



# Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry



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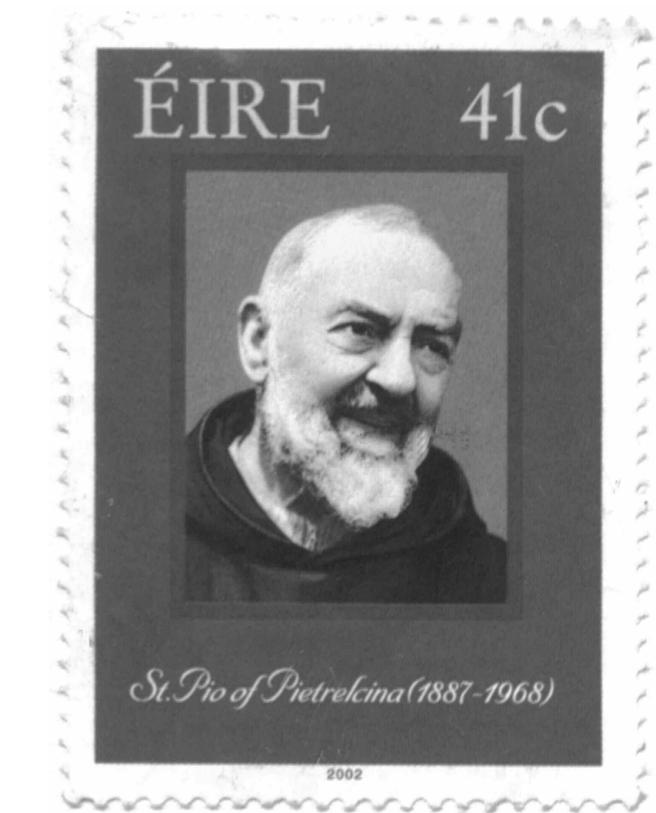
*David Doherty wrote to us at Padre Pio Devotions detailing his fascinating story regarding Padre Pio's intercession. We had many questions to ask David and he answered them all. His testimony follows:*

**David Doherty of Derry**, North Ireland had always taken good care of his health. It came as a complete surprise to him when his doctor told him in 2003 that he needed to have triple bypass heart surgery. He was sent to the Golden Jubilee National Hospital in Glasgow, Scotland for the operation. His doctors were pleased with the outcome of the surgery and considered it to have been a success. Soon after the bypass, a second surgery became necessary. After the second surgery, David's condition began to deteriorate, and a week later David was moved back into the hospital's intensive care unit where he drifted in and out of consciousness. The doctors explained the gravity of his situation to his wife, Isabel. They told her that he could pass away at any moment and advised her to notify the family immediately and summons them to the hospital.

Two days after being readmitted to the intensive care unit, David was put on a ventilator. A breathing machine now did the work of breathing for him. Antibiotics could not arrest the infection that was spreading throughout his body. His kidneys then failed and septicaemia (blood poisoning) set in. The doctor told Isabel and the family that they had done everything humanly possible to save David's life. He had multiple organ failure and his body was shutting down. There was nothing else that could be done.

One of David's daughters made some inquiries and arranged for Padre Pio's glove and a piece of bandage that covered his stigmata to be brought to the hospital. In the intensive care unit, the relics were placed on David's chest while the Rosary was recited by everyone who were gathered. All prayed for the intercession of Padre Pio.

That evening, as David's son Georgie was leaving the hospital, he noticed the distinct fragrance of perfume in the elevator. His two sisters, Patricia and Paula were with him but did not notice it. However, shortly after that, they both noticed an unexplainable fragrance of incense at their father's bedside. That was on a Friday afternoon. On Saturday, a priest came into the intensive care unit and gave David the Last Rites. On Sunday, the surgeon spoke to Isabel and told her that David showed very slight signs of improvement. On Monday, after examining David, another one of the doctors called Isabel aside and said to her, "It is amazing to see the changes in your husband's condition. He is getting



*Stamp issued in Ireland in 2002 honoring Padre Pio.*

better!" David remained in the intensive care unit for another three weeks and every day he got a little stronger.

