



# *“Pray, Hope and Don’t Worry”*



Padre Pio Newsletter

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"Oh Mary, Health of the sick-- help, protect and make blossom my poor work which is yours-- the "Home for the Relief of Suffering," for the glory of God and for the spiritual and material advantage of those who suffer in body and soul." – St. Pio of Pietrelcina

## **PADRE PIO'S GREAT WORK OF MERCY "The Home for the Relief of Suffering"**

When Padre Pio was sent to the monastery in San Giovanni Rotondo, there was not one hospital in the entire region. The closest hospital was 25 miles away and people had to travel on roads that were nearly impassable, using the most primitive means of transportation. Often the sick would die on their way to the hospital. It was Padre Pio's great desire to build a hospital in San Giovanni and provide the people with adequate medical care. His dream was realized in 1956 when the hospital which he named "Home for the Relief of Suffering" opened its doors to the public.

Laurino Costa was employed as head chef at Padre Pio's hospital, "Home for the Relief of Suffering." His encounter with Padre Pio in the confessional was not typical. But then again almost anything could happen in Padre Pio's confessional. Laurino's story begins with the strange sequence of events that brought him to San Giovanni Rotondo.

I had been living in a small town near Padua, and I was out of work. I heard about Padre Pio through a friend. My friend gave me a small photograph of Padre Pio, though I had never met him. It made a deep impression on me, and I took it and put it in my pocket. Frequently at night I would dream of him.

It occurred to me that I might write to Padre Pio and ask for his blessing to help me find work. I sent Padre Pio a telegram and immediately received a telegram from him in reply. He said, "Come to San Giovanni Rotondo right away."

For me to go to San Giovanni Rotondo was no small thing. It was a long and expensive trip, and I was



**On the Feast of Corpus Christi 1956, Padre Pio went to his hospital and took the Blessed Sacrament in procession through all the wards.**

penniless at the time. But on February 4, 1958, I set out. I arrived at 4:00 a.m., in time to attend Padre Pio's Mass. After Mass, I went into the sacristy with all the other men to meet Padre Pio. The Padre beckoned to me with his hand, but I did not budge. I thought he was looking at someone else. He called me out of the large crowd saying in a loud voice, "Laurino, come, come here!" Padre Pio recognized me among so many people, although I had never seen him before and he had never seen me. I approached him, shaking like a leaf. He said to me, "Well now, go and feed my sick."

I didn't know anything about cooking, and I had no intention to stay, but he insisted that I stay. I said, "But Padre, I'm not a cook. I have never cooked before. I don't even know how to cook an egg."

Again he said, "Go and prepare the food for my sick." I asked him, "Will you assist me? I've never been a cook." He said to me, "Go, I'll be with you."

Someone showed me over to the hospital and introduced me to the Mother Superior. She greeted

me with, "So you are the experienced cook we were expecting." I was too stunned to reply.

At 7:30 a.m. I went to the kitchen. It was a frightening sight—this great spacious kitchen with huge kettles, stoves, sinks, pipes, basins, kitchenware, and so forth. I never saw anything like that in my life. But the most alarming feature was the sight of the kitchen employees standing there, waiting for my orders.

However, as soon as I entered, I had the sensation that I had always been there. I felt as though being a cook had always been my trade. Everything seemed familiar to me. I had no doubt that I could do the cooking. So I went ahead with it. That first day I cooked for about 450 people.

After a short while Padre Pio wanted me to bring my family here and so we settled in San Giovanni Rotondo. Padre Pio never wanted me to leave. Just before he died, my days off were due and I was planning to go and visit my relatives for seven or eight days. He said, "I will give you five days." That was precisely enough time to bring me back for Padre Pio's death.

When I first came, I had some doubt in my mind that Padre Pio was really a saint. I never told anyone that I had these doubts. Then one day I went to confession to Padre Pio. I saw him in the confessional with his head tilted to one side. I saw a deep cross on his forehead. His face was bloody. He was staring at me, his eyes fixed on me. "Mama Mia", I said to myself. I started to shake. I put my hand in my pocket to get a handkerchief and wipe



**This photograph of Padre Pio (seated in the car) was taken in May, 1948. He was on his way to bless the lime-kiln that would be used in the building of his hospital—"The Home for the Relief of Suffering". As always, he was surrounded by a large crowd.**

his face, but my hand remained in my pocket. I could not move. We just kept staring at each other. I felt as if I was going to faint.

