

Mr Donal Foley
Nottingham

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

Recently a number of people, like yourself, have approached me as Bishop of Santander, enquiring about the alleged manifestations of Garabandal and, in particular, about the position of the hierarchy of the Church regarding this matter.

I have to say that:

- 1- All the bishops in the Dioceses, from 1961 to 1970, stated they had no evidence to support the supernatural nature of the apparitions that some people claimed were happening at that time.
- 2- In the month of December 1977 Mon. del Val, Bishop of Santander, expressed his agreement with his predecessors, and stated that in the six years he had been at the Bishopric there had been no other phenomenon.
- 3- However Mon. del Val himself, after the confusion or enthusiasm of the first years, commissioned an interdisciplinary study to study those phenomena in more depth. The conclusion of the study was in agreement with that of the previous statement given by the Bishops, that is, there was nothing supernatural in those supposed apparitions.
- 4- This study was completed around the time when I took charge of the Dioceses in 1991. Taking advantage of my visit to Rome for the visit ad Limina that year, I showed the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith the study and asked them for guidance on my pastoral advice about this case.
- 5- Dated 28th November 1992, the Congregation sent me their reply in which it is stated that, after having examined carefully all the documents, they did not find it necessary to intervene directly or to withdraw this affair from the ordinary jurisdiction of the Bishop of Santander, which is his by right.

Previous declarations from the Holy See agree with this statement.

In the same letter it is suggested that if I considered it appropriate, I should publish a declaration to reiterate the fact that there is no evidence to support the supernatural nature of the alleged apparitions, and so make my own the unanimous position of my predecessors.

- 6- As the statements of my predecessors who had studied the case had been clear and unanimous, I did not consider it necessary to make a new public declaration and I wished to avoid drawing attention to matters which were now well in the past. However, I did consider it relevant to write this report as a direct answer to those people who seek orientation on this affair, which I now consider concluded, accepting the decisions of my predecessors, which I make my own, and the directions of the Holy See.
 - 7- Concerning the celebration of mass in Garabandal, following the dispositions of my predecessors, I only permit them to be celebrated in the parish church with prior authorisation of the parish priest, and ask that no reference should be made to the alleged apparitions.
- Hoping this information is of some help to you,

+ José Vilaplana
Bishop of Santander