David spent a total of nine weeks in the hospital. After he was released, he spent many months at home continuing his recuperation. His family and friends were astonished at his recovery. When they explained to David how close he had been to death, he was stunned. He had no idea. When David was told that Padre Pio's glove and bandage were brought into the hospital and laid on his chest, the spiritual experience that he had while in the hospital suddenly took on a new meaning. When he shared the experience with his family, it was their turn to be amazed.

David told his family that while laying in his hospital bed, he experienced seeing himself as already dead. He saw his body in a coffin in a small village just outside of Derry. He was watching his own wake. While not all countries have the tradition of a wake, it has long been observed in Ireland. During a wake, the body is kept at home in a coffin where friends and relatives come to

pay their last respects to their loved one. Following the wake is the funeral at the church.

After witnessing his own wake, David saw that his coffin was then put in the back of a hearse and driven to Derry. Next he saw himself in a field in which he could see for miles and miles in every direction. But what he saw was horrific. Everywhere the eye could see were millions of bodies crawling over each other and under each other in mud. Everything was bleak and colorless. While he stood there in shock, he thought to himself, "Is this where I am going to spend eternity?" Then a loud voice shouted at him, "Get out! Get out and save some souls!" Next, David saw himself back in his coffin in the hearse. The hearse pulled to the side of the road and stopped. The man in the hearse turned and said to the driver, "Why have we stopped?" The driver then replied, speaking about David, "He has been given a second chance."

In reality, David had been given a second chance. Some of the nurses who cared for David in the hospital told him that they had been present when the relics of Padre Pio were brought into his room. Although they could not explain it, they said they felt without a doubt that something happened when Padre Pio's glove and bandage were placed on his body.

What did David know about Padre Pio? Almost nothing. He knew that Padre Pio had the stigmata but that was the extent of his knowledge. A statue of Padre Pio had been erected at David's parish in Derry in 1999 but he never gave it a second thought. About ten years before his heart surgery, he had to retire from work because of his arthritis. A friend brought him Padre Pio's glove but at that time it did not have much significance to him.

David is aware that he received a healing not only for his body, but also for his soul. Was his soul in need of healing? Yes, it was. Before his heart surgery, his spiritual priorities had been on the back burner of his life. He had married Isabel and settled down to a comfortable life. He was devoted to his wife and five children but he had neglected his relationship with God. He went to Mass on Sundays but if something else came up which caused him to skip Mass, he never gave it a second thought. He never attended Mass during the weekdays. Prayer was not an important part of his life and even though he knew that he was going to undergo a very serious heart operation, it had never even occurred to him to pray before the surgery. At the time he was admitted to the hospital, he had not been to confession in more than a year.

These days David goes to confession regularly. He never neglects Sunday Mass and also attends Mass on as many week days as he can. The family Rosary is now a part of the Doherty's daily routine. And he sees the way his children's lives have changed as well. His daughters, Paula and Patricia have since become involved in charitable ministries in their parish.

David has seen the many blessings he and his family have received since his close brush with death. Many times he thought about the strong and insistent voice that shouted to him while he was lying in the hospital, "Get up and save some souls!" He knows now that it was Padre Pio's voice. "What could I possibly do to save other peoples' souls? I am having enough trouble saving my own soul!" David wondered. Nevertheless, in

thanksgiving for his many blessings, he began to have a great desire to do something for the Lord. He just could not figure out what he should do.

The answer came for him when he was invited to attend a Padre Pio prayer group meeting. After the meeting, he began to reflect how wonderful it would be to have a Padre Pio prayer group in his own large parish in Derry. He was able to get the permission of the bishop of Derry as well as his own parish priest.

The first Padre Pio prayer group meeting was in January 2005 in David's parish of the Holy Family in Ballymagroarty, in Derry. David made a little booklet on his computer, complete with the prayers of Padre Pio. It is used at every meeting. The prayer group is well attended and the attendance has steadily increased every year.



