

# Lipa Comes to Necedah

## Personal Experiences, Signs, and a Confluence of Imagery at an American Cold War Apparition

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**ABSTRACT:** In the late summer and fall of 1950, Juliet Hughes, a self-appointed promoter of a Marian apparition at Lipa in the Philippines, joined the crowds assembling for apparitions of the Virgin in Necedah, Wisconsin. The story of Hughes' visits to Necedah—including a miraculous rose petal she brought from Lipa as well as her meetings with visionary Mary Ann Van Hoof and a number of Necedah pilgrims—highlights the importance of person-to-person encounters at an active apparition site. Indeed, the events described here suggest that when miraculous objects and miracle stories are shared among various sites, these encounters can trigger powerful experiences of signs that enable devotees to perceive these apparitions as testifying to the same transcendent reality. These experiences function as building blocks for a global apparition network.

**KEYWORDS:** apparitions, Teresita Castillo, Juliet Hughes, Lipa (Philippines), Necedah (Wisconsin), rose petals, sun miracles, Mary Ann Van Hoof, Virgin Mary

The apparition of the Virgin Mary reported in 1950 by 41-year-old farmwife Mary Ann Van Hoof reached its climax on 15 August, the Feast of the Assumption,<sup>1</sup> when perhaps 100,000 people gathered at her farm at Necedah in rural Wisconsin for her noon vision.<sup>2</sup> The crowd, characterized by one state trooper as “the largest gathering

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in rural Wisconsin history,”<sup>3</sup> included priests and nuns, local and national news media, and thousands of ordinary people, most of them Catholic, from all parts of Wisconsin, neighboring states, and some from much more distant locations. Near the “Sacred Spot” where Van Hoof was expected to have her encounter with the Virgin, the faithful had cordoned off an area for invalids and the physically disabled who had come in search of cures, or at least relief from their suffering. The crowd, led by a voice on a public address system, joined in praying the Rosary. There were also some impassioned speeches, perhaps the most important of which was delivered by Stephen Breen,<sup>4</sup> editor of *Scapular Magazine*, whose combination of Catholic piety and anti-Communist rhetoric gave expression to the Cold War fears of many Americans at that time, fears that would be echoed in the messages of the Virgin that Van Hoof would convey to the crowd.

Present that day was Juliet Hughes, a Filipina, who had brought a rose petal she had taken from an apparition site two years earlier at Lipa in the Philippines. The story of Hughes—including her rose petal and her meetings with Van Hoof and with a number of visitors to Necedah—suggests that personal encounters at an apparition site (especially encounters with an exotic Other representing another apparition) can trigger experiences of signs that transcend the particularities of that site and make it possible for devotees to understand two apparitions half a world apart as distinct events which nonetheless testify to the very same transcendent reality.

### **THE LIPA APPARITIONS AND JULIET HUGHES**

The alleged appearances of the Virgin Mary to a 21-year-old Teresita Castillo (1927–2016), a postulant in a Carmelite monastery near Lipa,<sup>5</sup> came to public attention in the fall of 1948, about a year and a half before the onset of the public events at Necedah. The apparition, which drew large crowds from all parts of the Philippines and all sectors of Philippine society, was and still is best known for the showers of rose petals said to have fallen in and around the monastery. Miracles were quickly attributed to these petals, ranging from miraculous healings to images of Jesus and Mary on the petals.<sup>6</sup> The mass media was probably largely responsible for news of the apparition spreading beyond the Philippines, but personal relationships and connections were just as important. Contacts and visits with relatives and friends abroad helped inspire interest in other countries, and it seems that by 1949–1950 a number of persons of Filipino heritage or simply with connections to the Philippines had become informal ambassadors for the Lipa apparition and its miraculous rose petals.<sup>7</sup>

Juliet Hughes was one of those ambassadors. For some time before her presence at Necedah on 15 August 1950, she had been speaking

about Lipa at various locations in the United States. For example, on 14 August 1949, the *Long Beach Independent* (California) reported that Hughes would be participating in a program that evening, sharing the stage with William E. Cousins, Auxiliary Bishop of Chicago, and speaking on “the reported miracles and apparitions at Lipa.”<sup>8</sup> Hughes’ talks in late 1949 and early 1950 were publicized by newspapers in California, New Mexico, Texas, Ohio, and Wisconsin, among others. These short announcements usually just noted the date, place, and time of Hughes’ talks, followed by a few sentences summarizing the apparition and her connection with it. Piecing together bits of information in these newspaper accounts provides some basic information about Hughes and her talks.

