

visited all places associated with Padre Pio, his cell, his old tomb, the beautiful new tomb where his body can be seen, the friary, the hospital, and the English office, where we see a video of Padre Pio and get a blessing with some of his relics. We also visit Manoppello, the shrine of the Holy Face.

Our grandson is nineteen years old now and is 5ft. 11 inches tall and is in very good health. We are forever grateful to Padre Pio for this favor and for so many other favors given to our Prayer Group members over the years. It is amazing how Padre Pio gets hold of you in so many ways and gets you working for him. He got hold of me at first when I had the strong desire to visit San Giovanni Rotondo, even before I knew that my grandson was ill. I never dreamed I would organize the Padre Pio Devotions in Dublin or the pilgrimages to Italy but I really love to do this. Padre Pio makes you work hard for him. He is our great friend!

– *Noreen Handley*

Padre Pio and Noreen Handley



Noreen Handley

Padre Pio and Noreen Handley

In the beginning of the year 2000, I had a very strong desire to travel to Padre Pio's shrine in San Giovanni Rotondo. The desire to make the trip was in my thoughts constantly so I finally made plans to go at the end of October of that year. I still did not understand why I was feeling such a strong pull to go there.

In early September of the same year, my grandson was diagnosed with Neuroblastoma stage four cancer. It was a very aggressive form of cancer with no known cure. He was three and a half years old at the time. We were totally devastated with this news. My grandson was living in England. I live in Dublin, Ireland. I flew to England to help look after his older sister and to be with the family.

I contacted Cathy Kelly, who runs the Padre Pio Information Centre, in Victoria, London, and she very kindly allowed me to take the mitten of Padre Pio to my grandson in the hospital. I gave Cathy my passport as good faith with the understanding that she would return it to me when I returned the mitten. We had the mitten resting on my grandson's head all night, and I was begging Padre Pio to save this child.

My grandson had surgery at the Royal Marsden Cancer Hospital in London. A cancerous tumor which was the size of a golf ball was removed from his brain and he was given only four months to live. He was also given chemotherapy and radiation to his brain and spine. The doctor said that if he was to survive, he would have stunted growth as a side effect of this therapy. But the doctor did not believe that he could survive.

The following day, when I returned the mitten to Cathy Kelly's office, I was totally overcome with a very strong fragrance of beautiful roses, which seemed to last for ages. I was emotional and crying and wondering what was it all about. Cathy said that it was a sign that Padre Pio had heard my prayer. I understood then that Padre Pio would look after this child.

Now I had a reason to get to San Giovanni Rotondo, and while there I was up at the chapel door at 5 am when it opened and stayed at the tomb of Padre Pio until 8 am, talking to him and praying and begging him to heal our grandchild. I told Padre Pio that if our grandson recovered, I would do something for him. I really did not know at that time how I would help Padre Pio but I would find a way.

When I returned from San Giovanni Rotondo, I started the Padre Pio Devotions in Malahide, Dublin, as I had promised Padre Pio that I would do something for him. At first we held the devotions in the Carmelite Monastery in Seapark, Malahide but after six years we had to move to a bigger church because of the large crowds who attended. We are now at the Sacred Heart Church, Seabury, Malahide, Dublin. We meet on the first Friday of every month.

We have an organist and choir, and we start with Eucharistic Adoration, followed by Mass celebrated by Fr. Angelus, a Capuchin Priest, who blesses the people after Mass with a mitten of Padre Pio. We always have a packed Church, with 300 to 400 people in attendance, and Fr. Angelus tells us lovely stories of Padre Pio during his homily. Last September, the members of our Prayer Group bought a beautiful statue of Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo. It was shipped to Dublin for our Padre Pio Devotions which have been going now for fourteen years.

Every year in September, I organize a pilgrimage to Italy. I have been doing this yearly for the past fourteen years. During our trips, we have visited Rome, Assisi, Cascia, the Holy House of Loreto, Lanciano, to see the first Eucharistic Miracle, Mount St. Angelo, where St. Michael the Archangel appeared, San Giovanni Rotondo, and more. We usually have a group of around 50 people each year. In San Giovanni Rotondo, we