*David & Isabel Doherty*

When a nun from Dublin, Ireland, Sister Mella, heard about the Padre Pio prayer group that David had started, she contacted him and asked for information so that she could start a group in her parish. David went to Dublin and met Sister Mella and provided her with the prayer booklets he made for his prayer group. Sister Mella's Padre Pio prayer group is going very well. A young woman from Dungiven, Ireland has invited David to come to her parish and assist her in forming a Padre Pio prayer group there. He has also been contacted by an individual in England who expressed interest in forming a Padre Pio prayer group.

In reflecting on his near death experience and all that has happened since, David said, "My life and my family's life has taken a change in direction I wouldn't have thought possible. I feel sure that I would not be here today if it had not been for the prayers and the intercession of Padre Pio. I am just happy to be alive!" ■

**Thomas Carolan of Ireland** grew up in poverty. His parents had a very small farm and were used to long hours and hard work. Their little thatched house was in a bad state of disrepair but they could never afford to fix it. The roof had to be propped up and was on the verge of collapse. Tom's father was forced to seek a loan at the bank but the family's financial difficulties grew steadily worse.

In May of 1929, Tom's father suddenly became very ill. He had just finished saying his prayers to the Holy Family, "Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, I give you my heart and my soul," when he died.

Tom's mother experienced profound grief at the loss of her husband. When Tom and his mother walked

to their parish to attend Mass she would cry all the way to the church and all the way home.

In the afternoon, after they had their lunch, his mother would always go outside to feed their hens. Tom and his mother were just getting ready to go out to the henhouse one day when they saw a monk approaching their house. "Tom, in the name of God, who is that who is walking up to our house?" his mother said. The monk came right up to the kitchen door. He stood there in an attitude of prayer. He had a beard and was wearing a habit. Gloves were on his hands but they were unusual in the fact that his bare fingers were exposed. He put his left hand on his chest and his right hand was raised in a blessing. He said, "There is trouble in this house. You lost your husband. I was sent to tell you that your husband is happy in Heaven but while you are crying and grieving over his death, you are only making him feel unhappy. You are in great financial trouble. To meet this trouble, help will be coming to you from a source you least expect. When your financial troubles are over that source will cease."

Tom's mother offered him some tea but he said, "No, I am not allowed anything." He asked her to kneel down and he made the sign of the cross on her forehead. He also made the sign of the cross on Tom's forehead. He then looked toward the room where Tom's father had died. He prayed and raised his right hand in a blessing. He was praying as he left the house. Tom was sent outside by his mother to see which way the monk went. Tom looked in all directions but he was nowhere to be seen.

After the visit of the monk, Tom's mother felt greatly strengthened in spirit. She no longer cried over the death of her husband. She was surprised when she received a letter from her sister Katie. Katie had lived in the U.S. for 50 years and had never once written to her. Katie sent money in the letter. Tom's mother wrote back and thanked her and the next month before the bank note came due another letter arrived from Katie with money inside. This went on for a number of years. Right after the bank note was paid in full, the letters from Katie stopped altogether.

A relative from Glasgow used to come on occasion to visit Tom and his mother in Ireland. On one of his visits, he brought a magazine that had a photograph of Padre Pio saying Mass in San Giovanni Rotondo. When he showed the photo to Tom and his mother, they immediately recognized him as the kind monk who had come to their home to console them in 1929 on the Feast of the Sacred Heart. ■

**The People of Ireland** have traditionally had a great devotion to Padre Pio. Every year at the shrine of Knock in County Mayo, Ireland, a Padre Pio commemoration day is observed. Between fifteen and twenty thousand people attend the celebration.

The Knock shrine is truly a place of prayer and pilgrimage. People come from all parts of the world to pray and contemplate the beautiful event that took place there on August 21, 1879. On that date, the Virgin Mary along with St. Joseph and St. John the Evangelist made a heavenly visitation to the tiny and impoverished village of Knock. They appeared at the south wall of the parish church of St. John the Baptist. To the left of the

figures appeared an altar with a lamb resting on it. Around the lamb were golden stars in the form of a halo and behind the lamb was a cross. The altar was surrounded by angels and the whole area was bathed in a beautiful light.