The daughter of an American military officer and a Filipina,<sup>9</sup> Hughes had been a golf champion in the Philippines before taking up “her mission” to lecture about Lipa.<sup>10</sup> She claimed she had gone to high school with and was a friend of Teresita Castillo.<sup>11</sup> Initially, she had been skeptical of the apparition, and in order to get a first-hand account she had gone to the Carmelite monastery at the site, where she became convinced of the apparition’s authenticity.<sup>12</sup> Saying she had made fourteen visits to the site,<sup>13</sup> and in accord with a vow she had made two years earlier to Our Lady of Lipa, Hughes was dedicating her life to telling the story of the apparition.<sup>14</sup>

Hughes’ talks in Lima, Ohio, on 25–26 March 1950 were well publicized in the local press. An announcement in the *Lima News* of her speech for the Lima Public Forum on Saturday evening was accompanied by a picture of her holding up a container with the rose petal.<sup>15</sup> The next morning, the paper gave a brief summary of her speech, mentioning that she would repeat it that afternoon at three o’clock before going to Tiffin (Ohio) to speak.<sup>16</sup> Hughes’ presentations apparently were popular, for the *Lima News* reported on Monday that her talk the previous day had been attended by more than 500 persons.<sup>17</sup>

While one cannot be certain of just what Hughes said in these talks, it would seem from the *Lima News* reports that she told the story of the Lipa apparition very much as it had been told by seer Teresita Castillo and popularized in the Catholic press.<sup>18</sup> On 12 September 1948, Castillo was walking in the monastery garden when, although there was no wind, a bush began to move. A voice told her to kiss the ground, eat some grass, and then return to the same spot for fifteen consecutive days.<sup>19</sup> Catholics in attendance at Hughes’ talks in 1950 would have been aware of a resemblance here to the events reported 1858 at Lourdes, France, where the Virgin instructed Bernadette Soubirous to return to the grotto every day for a fortnight and eat a plant growing there and drink from the water.<sup>20</sup>

It is likely that Hughes also would have included in her talks some of Mary’s messages reported by Castillo that would have reminded her

Catholic listeners of even earlier messages said to have been delivered by the Virgin in 1917 at Fatima, Portugal. By the late 1940s, Fatima had become the best-known and most talked about Marian apparition of the twentieth century. In the years following the 1942 publication of parts of the “Fatima secret” in the memoirs of Lucia dos Santos, the only surviving seer of that apparition,<sup>21</sup> large numbers of Catholics in the United States and the American-dominated Philippines became obsessed with the Fatima messages and came to believe that the messages miraculously predicted the rise of a godless Russia and what came to be known as the Cold War.<sup>22</sup> In her last appearance to Castillo on 12 November 1948, Mary identified herself as the Mediatrix of All Grace and explicitly evoked the apparition at Fatima.<sup>23</sup> This may begin to explain why some of the themes, warnings, and admonitions in the Fatima messages were repeated in the messages reported by Castillo at Lipa and probably also repeated by Hughes to her American audiences.

### **JULIET HUGHES AT NECEDAH**

Information about Hughes’ presence at Necedah in the late summer and fall of 1950 comes from two sources. The first is Mary Ann Van Hoof’s account of her visions and experiences from late November 1949 through 1955, compiled by her long-time devotee, Henry Swan.<sup>24</sup> The second consists of two volumes of testimonials by persons present at the Van Hoof farm during one or more of the apparitions from 1950–1969, collected and published by the Necedah shrine.<sup>25</sup> In these two volumes are a letter from Hughes about her experiences at Necedah, and some letters of Necedah pilgrims who encountered Hughes with her rose petal.

