

Finally, as if to remind us of an unusual 'event' in the Saint's life, the official missal for the occasion had on the cover an icon depicting Jesus Christ crucified with Saint Francis beneath one arm of the Cross and Padre Pio beneath the other. This 'event', to be described briefly, was reported by Fr. Alberto D'Apollito, a friend of Padre Pio's.

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Padre Pio and The Church Approved Miracle For His Canonization



Matteo Pio Colella and Padre Pio

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January 20th, 2000, was a regular school day for seven year old Matteo Pio Colella of San Giovanni Rotondo until he started to shiver and develop a fever. He was brought home weak and vomiting. That evening he grew progressively worse with the development of bleeding into and necrosis (death of skin cells) of his skin. In the modern hospital of San Giovanni Rotondo (Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza) he was found to have clots in his blood vessels, signs of kidney and liver failure and hyperacute meningitis with septicaemia : an extremely serious condition, which by next morning, had rapidly affected all organ systems with septic shock, respiratory failure, cyanosis, a heart rate of 20 , dilated pupils and cardiac arrest. Despite therapy, the prognosis for survival was hopeless. Meanwhile, prayers for his recovery were being offered by many through the intercession of Padre Pio. By mid-day, despite the most morbid prognostication, he showed signs of improvement. Even with a persistent lung problem he made great progress within ten days. In a few weeks recovery was complete.

The mortality from his illness ---fulminant meningitis with acute respiratory distress syndrome and multi-organ (nine organ systems) failure ---- is 100 percent. His recovery was medically inexplicable and was declared a miracle by the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints in the presence of Pope John Paul II.

An unusual visitor

While asleep, Matteo said that he was unable to pray to Padre Pio but started to do so, on awakening. "As soon as I awoke, I put out my hand searching for another hand saying: I want Padre Pio ". However during his 'sleep' he was not alone but was visited by an old man with a white beard and a long brown garment. This man, smiling, gave him his hand and said "**Matteo don't be worried you will soon be healed** ". Beside this man he saw three angels, one dressed in white with green wings and two in red with white wings; their faces were not clear because of their brilliance. Another day afterwards, he told his uncle Giovanni that the very night he was healed there was a child with green eyes and black hair, lying rigid, on a little bed in a hospital in Rome. Subsequently he related the dream to his mother who asked: "How did you get to Rome? ". Matteo told her that he made a kind of flight with Padre Pio who held him by the hand and who spoke to him interiorly; when they arrived Padre Pio asked: "**Do you want to be healed ?** And Matteo replied "How will that happen? " "**Will it with prayer**".

Then his mother asked: "How did you know you were in Rome? " Matteo recognized Luna Park (a theme park) which he had visited with uncle Giovanni! In conclusion, Matteo said "I was healed by Padre Pio."

Matteo was present in Saint Peter's Square for the canonization of Padre Pio (June 16th, 2002) and at this Mass he made his First Holy Communion. Incidentally, Matteo has green eyes and black hair.