Everyone who passed by the church that evening, fifteen people in all, ranging in age from six years old to seventy-five years old, saw the apparition. For two hours, the witnesses stood in the pouring rain and beheld the heavenly scene. Although they became drenched in the downpour, no rain fell on the figures or the ground underneath their feet. The wall behind them also remained dry. This reversal of the natural order was regarded as a true miracle. A half a mile away, people reported that they saw what appeared to be a globe of light coming from the gable wall of the Knock church.

The apparition was unusual in that no words were spoken, no message was given. The only sound that was heard were the witnesses' own prayers as they gazed at the heavenly scene. Those who were present observed that if they drew too close, the figures would retreat backward toward the wall of the church. St. John held a book in his hands and one of the witnesses was standing so close to him that he could see the words in the book.

Traditionally, the people of Ireland see the Virgin Mary as a queen. At Knock, she came as a queen. Mary wore a white cloak and a crown was on her head. Her eyes were raised up to Heaven and her hands were uplifted in prayer.

Fr. Cavanagh, a man of great personal holiness, was the parish priest of the Knock church. He was admired and loved by his parishioners, most of whom considered him to be a saint. Fr. Cavanagh had a great devotion to the souls in purgatory and decided to offer one hundred Masses on their behalf. The one hundredth Mass was said by Fr. Cavanagh on August 21, the day of the heavenly visitation. Many of the people in Knock believed that the Blessed Virgin paid a visit to their village because of their saintly pastor. Fr. Cavanagh who had an intense love for the Virgin Mary, died on the feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1897.

It has also been thought that the Virgin Mary visited Ireland to give the people a sense of hope and spiritual strength. At the time of the apparition, the people of Ireland suffered from many privations including grinding poverty, deadly diseases, and widespread hunger. Despite their many sufferings, the Irish people were long known for their deep and abiding faith and trust in God.

Soon miraculous cures began to be reported. Fr. Cavanagh recorded 300 healings in the first three years after the apparition. Included in the long list of those who were healed was Archbishop John Joseph Lynch of Toronto as well as Archbishop Murphy of Tasmania.

An ecclesiastical commission conducted two official inquiries into the supernatural occurrence at Knock. The testimony of the witnesses was declared to be trustworthy and satisfactory. Pope John Paul II made his own personal pilgrimage to the shrine of Knock in 1979 on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the apparition. Today Knock is numbered with Guadalupe, Lourdes and Fatima as one of the chief Marian shrines in the world. Over one and a half million pilgrims visit Knock annually.

The Roman sculptor, Lorenzo Ferri was commissioned to sculpture a number of statues in commemoration of the apparition at Knock, Ireland. When finished, they would become a permanent part of the Knock shrine. A woman named Judy Coyne of Ireland was asked to oversee the project.

Lorenzo completed the clay models for the sculptures and Judy made a trip from Knock, Ireland to Rome to view his work. Judy was disappointed. The expression on the model of the face of the Virgin Mary was not what she had hoped for. It did not portray the Virgin according to the testimony of the witnesses of the Knock apparition. The sculpture model of the lamb, which had been seen in the apparition of Knock, was unsatisfactory as well. The complaint regarding the lamb was that it had an Italian flair and needed to be more in accord with the Irish tradition. Lorenzo too was dissatisfied with his work. He had put forth a great effort but was unable to achieve what he had hoped to.

Judy Coyne decided to go to San Giovanni Rotondo and entrust the entire matter to Padre Pio. She attended Padre Pio's Mass on November 18, 1960 and during the Mass she prayed to Padre Pio for his intercession on behalf of Lorenzo. She felt a great sense of peace and well-being during the Mass.