Although Hughes was not a visionary herself, her claim to be a classmate and friend of the Lipa seer, her possession of one of the miraculous rose petals, and her success on the Catholic lecture circuit gave her a certain cachet of privileged access to the sacred at Necedah. But whatever other motives she might have had for being at Necedah on 15 August, Hughes had come prepared to spread the word about Lipa, having brought the rose petal and some leaflets about the Lipa apparition.

According to an undated testimonial she sent to the shrine sometime before 1966, she had been unsure whether to distribute her leaflets: “Lipa was closed by the Church, and I was so confused, yet in my heart I was at Lipa and saw and believed.”<sup>26</sup> When she sought out Van Hoof the night before the apparition, Van Hoof invited her to come with her to the shrine, where they would pray the Rosary together and Hughes would receive a sign about what she should do. They had just reached the mid-point of the Rosary when suddenly a little breeze arose and a branch from an ash tree with just a few leaves on it fell in front of

them. Van Hoof picked up the branch and handed it to Hughes, saying, “This is your answer. You should distribute it [the leaflet].”<sup>27</sup>

Writing of her encounter with Hughes that night, Van Hoof did not mention this episode but rather complained about the special treatment Hughes had received, and seemed to expect, from some of the visitors. According to Van Hoof, “the Philippine girl” had arrived early on 14 August and “made herself right at home.” She recalled that photographers from *Life* and *Time* magazines took photographs of the two of them—Van Hoof holding her prized blue rosary given to her by her daughter and Hughes holding the case containing her Lipa rose petal. Van Hoof spoke of Hughes as if she were just one of “the foolish people” who thought they were better than others; so, while Hughes was determined to see her on the morning of 15 August, Van Hoof wrote later that Hughes “was not better than the thousands gathered outside.” She didn’t feel it was justified for a priest, whom she did not identify, to make a fuss over Hughes and bring her into the Van Hoof home while others were turned away.<sup>28</sup>

Van Hoof apparently had similar feelings on 7 October, recalling that Hughes thought she should be allowed into the Van Hoof home and to be with Van Hoof at the Sacred Spot during the apparition. On that occasion, however, Van Hoof insisted that she had been ordered by her spiritual director not to give Hughes these privileges, so she told Hughes, “Oh Juliet, you’ll be close to Our Lady if you stand with the rest of the relatives.” And while she recalled that Hughes cried when she heard this, Van Hoof did not back down, because “orders were orders.” She concluded that Hughes “was happy and contented with the position she had afterward.”<sup>29</sup>

In her letter addressed to the shrine, Hughes described her experiences at the site on 15 August and three later occasions.<sup>30</sup> While she recalled feeling disappointed or frustrated by a few things on these occasions, her experiences on the whole seem to have been positive and deeply satisfying, and there is no indication that she felt slighted by Van Hoof at any time. Indeed, she seems to have understood that at this apparition site Van Hoof’s authority took precedence over her own, which was grounded at another place and in another apparition.

### **HUGHES, HER ROSE PETAL, AND THE NECEDAH PILGRIMS**

Although Van Hoof did not really seem to appreciate Hughes, some of the Necedah pilgrims who encountered and talked to Hughes clearly came to see her as a very special person. For example, Etta Mullins’ chance encounter with Hughes on a train returning to Chicago from Necedah after the 15 August apparition led her to return to Necedah on 7 October. In her testimonial, Mullins recalled that Hughes said she had

spoken with Van Hoof, who had told her that something would happen at the site on that date and this was what brought her on that occasion to the Sacred Spot. There she saw and was apparently deeply moved by sun miracles,<sup>31</sup> the prototypes of which had been reported at Fatima on 13 October 1917, when, after a downpour of rain, the sun suddenly appeared and (to devotees) seemed to fall from the sky, whirl or “dance,” and change color.

