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*He leads us on by
Paths we do not know
Upward He leads us
Though our steps be slow.
Though oft we faint and
Falter on the way,
Though storms and
Darkness oft obscure the day;
Yet when the clouds are gone
We know He leads us on.*

Testimony of Father Eusebio, Capuchin

Father Eusebio was Padre Pio's assistant from 1960 to 1965. When Padre Pio was growing old and as his body became increasingly weaker, Father Eusebio was one of the few friars who had the privilege of caring for him. Like St. John with Our Lord, Father Eusebio was the disciple that Padre Pio loved. Father Eusebio could coax Padre Pio to take better care of himself. He could joke him (see picture) out of his bouts of weariness and day and night he was always available, always there.



Father Pio wondered, "Why do these people come here." Father Eusebio answered. "They come to see me."

This is an outstanding photograph of Padre Eusebio and Padre Pio greeting each other after Padre Eusebio had been absent for some time from the monastery. The camera caught wonderfully the fatherly pleasure and affection on Padre Pio's face as well as the joyful and loving gaze on the face of Padre Eusebio.

"How can I express my experiences of five years in a few words. I was very, very close to Padre Pio. I took care of his room and his person. Before coming to San Giovanni Rotondo, I didn't believe in him. My scepticism was not about his stigmata but about his sanctity. At that time he was under restrictions and many people were against him. I didn't know whom to believe. I had to see for myself who Padre Pio was.

I had been in England. When I returned to Italy, Father Provincial sent me to San Giovanni Rotondo. When I came to San Giovanni Rotondo, I tried to see if it was true or not that he was really a holy man. It was not difficult for me to acquire an experience of what he was, especially in his prayer life and the times he read people's minds, and in the way he would answer the people's questions. Now, afterwards, I believe in everything. I am convinced that Padre Pio was an extraordinary man, really a holy man.

I did see the stigmata many, many times. I would be directly in front of him, and I could see his wounds very clearly. Many times I saw his hands bleeding through his gloves. Sometimes I found the sheets of his bed covered with blood, and at those times he was compelled to renew his bandages twice a day, especially the bandage on the wound of his heart.

I must tell you something about the wound of his heart. One day Padre Pio fell down. He had been pushed by the devil. When we found him, he was covered with blood. I was there and I saw him. There was a woman in San Giovanni Rotondo who was possessed by the devil. The devil spoke through her and said that he himself had pushed Padre Pio down. The doctor was called to treat Padre Pio. I was the only priest who helped Padre Pio to change his undershirt on that occasion.

It was then that I saw the wound on his side. It was an open wound.

I saw the photographs of his body that were taken immediately after his death. First in one picture, you could see the wound of his side. In another photograph it was smaller. In another, smaller. And in another—nothing! All of the wounds of the stigmata disappeared after his death.

My favorite reflection about Padre Pio is about how he lived his life. This means more to me than the miracles he performed. Miracles are found in the lives of all the saints. But if you had lived with Padre Pio from early in the morning till late at night—you would see for yourself the kind of life he lived.

He would get up very early in the morning, clean his wounds and start to say the rosary and pray and meditate. Afterwards, Mass. After that, he stayed for many hours and heard Confessions. People would go to him not only for Confession but with every kind of question you could imagine: should I enter the hospital, should I have an operation, should I leave this job and take another? He always had presence of mind to give each person an answer.

After hearing Confessions, he would go upstairs. Along the stairs and along the corridor were people after him with more questions, always after him for something. He never said: "Please let me think about it." No! Bing, bing, bing. He had the answer. God was with Padre Pio all the time, to help him not to make mistakes. I have seen that.

Another thing: the same question made by different people sometimes got a different answer. This is very important. It means that something that was good for you might not be good for another person.

When he ate, his food was very, very, poor. He would eat a piece of macaroni and a tiny piece of fish. That was all the food he would have for the entire day. Humanly speaking he had no other source of nourishment.

Padre Pio Devotions are every 1st Monday of the month at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church at Date Street and State Street. Rosary begins at 6:40 and Mass at 7:00 p.m. For more informatation call (619) 697-5958.

