

## OUR LADY OF SORROWS

LA CODOSERA, CHANDAVILA, SPAIN 1945

### THE FIRST VISION

IT WAS three in the afternoon, May 27, 1945, when ten-year-old Marcelina Barroso Exposito, accompanied by her cousin, Augustina, was walking to the village on an errand for her mother. The girls walked through the area known as Chandavila when they noticed something strange in the distance. They were about to ignore it, but then a strange force somehow propelled them to a chestnut tree. There, a little above the ground, was a vision of Our Lady of Sorrows. She was easily identified by the black robe and mantle she wore, the stars that sparkled around her and the stars that embellished her gown. Her hands were joined and her beautiful face bore every mark of deep pain and overwhelming sadness.

Marcelina alone saw the Lady, and when the vision disappeared she ran with her cousin to the village where her message was greeted with great excitement.



### THE SECOND VISION

Days later, on the morning of June 4, Marcelina returned to the place of the apparition and beheld the Virgin once again. This time the Lady spoke, telling her to return in the afternoon when she would ask the girl to perform a sacrifice in the presence of all who attended. Accompanied this time by a thousand people, both Spanish and Portuguese, Marcelina walked to the apparition site in an ecstatic condition that drew wide attention. After arriving in sight of the chestnut tree, she stopped and beheld the vision in the distance. The Lady invited the girl to crawl on her knees to her, a distance of about one hundred feet, and reassured her, "Fear not. Nothing will harm you. I will be putting

before you a reed mat and herbs so that you will not be hurt.” Upon seeing her daughter in an ecstatic state and crawling on her knees over rocks and rough ground, Marcelina’s mother fainted. The child, however, remained for about ten minutes kneeling by the tree. Then, in addition to the vision of the Virgin, the child saw a beautiful church and on the altar appeared the Virgin Mary who invited the child to dip her fingers in holy water and bless herself. When the child drew near to the Virgin, she was asked if Marcelina would like to join her in Heaven. The child answered enthusiastically, “Yes, Ma’am, now.” The Blessed Mother smiled and kissed the child on the forehead. While doing this, the mantle of the Mother of God softly touched Marcelina’s face. The Virgin then requested that a chapel be built at the place of the apparition. When the vision disappeared, Marcelina was no longer ecstatic and began talking with her friends. They, on the other hand, paid particular attention to her knees and found no scratches or injuries after seeing her crawl over rough ground. The pastor of Codosera, Father Juan Antonio Galan y Galan, also checked for injuries, but found none. While accompanied each time by more and more people, Marcelina had other encounters with the Blessed Mother. She eventually enrolled in a Catholic school in Villafranca de Los Barros near Badajoz. Later, in Seville, on August 2, 1975, she became a religious in the Congregation of the Sisters of the Cross and took the name Sister Mary of Mercy of the Cross. She was a member for many years in this Order, which was dedicated to the care of the sick, orphans, the poor and elderly. After a time she joined a cloistered convent in Ciudad Real.



### **ANOTHER VISIONARY APPEARS**

The history of the apparition at Codosera now includes another visionary. While Marcelina was still experiencing the visions of Our Lady of Sorrows, Afra Blanco Brigade, then seventeen years old, went to Codosera with her friends on May 30, 1945. Like the other pilgrims, Afra wanted to see Marcelina, to witness the event and to take part in the prayers that were offered there. Upon her arrival, she thought she saw something dark in the clouds. The next day, she again went to the place of the apparition

and once again saw the dark object. This time it drew nearer until it was clearly recognized as Our Lady of Sorrows. The vision proved to be overwhelming for Afra who fell into a deep faint. A few days later, Afra's grandmother died. While Afra was dressed in mourning, her friends approached her and insisted that she join them for another visit to the place of the visions, which she did. While kneeling next to Marcelina, the apparition revealed herself to both girls. This time the Lady told Afra a secret, predicted great suffering and then asked her to kiss Marcelina. She asked for the recitation of the Rosary and the construction of a chapel. Days later, Afra and Marcelina went to Villar del Rey and stayed there from July 21 until July 24, giving thanks to the Virgin Mother for all the favors received.

### **STIGMATA APPEAR ON AFRA BLANCO BRIGADE**

While making the Way of the Cross there, Afra became ecstatic at the eleventh station and saw the sufferings of Our Lord and his Crucifixion. Suddenly she felt a sharp pain on the palms of both hands and discovered that an incision in the center of each was dripping blood and causing excruciating pain. Eventually, the stigmata were present on both feet and then were seen to penetrate deeper into the hands. The pain continued and the blood flowed mainly on Fridays in commemoration of Our Lord's Crucifixion. Afra underwent numerous medical examinations, but treatments to heal the wounds were unsuccessful. It was noted that the stigmata were accompanied by a sweet fragrance. Afra worked for many years in a hospital in Madrid until her death on August 23, 2008, at the age of eighty, after a long and painful illness.

After completing her schooling, Marcelina Barroso Exposito joined the religious Order known as the Congregacion de Hermanitas de la Cruz. Known as Sr. Maria of the Mercy of the Cross, she worked until her death caring for the sick, orphans, and the poor. A beautiful church, which enveloped the chestnut tree of the apparition, was eventually built. The permission for the construction of this church, as well as approval for the Expression of Faith, was given by the Bishop of Badajoz