Another person who encountered Hughes at Necedah on 7 October was R. Sevigny, a 56-year-old man from Edmonton, Alberta, who had traveled there by bus with his wife and sister-in-law. Sevigny noted that on that day he had seen the sun miracle, but he seemed to be more impressed by some experiences involving roses. He recalled that he saw someone put a wreath of red roses on the head of the statue of Our Lady of Fatima, at which point the statue seemed to “come alive” for him. “I also met a lady that was at the last apparition of [the] Blessed Lady at Lipa,” he said. “She showed me a petal of a rose that fell from heaven on that day. The picture of the Blessed Virgin with her arms extended was in the petal.”<sup>32</sup> Sevigny’s sister-in-law also recalled Hughes showing them “the petal of a rose with ‘Our Lady of Grace’ imprinted in it.”<sup>33</sup> Sevigny said that as a result of these experiences he had become “more pious” and felt “much stronger in fighting sin.”

Maurice and Molly DeFeau, who were to become life-long Marian devotees, noted in their testimonials that while they had been present at the Necedah apparitions of 15 August and 7 October, their encounter with Hughes there occurred on 14 September, when Maurice met “a lady from Lipa” who said she “had gone to school with Sister Teresita and was her friend.” She had with her, he said, a rose petal from Lipa “in a reliquary,” and “a full sized picture of the Blessed Virgin showed on that petal.” Molly also spoke of this rose petal as “in a relic” (apparently meaning reliquary) and said that one could clearly see on the petal “the image of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal or Mother of Grace.” She recalled that when Hughes held it up so everyone could see it, people around her said, “*We can see it from this side,*” from which she concluded that “both sides were the same.”<sup>34</sup>

That the Lipa rose petal was being not only seen as a relic but being treated as such—with the expectation that it possessed healing powers<sup>35</sup>—is apparent in the letters of two Necedah pilgrims who had a more protracted relationship with Hughes. Ann Gmoser, apparently a Marian devotee with a sense of history, began her testimony by saying that the people of Wisconsin were particularly blessed, because for the second time in less than a century the Virgin had appeared in Wisconsin, the first being her mid-nineteenth century appearance to Belgian immigrant Adele Brise.<sup>36</sup> In July 1950, Ann and her husband Frank had fulfilled a long-time dream of making a pilgrimage to the shrine of St. Anne de Beaupre in Quebec, and when they heard their priest refer

to Necedah they traveled to the Van Hoof farm, where they met and talked with Van Hoof.<sup>37</sup> They were present for the apparitions of 15 August and 7 October and apparently made other trips from their home in Milwaukee to Necedah. On one of these occasions, they showed pictures of sun miracles they had taken on 7 October to Van Hoof's daughter, who in turned showed them to her mother. Van Hoof then spoke with Ann and asked her what she saw in the pictures. Gmoser responded that she thought she had seen the face of God the Father in profile.<sup>38</sup>

Hughes was interested in obtaining pictures of the Necedah sun miracles to send back to friends in the Philippines, and these pictures apparently prompted her to contact the Gmosers. As Ann recalled in her testimonial, Hughes arrived at their home one morning at 2:00 a.m. on her way from Fond du Lac to Chicago. The previous evening, Hughes had spoken with Frank on the phone, telling him she had a rose petal from Lipa, and Frank had said he would wait up all night just to see it. The next day, Ann took Hughes to see the nuns at nearby St. Agnes School so that they, too, could see the rose petal. Then in Chicago, according to Ann, where Hughes was to speak at Mother of Good Counsel High School, a nun who was thought to be terminally ill with cancer was cured when she blessed herself with the miraculous petal.<sup>39</sup>

## SIGNS AND A CONFLUENCE OF APPARITIONS

It is not clear just how and when Van Hoof became a believer in the Lipa apparition. It is clear, however, that sometime before the publication of her *Revelations and Messages* she was aware of and found significance in the fact that her first, silent vision of a woman standing by her bed on 12 November 1949 had taken place precisely one year after the final appearance of the Virgin at Lipa.<sup>40</sup> For Van Hoof, this would have been a sign—an apparently anomalous event or confluence of events that visionaries understand as signaling a divine presence or important communication.<sup>41</sup> While the 14 August 1950 sign was understood as giving Hughes permission to distribute her leaflets, Van Hoof's recognition of the coincidence of dates just noted presumably would have eliminated any doubts she might have harbored about the validity of the Lipa apparition, while at the same time validating her own visions as part of a divinely sanctioned plan.

