

When Giovanni was released from the hospital, he went to the friary to thank Padre Pio for the prayers said on his behalf. Padre Pio said to him, "Let us thank God that you did not get killed." And later he said to Giovanni, "If only you knew what this cost me!"

Pietro Cugino, who used to visit Padre Pio's monastery, said that one day, in the garden, while talking to some of the friars, Padre Pio suddenly said, "I'm blind. I cannot see anything." After a time, Padre Pio's eyesight returned. While we may not fully understand the meaning of this incident, we do know that Padre Pio was offering many prayers and sacrifices on Giovanni's behalf and encouraging others to do the same.

In thanksgiving for the miracle, Giovanni and his wife offered to the Lord the child she was then carrying. Padre Pio named him Francesco, and he grew up to become a Capuchin priest.

Padre Raffaele, one of the friars at San Giovanni Rotondo, suggested that Giovanni go to Rome to see another eye doctor for treatment of his left eye. Giovanni asked Padre Pio his thoughts on the matter. "No," Padre Pio said, "we have already obtained the grace which we have asked for. Even if you go to Rome you will not get any better than you are right now."

Giovanni was not the only family member to be the beneficiary of graces through Padre Pio's prayers. His children also received help in times of crisis. Giovanni's young daughter, Lina, was on her way to a birthday party when she was struck down by a moped. This was before Padre Pio's hospital had been built, so Lina was taken unconscious to a first aid station. She was in a coma and found to be suffering from a trauma to her head and severe internal bleeding.

Giovanni and his wife rushed to the friary and told Padre Pio. As they described it, "He looked up to heaven as if he saw another reality," and said, "Let's pray and we'll leave everything in Our Lord's hands." Afterward, Lina made a rapid and complete recovery.

Even when people were cured through the intercessory prayers of Padre Pio, as in the healing of Giovanni Savino, Padre Pio always gave God the credit. He would say, "Nothing is due to me. I am not a miracle worker. Left to my own devices, I can do nothing but sin." When people came to thank Padre Pio for his prayers he would reply, "Do not thank me, thank Our Lord and Our Lady. They are responsible for your healing."

God is for us a refuge and strength . . . So we shall not fear though the earth should rock, though the mountains fall into the depths of the sea. – Psalm 46:1,2

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Padre Pio and Giovanni Savino



Giovanni Savino and his son Francesco

"What fame he had. How many followers from around the world. Why? Was it because he was a philosopher, a scholar, or because he had means at his disposal? No, it was because he said Mass humbly, heard confessions from morning until night and was a marked representative of the stigmata of Our Lord. He was truly a man of prayer and suffering."

– Pope Paul VI

The following story of the healing of Giovanni Savino is well-documented and backed up by factual information and analysis. Father Dominic Meyer, Padre Pio's secretary for twelve years, wrote a detailed account of Giovanni's cure in July, 1949. When the story was first publicized, it attracted great numbers of pilgrims to San Giovanni Rotondo.

THE HEALING OF GIOVANNI SAVINO

Giovanni Savino, a construction worker and a member of the Third Order of St. Francis, was a devoted spiritual son of Padre Pio. In February, 1949, Giovanni was working at Padre Pio's friary, completing the construction of an annex to the monastery. The workers were leveling the ground and were getting ready to blast a huge boulder.

It was Giovanni's custom to attend Padre Pio's Mass every morning before going to work. After the Mass, he would wait in the sacristy to receive a blessing from Padre Pio. Every day Padre Pio would place his hands on Giovanni's head and pray for him.

One morning, Padre Pio deviated from the regular routine. When Giovanni asked for a blessing, Padre Pio gave him a big hug and said, "Courage! I am praying to the Lord that you will not die." Giovanni was terribly upset by this statement. He began to cry. "Padre Pio, what is going to happen to me?" Giovanni asked. But Padre Pio was silent.

The next three mornings as Giovanni asked for a blessing, Padre Pio embraced him and repeated the same disturbing words. When he repeated the same remarks on the fourth day, Giovanni told some of the construction workers, "I'm afraid something is going to go wrong. Maybe we should not work today." But the crew decided to proceed with the job of blasting and leveling the ground.

That afternoon, Giovanni and another worker placed a charge of dynamite under a huge boulder. Giovanni lit the fuse but it failed to detonate. After a few minutes, he went over to check the charge. Just as he bent over, the dynamite exploded in his face. A shower of rocks hit Giovanni. The rock that he had been standing on fell on top of him and he lost consciousness. His face was badly burned and much of the skin was torn off. His left eye was filled with rocks and gravel. His right eye was completely gone. There was only a bit of raw flesh left in the empty socket.

Giovanni was rushed to the hospital. His left eye was operated on but nothing could be done for his right eye. The doctor told Giovanni's wife that both of her husband's eyes had been destroyed. Padre Pio was informed about the accident and told that Giovanni had been blinded. "That is not for certain yet," Padre Pio replied.

It was three days before Giovanni regained consciousness. His entire head and face were bandaged. He was told that there was a possibility that his left eye might be saved. But as for his right eye, there was no hope. Meanwhile, Padre Pio was asking everyone to pray for Giovanni. He exposed the Blessed Sacrament and was heard to say, "Lord, I offer You one of my eyes for Giovanni, because he's the father of a family."

One evening, after being in the hospital for ten days, while Giovanni was praying the Rosary, he smelled "the aroma of paradise." It was a beautiful, heavenly smell. It was the sign that announced Padre Pio's invisible presence.

Giovanni felt a gentle slap on his right eye, the one that had been blown out of its socket. "Who touched me?" Giovanni said. But no one was there. He felt a tightness of the bedclothes caused by someone standing against the bed. He then realized that Padre Pio was with him. "Give me back my sight, Padre Pio, or let me die," Giovanni said. "I cannot live like this."

In the morning, when the doctor took the bandages off, he discovered that Giovanni's face was healed and covered with new skin. He then examined his eyes. "I can see you!" exclaimed the injured man. "I can see you with my right eye." The doctor insisted that he was seeing out of the left eye, as the right was totally destroyed. After further examination, it was clear that Giovanni was speaking the truth. He was not able to see with the eye in which the shrapnel had been removed, but he was seeing perfectly from the eye that had been shattered to a bloody jelly.

The doctor was astonished and said, "Well, now, who is the saint behind this? Who is your protector?" Giovanni replied, "I have been praying to Padre Pio and he has been taking care of me." The doctor, who had been an atheist said, "Now I believe, too. I believe because this has happened right in front of me."