

draw good out of it. I have been a priest for more than fifty years and I have always believed that. But in this situation, I struggled with God. Although at the time, I could not see past the pain of the situation, soon I would see the good that God would draw out of Amelie's death.

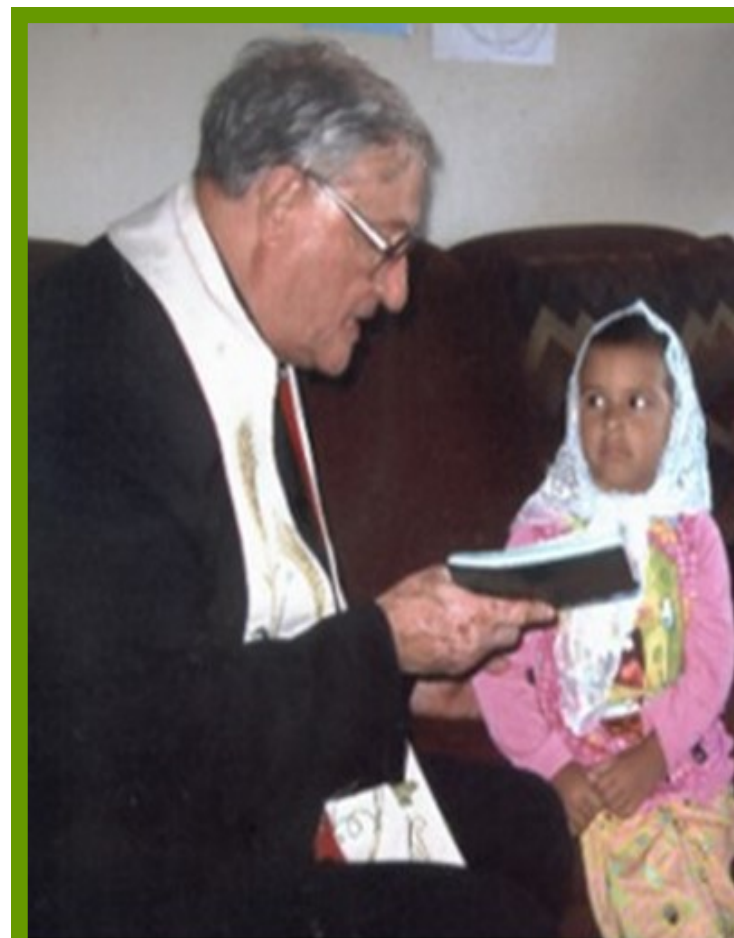
Amelie's best friend was her eight-year-old cousin, Alexis. The two girls were inseparable. After Amelie's death, Alexis' sister, Cassandra, had a vivid dream. In her dream, Amelie was looking everywhere for Alexis. "Where is Alexis?" she asked. "I want to find Alexis!" It was shortly after Cassandra's dream that Alexis announced that she wanted to take instructions in the Catholic faith and be baptized. Everyone in the family was surprised. Alexis' desire seemed to come out of nowhere. There was certainly no one in her family encouraging her to take that step. Alexis' mother had no religious affiliation and she never took the family to church on Sunday. However, she was willing to let Alexis take instruction in the Catholic faith. I had the sense that the dream of Amelie was instrumental in Alexis' desire to become a Catholic. Amelie's mother now brings Alexis to our parish once a week. I am giving her the instructions myself and preparing her for baptism, confirmation and for her first Holy Communion.

God can and does draw good out of the hard and painful situations in life. We only have to look and we will see.

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven – A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to uproot ... a time to break down, and a time to build up, a time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones.
– Ecclesiastes 3:1-4

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Padre Pio and Amelie Gonzales



Fr. Louis Solcia with Amelie Gonzales

I feel all your troubles, as if they were my own.
St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Padre Pio and Amelie Gonzales

A Testimony by Fr. Louis Solcia, CRSP



Amelie Gonzales was a little girl at our parish who taught me many things. She taught me much about both life and death. Her short life was a blessing to her family and to all those who knew her. It certainly was a blessing to me.

Amelie's mother, Amata, and her grandmother Marlene, regularly attended our Padre Pio prayer group at Our Lady of the Rosary. The family was very devout. Amelie, who followed the good example of her mother and grandmother, was a very spiritual child. Amata told me that when she took Amelie to the store each week, Amelie always wanted to buy a bouquet of roses to place in front of the statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Amelie was diagnosed with a rare form of lung cancer called Pluropulmonary Blastoma. It is a cancer that occurs most often in infants and children but has also been reported in adults. The doctors hoped that chemotherapy treatments would arrest the cancer. Finally,

the doctors told the family that they had done everything in their power to save Amelie. They had used every modern medical means at their disposal. There was nothing more they could do.

Amelie grew weaker as the cancer progressed but strangely enough, she never looked sick. She had a desire to receive Holy Communion. Children ordinarily do not receive their first Holy Communion before the age of seven. Amelie was just five years old. But because she had a spiritual maturity beyond her years and because of her terminal diagnosis, I was able to give her Holy Communion.

Amelie told her mother that Padre Pio had come to her and had given her a blessing. One day, near the end of her life, she was lying in her bed, looking up at the ceiling in her room. Suddenly, the ceiling disappeared, and in its place she saw the evening sky, studded with brilliant stars. Jesus and Mary were there in the sky and they were smiling at her. Later, her mother showed her a holy card of Jesus. "Amelie, did Jesus look like this?" she asked. "No, he didn't," she replied. "He was so bright!"

Our Padre Pio prayer group had prayed for many weeks for Amelie. We all hoped in our hearts that she would be healed. But it was not to be. Amelie died peacefully in her mother's arms on December 14, 2009. On the day that she died, she saw a white butterfly. "Mommy, don't you see the butterfly?" she asked. But her mother could not see it. No one saw it but Amelie. After her death, Amelie truly looked like a little angel. I had a desire to visit the cemetery where Amelie was buried and I went there on several occasions to pray. Beautiful red roses in a heart-shaped pattern had been placed on her grave by her mother. In my heart, I felt a great sadness. I wondered why God had taken such a beautiful little girl and left us all with such heavy hearts. I especially felt sorry for Amelie's family because of their grief. But then I reasoned to myself that God never allows something bad to happen unless He can