Nearly all the testimonies of Necedah pilgrims are replete with descriptions of significant events that functioned as signs, but the testimonies just cited from Mullins, Sevigny, the DeFeaus and the Gmosers are especially interesting because in all these cases the primary sign (that is, the most significant event) was the encounter with Hughes. The important thing to note here is that both Hughes and her rose petal brought the Lipa apparition into the space of Necedah in such a way that the two

apparitions, while technically distinct, were brought together in a single devotional experience.

Van Hoof appears to have had a sense of this confluence. Beginning on 29 May 1950, she was delivering messages from the Virgin, reminding listeners of the warnings at La Salette,<sup>42</sup> Fatima, and Lipa, and for some months thereafter she spoke of and related to Lipa as if she were a devotee. On 2 December, for example, she recalled that a statue of Our Lady of Lipa, sent from the Philippines, arrived at the Necedah shrine. It apparently had made a stop in Chicago and was blessed there by a visiting bishop from the Philippines. The statue, hand-carved out of wood, was about four feet high, and the Van Hoofs kept it in their living room. On 8 December as Van Hoof was praying before the statue, she noticed a change in its base that led her to look again at the statue, and there, instead of Our Lady of Lipa she saw Our Lady of Necedah. Whereas Our Lady of Lipa had brown hair and brown eyes and was dressed in white, Our Lady of Necedah had blond hair and blue eyes, was dressed in blue with a blue veil and mantle, and was about a foot taller. “She smiled so beautifully,” Van Hoof said. “She looked so beautiful with those beautiful eyes one is lost to the world and hears no one.”<sup>43</sup> For Van Hoof, at least in those moments, the boundaries between the two statues, the two Marys, and the two apparitions had become fluid, although she retained a distinct preference for the blond-haired, blue-eyed Lady of Necedah.

## CONCLUSIONS

These observations—which focus on the experiences of devotees of the Marian apparition at Necedah in 1950 and their encounter with a self-appointed ambassador for the earlier apparition at Lipa—highlight the importance of material objects and serendipitous personal encounters in the development of apparition culture. For pilgrims such as the DeFeaus and the Gmosers, meeting Hughes and her miraculous rose petal at Necedah shaped their understandings both of Lipa and Necedah and became the catalyst for extraordinary on-site and off-site experiences.

As happened at Necedah, devotees drawn to new apparition sites bring with them knowledge and stories of other apparitions and, frequently, objects connected with those apparitions such as rose petals bearing religious images, rosaries changing color, representations of Mary from a variety of sources, and reports of sun miracles and other signs. These devotees eagerly share their stories and objects with other devotees, and such wide-ranging personal contacts at apparition sites and other places have given rise to a complex network of apparition devotion that transcends national boundaries. In recent years, the Internet has greatly facilitated this globalization of Marian apparitions,<sup>44</sup> with some websites promoting all reported Marian apparitions, some devoted to



particular apparitions, some concerned with documenting reports of new apparitions, and still others dedicated to evaluating the claims of various visionaries. Apparitional culture today is a worldwide devotional phenomenon, the virtual dimension of which devotees can access and share with the click of a mouse.

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> The Feast of the Assumption, dating back some 1,500 years in its early forms, celebrates the teaching that the Virgin Mary was taken body and soul into heaven while she was still living. Pope Pius XII dogmatized this doctrine in November 1950.

<sup>2</sup> The Necedah apparitions began on 28 May 1950, Pentecost Sunday. According to Van Hoof, Mary appeared and spoke with her about a number of concerns, including lack of faith within the local parish, and then told her to return to the same spot the next day (29 May), the following day (30 May), on 4 June (Trinity Sunday), 16 June (Feast of the Sacred Heart), 15 August (Feast of the Assumption), and 7 October (Feast of the Rosary). See Mary Ann Van Hoof, *Revelations and Messages as Given Through Mary Ann Van Hoof at Necedah, Wisconsin, Vol. 1* (Necedah, WI: For My God and My Country, Inc., 1966), 2. As the apparitions came to public notice, increasing numbers of people went to the farm when Van Hoof had her visions. For a discussion of these apparitions and their early development, see Sandra L. Zimdars-Swartz, *Encountering Mary: From La Salette to Medjugorje* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 259–66.