Padre Pio began to tell me all my sins. Then he gave me absolution. I saw that the blood on his face began to disappear. The cross on his forehead also disappeared. I left the confessional and I began to cry. I went on crying for three days and three nights. I said the rosary continuously.

I went to Padre Clemente and asked him to explain why Padre Pio had revealed himself to me the way he had. He told me to ask him but I did not have the courage to. Padre Pio was always before my eyes. I could not eat or sleep and I cried continuously.

I decided to go to the friary and ask Padre Pio why he had revealed himself to me like he had. I got to the end of the corridor and saw Padre Pio leaning against the door outside his room as though he were waiting for me. I felt unable to move and I could not utter a word.

He saw me and said, "Come Laurino, come! What's the matter? What has happened to you?" But I couldn't find my voice. Finally I said, "Padre, tell me why you made me see you like that? Is it perhaps because of me that you suffer so much?"

"No," he replied. "It was a grace that God wanted to give you."

You see, it happened because of my doubts about his sanctity.

## **Padre Pio's Words of Hope**

Bring God to the sick. That is of more value than any other treatment.

I pray always for the sick; every day I recite a Rosary for all the sick of Italy.

A person, who transcending himself, bends over the wounds of his unfortunate brother, raises to the Lord the most beautiful, the most noble prayer, made of sacrifice and love lived.

I know you are all suffering. Take courage! The trust in our Mother is the sure guarantee that she will stretch out her hand to comfort all of us.

In every suffering person there is Jesus who suffers. In every poor, sick person there is Jesus twice.

## Canonization Notes

The editors of the Padre Pio newsletter were blessed to be able to attend the canonization of Padre Pio on June 16th of this year. How wonderful it was to discover that some of the people on the pilgrimage to the canonization had known Padre Pio personally. We now share two of their stories --the story of Eublio Cardone and that of Ellie Hunt.

**Eublio Cardone** was born in Pietrelcina, Italy, Padre Pio's home town. His family knew Padre Pio's family very well. Eublio relates that Padre Pio's family, the Forgiones, were deeply religious and also like many others in Pietrelcina, were very poor. Everyone in Pietrelcina either knew Padre Pio or knew of him and everyone considered him to be a saint.

When Eublio's parents were getting married, Padre Pio's mother gave them Padre Pio's bed and pillow as a wedding gift. Padre Pio had been transferred to San Giovanni Rotondo and no longer needed them. The Cardones treasured this very special gift.

When Eublio was 6 years old he became gravely ill with bronchitis as well as pneumonia. The doctor could offer no hope to the family. He told Eublio's mother to buy his coffin and his burial clothes, which she did. The family had a picture of Padre Pio in their home, and in desperation one day, Eublio's mother knelt in front of the picture and pleaded with Padre Pio to save the life of her child. Eublio's condition began to improve dramatically and in a short time he made a complete recovery. Everyone in Pietrelcina heard about Eublio's miraculous recovery. The whole town was overjoyed. Padre Pio's brother Michael visited Eublio and brought him a puppy to cheer him.

Eublio's mother made a promise that someday she would travel to the monastery in San Giovanni Rotondo and thank Padre Pio in person for saving the life of her little son. Several years later she and Eublio were able to make the trip. When Eublio entered the monastery and walked into the sacristy, he saw Padre Pio for the first time. He said that he realized at once that he was in the presence of a saint. Eublio was 7 years old. Padre Pio recognized him immediately, greeted him warmly and called him by his name. "You are Eublio," he said. It was a moment Eublio will never forget.

Today Eublio Cardone is 80 years old and lives in New Jersey. When he tells the story of how Padre Pio saved his life, his eyes fill with tears. Eublio moved to the United States in his youth and was not able to take



**Eublio Cardone and Ellie Hunt on the pilgrimage bus, the day of the canonization of St Pio of Pietrelcina, June 16, 2002.**

Padre Pio's bed with him. But he was able to take Padre Pio's pillow. He has been sleeping on it for the past 75 years.

**Ellie Hunt** was born in Flushing, New York. Her father and grandparents were from Pietrelcina and had immigrated to America years before. All of Ellie's grandparents knew Padre Pio. Ellie's maternal grandmother was the same age as Padre Pio and knew him as a youngster. She recalled that he was very pious as a young boy and she remembered him as always having a devotional book with him. He was a quiet boy and always very prayerful and studious.

