

**RECONCILER OF PEOPLE AND NATIONS (OUR LADY OF
BETANIA)
BETANIA, VENEZUELA 1976–1990**

THE FIRST MYSTICAL EXPERIENCE OF MARIA ESPERANZA

MARIA Esperanza, a married woman and mother of seven, had thirty-one visions of the Blessed Mother at this place that the Church has officially declared is “sacred ground.” Numerous phenomena have also been reported there and witnessed by many. The visionary was born November 22, 1928. Her first mystical experience took place early when Maria, who was only five years old, had a vision of St. Theresa of Lisieux who gave her a rose. The Blessed Mother also demonstrated her special interest in Maria when the child was seven years old and near death from pneumonia. The Mother of God appeared to Maria and recommended the appropriate medication which hastened her recovery.

From her earliest years, Maria felt called to the religious life and entered the Order of the Franciscan nuns in Merida. Unfortunately, her dream was not to be realized because the Mother Superior determined that Maria did not have a vocation. St. Theresa of Lisieux consoled Maria and revealed that her vocation lay in the married state and as a mother. Subsequently, on December 8, 1956, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, while on a visit to Rome, Maria married Geo Bianchini in Saint Peter’s Basilica. This marriage would produce seven children, a boy and six girls who were also called to the married state and, in time, had children of their own.

Some years later, in 1974, Maria and her husband purchased a farm a few miles from Caracas which the Blessed Mother predicted would become a center of “constant prayer and pilgrimage” for “all the nations of the world.”

The first apparition on the farm took place on March 25, 1976. Maria described the



appearance of the Blessed Mother in this manner, When she revealed herself, she went to the top of the tree, and I saw she was beautiful, with her hair brown, dark brown, her eyes that were light brown and she had very fine, very pretty eyebrows, a tiny mouth, a nose very straight and her complexion was so beautiful, it was skin that seemed like silk. It was bronzed. It was beautiful. Very young. Her hair was down to here, to her shoulders. As the Blessed Virgin had predicted years earlier, the



farm soon became a place of pilgrimage with over one hundred people seeing the Virgin at the grotto in 1984. An unusual aspect of the place is that Maria does not have to be present for phenomena to take place. Sometimes when Maria is not present, the Virgin reveals herself, sometimes in mysterious manifestations in clouds or in a type of haze. The Virgin appeared thirty-one times to Maria asking for prayers for the Reconciliation of Peoples and Nations. Of these visions, twenty-four took place after 1984. During these apparitions and subsequent visits by pilgrims, more than five hundred miracles and cures have been reported while over two thousand testimonials were given that claim various celestial phenomena.

Maria herself, was favored with the stigmata. She is known to have been surrounded by a sweet aroma, to have had the gifts of healing, levitation, bilocation and the capability of predicting future events, and to have been blessed not only with visitations of the Blessed Mother, but also with apparitions of her beloved Son.

Approval of the events at Betania was declared on November 21, 1987, by Bishop Pio Bello Ricardo who declared, After having studied repeatedly the apparitions of the Most Holy Virgin in Betania, and having begged the Lord earnestly for spiritual discernment, I declare that in my judgment the said apparitions are authentic and have a supernatural character. I therefore approve, officially, that the site where the apparitions have occurred be considered as sacred.” Likewise Bishop Freddy J. Fuenmayor, Bishop of Los Teques decreed I declare the sacred place where the image of Our Lady has

been venerated under the title of Mary Reconciler of All People and Nations, a Marian diocesan sanctuary of Our Lady.”



THE LAST VISION

The last vision of the Blessed Mother took place on January 5, 1990.

But a wonderful manifestation of another sort took place the following year on December 8, 1991, when, on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, during Holy Mass offered by Father Otty Ossa Aristizabal, the consecrated Host began to bleed. Tests later made in Caracas proved that the blood was of human origin.

After a life of numerous phenomena and heavenly visitations, Maria died of a Parkinson-like ailment in a New Jersey hospital, on August 7, 2004, surrounded by her family.