<sup>3</sup> J. Kanady, “Woman Prays, Claims to See Vision Again,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, 20 August 1950, 1.

<sup>4</sup> Breen was a popular lecturer on Marian apparitions, especially Fatima and Lipa. He gave two lectures in Necedah on 30 July 1950. See *La Crosse Tribune*, 30 July 1950, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Deirdre de la Cruz, who did historical and ethnographic research on Lipa, has provided the authoritative scholarly account of this apparition in *Mother Figured: Marian Apparitions and the Making of a Filipino Universal* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). De la Cruz notes that during the occupation of the Philippines by the Japanese, between 1942 and 1945, Batangas Province suffered some of the greatest atrocities committed during the wartime period, with an estimated twenty-five thousand people killed between October 1944 and May 1945, the most of any province in the Philippines. The grounds on which the monastery of Lipa Carmel was built was the site of a mass execution of five hundred male civilians (89–90). The Virgin Mary is the Patroness of the Order of the Discalced Carmelites.

<sup>6</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 132–36; for a sampling of photographs of the rose petals, see the cover and Figure 4.2, 133.

<sup>7</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 134. De la Cruz cites a number of accounts of miraculous healings through rose petals, in each case the curative petal coming from someone who knew someone who had connections with the Philippines (334–36). Prayer cards (*estampas*) brought into contact with the petal were said to have the same curative effect (135–37).

- <sup>8</sup> *Long Beach Independent* (California), 14 August 1949.
- <sup>9</sup> “Philippine Guest Speaks on Lady of Lipa Thursday,” *Santa Fe New Mexican*, 21 February 1950, 3.
- <sup>10</sup> “Speaker to Discuss ‘Miracle of Lipa’,” *Racine Journal Times* (Wisconsin), 7 September 1950, 19. See also de la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 258, n. 16.
- <sup>11</sup> “Miracle Talk Planned,” *San Antonio Light*, 18 May 1950.
- <sup>12</sup> “Forum Speaker Tells of Miracle,” *Lima News* (Ohio), 16 March 1950.
- <sup>13</sup> *Long Beach Independent* (California), 14 August 1949.
- <sup>14</sup> “Forum Speaker Tells of Miracle.”
- <sup>15</sup> “Lecture Here,” *Lima News*, 25 March 1950.
- <sup>16</sup> “Forum Speaker Tells of Miracle.”
- <sup>17</sup> “Apparition Story Told for Audience of 500 Sunday,” *Lima News*, 27 March 1950.
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, “Mystic Rose Petals Fall in Philippines.”
- <sup>19</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 102–03; “Forum Speaker Tells of Miracle.”
- <sup>20</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 102. De la Cruz notes here that Castillo’s account of her visions, written some forty years after the events, is framed in relation to the two most authoritative apparitions of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries—*Lourdes* (1858) and *Fatima* (1917).
- <sup>21</sup> Lucia dos Santos, *Fatima in Lucia’s Own Words*, ed. L. Kondor, trans. Dominican Nuns of the Perpetual Rosary (Fatima, Portugal: Postulation Centre, 1976).
- <sup>22</sup> For an overview of the Fatima apparition’s popularity during the Cold War in the United States, see Thomas A. Kselman and Steven Avella, “Marian Piety and the Cold War in the United States,” *The Catholic Historical Review* 72, no. 3 (1986), 403–24; and Una M. Cadegan, “The Queen of Peace in the Shadow of War: Fatima and U.S. Catholic Anticommunism,” *U.S. Catholic Historian* 22, no. 1 (2004), 1–15. For the American domination of the Philippines and the influence there of American officials in Cold War politics, see De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 125, 137–38, 157, 174.
- <sup>23</sup> De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 105; quoted from Castillo, original testimony, 25.
- <sup>24</sup> Henry Swan, *My Work with Necedah: Mary Ann Van Hoof’s Own Story of the Apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary* (Necedah, WI: For My God and My Country, 1959).
- <sup>25</sup> *Testimonials of Pilgrims, Queen of the Holy Rosary Mediatrix of Peace Shrine, Vol. 1* [1950–1955] (Necedah, WI: For My God and My Country, n.d.); and *Testimonials Attributed to Queen of the Holy Rosary Mediatrix of Peace Shrine at Necedah, Wisconsin, Bk. 2* (Necedah, WI: For My God and My Country, 1969). A likely motive for the collection and publication of these testimonials was to counter the negative stance the Diocese of La Crosse had taken toward the apparitions. In 1955, Bishop John P. Treacy issued a statement declaring that claims of the supernatural at Necedah were false. In 1970, his successor, Bishop Frederick William Freking, reiterated that position and placed Van Hoof and some of her associates under interdict. A number of devotees settled in Necedah and continue to be active there.
- <sup>26</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 189. In April 1951, after an ecclesiastical investigation, six Filipino bishops signed a declaration that the Lipa apparitions had not been of supernatural origin. It is not clear what steps authorities had already taken in the fall of 1950 to discourage devotion at the site. See De la Cruz, *Mother Figured*, 83,