When he finally went to bed, he used to break his sleep to pray the rosary and say ejaculations. He got up very early in the morning at one o'clock a.m. or at two o'clock a.m. How much he prayed! The way he said Mass! The way he stayed with us! He would tell us stories and at the end he would have a good word to convince us to be better in our spiritual life. He was a man who put the theology of the cross in a special way: why you have to suffer to help God, because God wants you to help Him to bring souls to Him. God is a Father who sees value in our suffering. It is difficult for us to express this theology.

Padre Pio made my life quite different. He was a priest in whom God was particularly alive: in his life, in his way of bringing people to God. He was like a lamp to enlighten people and to bring them on the right path to God."

Padre Pio's Words of Hope

"I will stand at the gates of Heaven and will not enter until all my spiritual children have entered."

"This present life is given to us in order to acquire the eternal. In order to live happily while on pilgrimage, we must keep before our eyes the hope of arriving at our homeland where we will stay for eternity, and in the meantime we should believe this firmly. Because given that it is God who calls us to himself, he watches how we make our way to him, and will never permit anything to happen to us that is not for our greater good."

"Once I take a soul on, I also take on their entire family as my spiritual children."

"Let us become saints so that after having been together on earth, we may be together in Heaven."

"It is necessary to be strong in order to become great; this is our duty. Life is a struggle which cannot be forsaken, which must be conquered."

"The palm of glory is reserved only for those who fight valiantly till the end. Therefore, let us begin our holy battle this year. God will help us and crown us with eternal triumph."

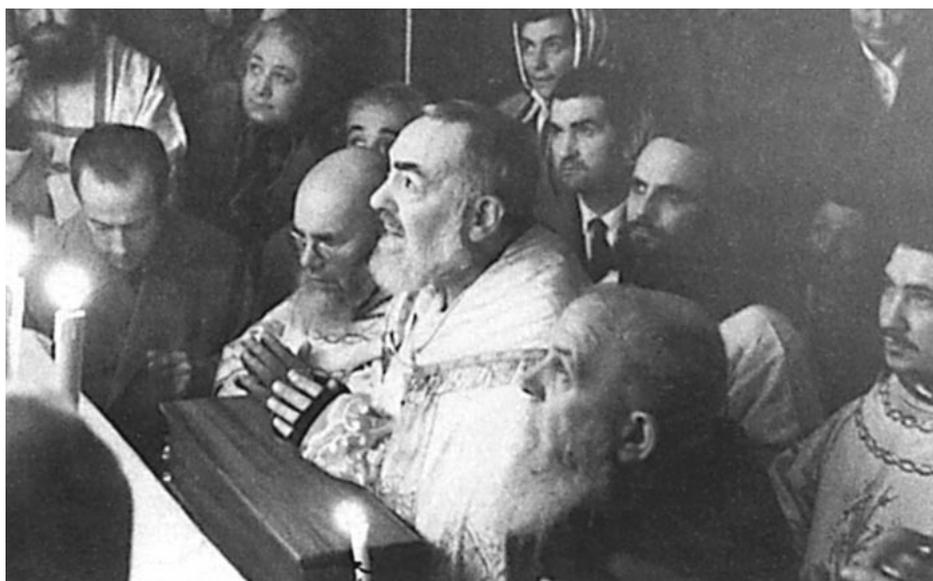
Padre Pio — With us in Life and Death

Father Dominic Meyer, from Belleville, Illinois, was summoned to San Giovanni Rotondo to act as secretary to Padre Pio for the English and German languages. It was Father Dominic's job to sort the tremendous volume of mail that came into the friary each day and to assist Padre Pio in answering the letters.

At that time, there was much talk among the friars about an incident of bilocation by Padre Pio that took place in Uruguay. Monsignor Damiani, Vicar-General in Uruguay, had a great devotion to Padre Pio. Padre Pio had promised him that he would assist him on his death bed and he was true to his word.

When Father Dominic was visiting his father in Wisconsin, he shared with him the story about Monsignor Damiani and Padre Pio. His elderly father was quiet for some time and then he said "Son, you know Padre Pio well. You are his friend. Will you ask him to help me here when my time comes?" Father Dominic felt he must do what his father requested.

Father Dominic felt that he was in an embarrassing as well as an awkward position. He did not want to make this request of Padre Pio but he promised his father that he would. When he saw Padre Pio, he explained, apologized, and made the request. Padre Pio gave him an understanding look and gave his consent.



