

Statement by Bishop Msgr. Jose Vilaplaua of Santander on alleged apparitions at Garabandal - issued on 11 October 1996

"Some people have been coming directly to the Diocese of Santander (Spain) asking about the alleged apparitions of Garabandal and especially for the answer about the position of the hierarchy of the Church concerning these apparitions.

I need to communicate that:

1. **All the bishops of the diocese since 1961 through 1970 agreed that there was no supernatural validity for the apparitions.**

2. In the month of December of 1977 Bishop Dal Val of Santander, in union with his predecessors, stated that in the six years of being bishop of Santander there were no new phenomena.

3. The same bishop, Dal Val, let a few years go by to allow the confusion or fanaticism to settle down, and then he initiated a commission to examine the apparitions in more depth. **The conclusion of the commission agreed with the findings of the previous bishops. That there was no supernatural validity to such apparitions.**

4. At the time of the conclusions of the study, in 1991, I was installed bishop in the diocese. So during my visit to Rome, the *ad limina* visit which happened in the same year, I presented to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith the study and I asked for pastoral direction concerning this case.

5. On Nov. 28, 1992, the Congregation sent me an answer saying that after examining the documentation, there was no need for direct intervention (by the Vatican) to take away the jurisdiction of the ordinary bishop of Santander in this case. Such a right belongs to the ordinary. Previous declarations of the Holy See agree in this finding. In the same letter they suggested that if I find it necessary to publish a declaration, that **I reconfirm that there was no supernatural validity in the alleged apparitions, and this will make a unanimous position with my predecessors.**

6. Given that the declarations of my predecessors who studied the case have been clear and unanimous, I don't find it necessary to have a new public declaration that would raise notoriety about something which happened so long ago. **However, I find it necessary to rewrite this report as a direct answer to the people who ask for direction concerning this question, which is now final: I agree with [and] I accept the decision of my predecessors and the direction of the Holy See.**

7. In reference to the Eucharistic celebration in Garabandal, following the decision of my predecessors, I ruled that Masses can be celebrated only in the parish church and there will be no references to the alleged apparitions and visiting priests who want to say Mass must have approval from the pastor, who has my authorization. It's my wish that this information is helpful to you."

My regards in Christ,
+Jose Vilaplana
Bishop of Santander
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