



Padre Pio
and
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The Apennines Mountains

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Father Valentino was a capuchin friar from San Marco in Lamis who was a spiritual son of Padre Pio and was very devoted to him. During the second world war he was in Emilia Romagna while the Gothic line of the German Army was encamped on the Apennines, thereby dividing the region in two. Because of this separation, he hadn't heard from his family who lived in Puglia for a long time. So one day he finally decided to try to cross over and head for his family in the South. However, it was of course necessary to cross the military front, and to do so was very, very risky. He knew some people who were fighting against the Germans so he asked them for help and advice about what to do. They indicated a way through the mountains but warned that it was very dangerous. Additionally, it was in the middle of the winter and very cold. There were a few others also who longed to be united with their separated loved ones so together the group set a date. The day arrived and Fr. Valentino said to himself – “It's now or never”.

So together with a few others he set off walking. He prayed to God for the groups safety and in prayer he also sought the intercession and help of Padre Pio. Eventually the group came to a very high place in the mountains where the path was narrow and covered with snow. At this point the path descended down a steep slope. When Fr. Valentino was about halfway down the slope, he placed one of his feet wrong and suddenly started to slide. *“Padre Pio help me; Padre Pio help”* he cried as he was sliding down. Suddenly, a bush broke his fall.

The others helped him back up and he was able to continue his journey and eventually the group crossed the military line safely, without being discovered. When he reached San Marco in Lamis, after resting a few hours, he wished to go to San Giovanni Rotondo to see Padre Pio. As soon as Padre Pio saw him he said: ***“How many times you called out to me the other night!.. how many times!”***

The Saint then held him close to his heart and said: *“Let us together thank the Lord”*