108–12, 150–52; for a discussion of the reopening of the case, see 138–49. For the recent history of the Philippine bishops with regard to Lipa, see Deirdre de la Cruz, “The Rise of Recognition: A Postscript on the History of the Apparitions of Mary in Lipa, the Philippines,” in this issue.

<sup>27</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 189.

<sup>28</sup> Swan, *My Work with Necedah*, 23. That Van Hoof was not especially impressed by Hughes may in part be attributed to the fact that on 4 June she met among the pilgrims at the farm a man who had been to Fatima, Lourdes, and Rome and who, she said, gave her a rose petal from Lipa. *My Work with Necedah*, Vol. 1, 13.

<sup>29</sup> Swan, *My Work with Necedah*, 44, 45.

<sup>30</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 189–92.

<sup>31</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 208.

<sup>32</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 15.

<sup>33</sup> See letter of Mrs. G. Poquette, *Testimonials*, Vol. 1, 169.

<sup>34</sup> *Testimonials*, Bk. 2, 380, 390. Italics in the original.

<sup>35</sup> De la Cruz makes this comparison to relics for some of the rose petals in circulation outside the Philippines. See these examples in her discussion of healings connected with the petals in *Mother Figured*, 132–37.

<sup>36</sup> This apparition was formally recognized by Bishop David Ricken on 10 December 2010, making it the first officially approved apparition in the United States. See Karen E. Park’s “Adele Brise: Prophet, Preacher, and Priest of the Wisconsin Frontier,” in this issue.

<sup>37</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 237.

<sup>38</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 241–42.

<sup>39</sup> *Testimonials*, Vol. I, 242.

<sup>40</sup> Van Hoof, *Revelations and Messages*, 1. Peter Jan Margry notes that a similar claim is made for Ida Peerdeman of Amsterdam, whose visions of Mary began 25 March 1945, when Peerdeman was 39. In a later edition of the Amsterdam Messages, however, an annotation is added that at age 12 Peerdeman had a vision of Mary at the same time the Virgin appeared to the three children at Fatima in October 1917. See Margry’s “Marian Interventions in the Wars of Ideology: The Elastic Politics of the Roman Catholic Church on Modern Apparitions,” *History and Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2009): 247.

<sup>41</sup> For a discussion of signs in contemporary visionary culture, see Jill M. Krebs, *Our Lady of Emmitsburg, Visionary Culture, and Catholic Identity* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 37–66; and Lisa M. Bitel, *Our Lady of the Rock: Vision and Pilgrimage in the Mojave Desert* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2015), 2–15, 69–114.

<sup>42</sup> On 19 September 1846 Mary allegedly appeared to two shepherd children at La Salette, France. In its prophetic messages, this apparition is a precursor to Fatima and many of the Cold War apparitions of Mary, including Lipa. Pope Pius IX approved public devotion at La Salette in 1851.

<sup>43</sup> Swan, *My Work with Necedah*, 66.

<sup>44</sup> For an early study of the Internet’s impact on Marian apparitions, see Paolo Apolito, *The Internet and the Madonna: Religious Visionary Experience on the Web* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).