When Judy returned to Rome she visited Lorenzo's studio and was delighted to see a great improvement in the models of the sculptures. The face of the Virgin Mary now looked perfect. Lorenzo told her that a strange thing had happened. He had awakened in the morning

and felt a great spiritual strength within. He hurried to his studio and in three hours he redid the models of the sculptures which would have ordinarily taken him three weeks to complete. He was very happy with the final results. He said that in his entire career he had never had such an experience. It happened on the morning of November 18, at the very same time that Judy was at Padre Pio's Mass, praying to Padre Pio for his intercession. ■



*The Statue of Our Lady of Knock*

**Gerry Fitzgerald of Limerick**, Ireland, a spiritual son of Padre Pio, once visited the shrine of Knock, Ireland in the winter time. Because the weather was so cold and harsh, Gerry found himself taking shelter under a tree. He could not help but notice that the sick and infirm who were visiting the shrine that day were exposed to the bitter cold. Gerry felt very sorry for the invalids and felt something had to be done. He spoke with one of the local priests at Knock and suggested that it would be very worthwhile to construct some buildings to provide shelter for the pilgrims who were ill. The priest was in favor of the idea. However, as time went by nothing was ever done to remedy the situation.

Gerry used to go every year to San Giovanni Rotondo to see Padre Pio. He also took groups of people on pilgrimage to Padre Pio's monastery. His devotion

to him was so great that he talked about him all the time. Once when Gerry visited Padre Pio, he told him about the idea he had of providing shelters for the invalids at the Knock shrine. He asked him for advice as to whether he should pursue the idea. Padre Pio told Gerry that the Virgin Mary was pleased and wanted him to go forward with the plans. Greatly encouraged, Gerry went back to Limerick and formed a committee of six men. The shelters were constructed at the shrine and the work turned out to be a blessing for all. ■

**Across the sea from Ireland**, in Herne Bay, England, devotion to Padre Pio is also strong. Wally and Ann Wall were led to Padre Pio in an unusual way. In Herne Bay, Wally was the caretaker and Ann did the cleaning at the local convent school. One afternoon when Wally was taking a walk, he noticed a magazine laying on the pavement. It was in excellent condition and neither the dirt nor the dampness of the street had marred it. A photograph of a statue of the Virgin Mary on the cover caught Wally's eye. The name of the magazine was the *Voice of Padre Pio*.

Wally took the magazine home, read it, and didn't think too much more about the matter. The next day his wife read the magazine from cover to cover. Afterward, her conscience began to bother her. Though Ann and Wally both worked at a Catholic school, they had not attended church in years. Neither had been to confession in at least twelve years.

After reading about Padre Pio, Ann decided to go to the rectory and ask the parish priest to hear her confession. As she rang the doorbell, she began to feel very nervous. She knew she was losing her courage. She was about to turn and leave when the priest answered the door. Ann made her confession and the next day she told her husband that she was going to be able to receive Communion at the convent school with the children who were going to be making their First Holy Communion. She told Wally she had gone to the rectory and had made her confession. "Why didn't you tell me you were going to confession? I would have gone to confession as well," Wally said. "It was because I did not know if I would be able to go through with it," she replied.

Wally too returned to the sacraments. He and Ann began to attend Mass daily and Wally became a regular altar server at his parish. Soon they began sharing their interest and knowledge of Padre Pio with other people. Because of their conversations with Ann and Wally, others found themselves returning to the sacraments as well. The day Wally picked up the *Voice of Padre Pio* magazine from the street proved to be a very important day in his life and in the life of his wife, Ann. That day too was important for another reason. It was May 25, Padre Pio's birthday. ■

*Congratulation to Ron Allen who was ordained a deacon on June 6, 2008.*

**PADRE PIO DEVOTIONS** are every 1st Monday of the month at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in San Diego. Rosary begins at 6:35 pm and Mass begins at 7:00 pm. Benediction and prayers follow. For more information call (619) 697-5958.

*To receive more information about Padre Pio and a copy of the prayers he said daily – send 4 stamps and your address to:*

**D. Allen • P.O. Box 191545 • San Diego, CA 92159**  
Find Padre Pio information and past newsletters online at  
**www.saintpio.org**