Blessed Padre Pio prays before the Blessed Sacrament on Easter Sunday 1960 in San Giovanni Rotondo

Some time later, Father Dominic received word that his father had died. Father Dominic enquired of his sister concerning the circumstances of their father's death. Father Dominic's sister told him that their father had been sitting on the front porch enjoying the sunshine while she and her husband were inside the house preparing his lunch. Their father was unable to move around by himself, and so they could not believe their eyes when on this particular day they went to bring him back to his room and found him no longer there. Not a step had been heard, nor a door opening or closing. They could not understand how he came back inside the house without their hearing anything. The screen door screeched so you could hear it all over the house. Their father usually let the door slam and he also shuffled his feet—but they had heard nothing. Immediately it occurred to them that Padre Pio had been there.

They hurried to his bedroom and sure enough, there he was, lying in bed, eyes closed, mouth slightly open, "And Dominic," said his sister, "we saw a Host on his tongue!"

When Father Dominic heard what had happened to his father, he talked to Padre Pio and asked him if he had been with him in his final moments. Padre Pio smiled and answered that he had. Father Dominic asked if he was in heaven. Padre Pio replied, "If he's not in heaven, he's at the gate, ready to enter." A year later, when Dominic asked again, he received the reply, "He's in heaven long already."

It is while meditating on this beautiful story and realizing that Padre Pio is indeed with us in both life and death, that we announce with sadness the passing of Celina Florentino, who brought the Padre Pio Devotions to Our Lady of the Rosary. Celina went to God on Easter Sunday, April 15th, 2001.

Celina Florentino and the Padre Pio Devotions

Celina Florentino always had a special place in her heart for Padre Pio. She was so happy when Father McGovern of Ireland began devotions to Padre Pio in San Diego, though there was no regular place for the services. When Father was called away from San Diego soon after he had begun the Prayer Group, Celina thought she should do something for Padre Pio and tried to find a place for the Devotions, but without success. As she was getting discouraged, she prayed to Padre Pio to give her a 'sign' if he wanted her to continue.

Not long after, Celina was sitting in the rear of Holy Cross Chapel when a woman in front of her had to leave to check on her son who was ill. While the woman was gone Celina placed a Padre Pio prayer card on her seat. When the woman returned and found the card on her seat she looked around and found that Celina had been the one who had left it. As the woman was also a devotee of Padre Pio, she asked Celina if there were any Devotions here in San Diego. Celina replied that an attempt had been made but it had not been followed through. The woman, Anne Marie Uskevicz, then said, "Shouldn't one be started?"

Celina realized that this was the sign Padre Pio was giving her to keep trying. While turning down Celina's request at St. Anthony's in National City, the pastor made the providential comment that Celina should try Our Lady of the Rosary since it is the Italian parish and Padre Pio was Italian. Celina next called on Father Grancini with her request for a place for the Devotions, and Father Grancini immediately granted her request, and assigned Father Louis Solcia as our Spiritual Director! Through the grace of God we have enjoyed Padre Pio Devotions every month here at Our Lady of the Rosary for over ten years. Thank you Blessed Padre Pio! Thank you Celina!

May You Rest In Peace.

"Let us always think of heaven."

"I love my Spiritual Children as much as my own soul and even more."

—Blessed Padre Pio

From our Spiritual Director

The saints obtained from God many graces and miracles. The reason for all these special gifts is to be found in the intensity of their union with God. When someone asked Blessed Padre Pio for a favor from God, he would close his eyes and concentrate. Then, just like he had a direct line to God, he would give a definite answer

We must cultivate that intensity if we want to obtain graces. Our prayers must have these qualities; attentiveness, humility, confidence with expectant faith, and perseverance. We must pray with fervor, with fire and with a union with God.

We are too distracted and we have too many things to do. We have to learn to relax and to remain in union with God. Not to fret and worry seems to be the best way to really pray and have inner peace. What follows are miracles.

—Father Louis Solcia

3rd Annual celebration of Blessed Padre Pio at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church Sunday September 23rd

Beginning with Rosary at 2:40, Mass at 3 o'clock, procession and blessing with relic of Padre Pio followed by: Potluck, desserts & entertainment.

Come, and bring a friend !!!



Celina (seated) promoting Padre Pio, as always.