Ellie's father came in contact with Padre Pio whenever Padre Pio's superiors sent him back to his hometown to rest and recuperate from his many illnesses. Ellie's father used to bring Padre Pio fresh eggs in the hope that it would build up his strength. Ellie always enjoyed hearing her father and her grandparents share their recollections of Padre Pio with her. Ellie was in her 20's and living in Flushing, New York when her grandfather became gravely ill and fell into a coma. The family was all together. There was a knock at the door and when Ellie opened it, she was surprised to see, not her parish priest, but what appeared to be a Franciscan monk. He had come to give the last rites to her grandfather. Ellie had never seen a monk in Flushing before. She felt a little bit angry. Why hadn't any of the priests

from her parish come to assist her grandfather? Who was this stranger in the dark brown habit? When Ellie's father saw the Franciscan priest standing at the door he turned very pale and went into another area of the house and did not reappear until after the priest left. Ellie noted that the Franciscan was very kind and compassionate. He told the family the prayers they should repeat for their loved one. Then he went into the bedroom and anointed her grandfather. Finally, the monk blessed the family and left.

After the kindly monk left, Ellie wondered about her father's unusual behavior. She asked her father for an explanation. "Don't you know who that monk was?" he asked his daughter. "No," she replied. "That was Padre Pio," Ellie's father told her. "That was exactly the way he looked when I used to take eggs to him when he was a seminarian in Pietrelcina. He knew your grandfather well. He came in bilocation to assist him in his last moments."

Padre Pio had always said that the people of Pietrelcina were very special to him. Ellie's mother's cousin, Rose, made a trip to San Giovanni Rotondo while Padre Pio was still living. She was outside standing among a huge crowd, waving at him as he appeared at his window. Suddenly he pointed in her direction. The next thing she knew, a monk appeared at her side and said that Padre Pio wanted to speak with her and directed her inside the monastery to him. In that tremendous crowd of people, he picked out a person from Pietrelcina. So we must conclude that Padre Pio kept track of his old friends. He once said: "Everything happened in Pietrelcina. That's where I met Jesus."

### **Padre Pio Devotions**

**Padre Pio Devotions are every 1st Monday of the month at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church on the corner of Date St. and State St. Rosary begins at 6:35 p.m., Mass begins at 7 o'clock p.m. Benediction and prayers to follow. For more info about Padre Pio call (619) 697-5958**

If you would like information about St. Padre Pio and the prayers said at the Devotions, send 2 stamps to:

**D. Allen  
P.O. Box 191545  
San Diego, CA 92159**

The Information will be sent to you in a special envelope.

### **From our Spiritual Director**

## **A SAINT IS A PROPHET**

Prophecy in the Bible is primarily intended to encourage people, advising and enlightening them regarding impending evils.

Our pope is a prophet together with St. Padre Pio and Mother Teresa—all outstanding spiritual figures of modern times. And what are they telling us? What would they say to us now so that we can lead happy and holy lives? They would say avoid:

### **AVOID:**

1. Harmful programs on television that destroy values.
2. Gossip, seeking after things of the world, lack of prayer. St. Paul says we must "fight the good fight" or we will not become holy.
3. Pride—we must often sacrifice our own will.
4. Stifling the Spirit
5. Giving in to anger, depression, and confusion.
6. Wasting time
7. Thoughts against chastity, virginity, and purity.
8. Politically correct statements.
9. Disobedience to the natural law. Many follow the way of the world, the flesh, and the devil. The church has clear answers.
10. Inability to go to the root of the problem. We fear our words may offend those who are in sin.
11. Harmful friends whose beliefs are in opposition to the church.
12. Not taking a firm stand regarding the rules and the commandments of our religion with our children, our friends and in regard to our personal lifestyle.

We must have zero tolerance regarding watering down the faith, rejecting tradition, and abuse of the sacraments. The Roman Catholic Church has suffered immensely in our present crisis. A recent study indicated that only 46% of individuals now trust the church. We must reestablish our credibility.

– Father Louis M. Solcia, C.R.S.P.

**Father Louis and the Padre Pio Prayer Group of San Diego would like to thank all those who helped make the Feast Day Mass and Celebration of St. Pio of Pietrelcina such a great day at Our Lady of the Rosary.**