

We have another significant insight into Padre Pio's gift of bilocation from the question which Dr. Sanguinetti asked him.

"When God sends a saint, for instance St. Anthony," the doctor asked, "to another place by bilocation, is the saint aware of what is happening?"

Padre Pio answered him: "One moment he is here, and the next moment he is where God wants him."

"But is he really in two places at once?"

"Yes."

"How is this possible?"

"By a prolongation of his personality."

With that, we will leave the experts in parapsychology to probe as much as they care into Padre Pio's preternatural gifts. The Church has always welcomed and used scientific inquiry before making any decision on such matters. In the case of bilocation, scientific inquiry cannot do much more than prove that Padre Pio was actually present in two places at one time. For any further knowledge, even with regard to Padre Pio's statement about "a prolongation of his personality," scientists must admit that they are faced with a reality which is beyond their competency to explore or explain. At that point, the Church stands alone with the right and ability to judge the facts.



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Stories of Bilocation of Padre Pio—Part II



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On the feast of Corpus Christi, June 12, 1952, Lucia Bellodi was lying on her deathbed. Suddenly she smiled, opened her eyes, sat up in bed and began to wave her arms as if overcome with joy. She cried out: "Padre Pio told me that I am cured in the name of God. He told me to get up and come immediately to his monastery because he wants to bless me and thank God with me."

Lucia was the daughter of a farmer in Mirandola, Italy. At the age of fourteen she had been stricken with pernicious diabetes. For four years her parents had taken her from one hospital to another, but nobody could help her. Her condition grew more and more critical. Because no hospital would admit her, she was finally admitted into an old folks home run by nuns.

Her abdomen had become enormously deformed. Her thirst was insatiable. Next to her bed she had a container which held twenty-five quarts of water. She emptied that every twenty-four hours. She lost the use of her speech. Drinking was her only relief, but there was no human cure.

On the Feast of Corpus Christi at about 6:00 p.m., she suddenly stopped drinking water and called for the Mother Superior and told her that she felt an urge to go to the chapel to pray. The Mother Superior feared that the girl was delirious. But Lucia insisted and asked her to bring only one glass of water.

"Padre Pio came to see me," Lucia told the nun. "He told me that I will die soon, because I cannot be cured." Lucia had misunderstood Padre Pio. He had told her only that the doctors could not cure her.

The nuns took her to the chapel. While there, Lucia drank no water. She refused to touch even the glass which the Mother Superior took along. She prayed for a few moments, and then she fainted. Taking her back to her little room, they called the chaplain. Everyone thought that she was about to die. But then she awakened and sprang out of bed completely cured.

On June 17, she visited San Giovanni Rotondo with two of the nuns. When she met Padre Pio, he smiled, blessed her and said: "I have been waiting for you."

Father Dominic Meyer, Padre Pio's secretary, relates the story about another lady an Austrian, who was cured by Padre Pio. Seven years previously, in 1945, she had been so captivated by Padre Pio's life and spirit that she moved to San Giovanni Rotondo. But she paid a price for the move, not so much in terms of money, but in sacrifice. She was all alone and very depressed. Also, for six weeks her arm had been so swollen that she could not so much as move a chair or make her bed.

One day after Padre Pio's death, Padre Fortunato was walking down the corridor of the convento in San Giovanni Rotondo, when he saw Padre Pio just ahead of him. "Padre Pio, wait for me," he called out. But Padre Pio disappeared. This was no case of mistaken identity. They had lived together in the same house for many years. If Padre Fortunato actually had seen someone else, where did he disappeared to?

A man from Rome, highly respected by the friars, told them that once when he had been suffering from extreme grief, Padre Pio visited him in his home in Rome. However, we repeat that from 1918 until his death in 1968, Padre Pio never left San Giovanni Rotondo.

When Padre Eusebio was first assigned to San Giovanni Rotondo, he was totally unimpressed by the claims of Padre Pio's stigmata and bilocation and miracles. But he decided to investigate these claims. He asked Padre Pio if it were true that he had visited the man in Rome. Padre Pio answered him: "How was that possible? I have not left the friary for so many years. And Rome? Why I have not been there since the time I accompanied my sister there to become a nun."

"But Padre," Padre Eusebio pressed him, "he insists that you have been in his home. He says that he saw you."

Padre Pio realized that he could not escape this line of questioning.

"Oh, that is another matter," he said. "When these things happen, the Lord permits only that person to see, and only for that moment. Nobody else can see. Otherwise, how many miracles would the Lord have to work?"

One evening when he was assisting Padre Pio to go to bed, Padre Eusebio said to him: "Bon voyage, Padre." Padre Pio answered him: "Thanks."

Padre Eusebio added: "You should ask my permission when you go flying around during the night."

Padre Pio replied: "I once asked the person whom it was my duty to ask. That is sufficient."

"But Padre," Padre Eusebio asked, "why don't you take me with you? I will tie my cord to yours, and we will fly together?"

Padre Pio answered him: "Then what will you do if we are up high and your cord becomes untied?" Padre Eusebio did not pursue the conversation.

was not able to breathe. Mr. Pietruccio became blind only in 1925. Therefore, he had known Padre Pio for eight years before he lost his sight.

Maybe the scientists of Duke University, in their studies of extrasensory perception and related strange phenomena, can interview the people who were eyewitnesses to these events and piece together the physical events which actually happened during Padre Pio's bilocation. Unfortunately, it is already too late to interview Padre Pio himself on this matter.

One day Padre Onorato and Padre Alberto saw Padre Pio lean out of a window, and they heard him say the words of absolution for confession: "I absolve you of your sins. ..." A few days later some people from Morcone came to San Giovanni Rotondo to thank Padre Pio for having assisted a dying man, just at the time he had spoken the words of absolution. But Padre Pio had never left his convento.

Padre Alessio, who tended Padre Pio's every need morning and night, said that he had never heard Padre Pio speak about bilocation. But that he had told him of one strange incident which he himself had witnessed, similar to the experience of Padre Onorato and Padre Alberto.

"One day," Padre Alessio said, "I was in his room, sitting in the armchair. I could hear him praying the rosary. Then all of a sudden he stopped, and I heard him say: 'Come here. What do you want?'"

"Again after a few seconds, he said: 'Come here. What do you want?'"

"Then in a more insistent tone, he said: 'Come here! What do you want!'"

"Then I heard him pronounce the words of absolution: 'I absolve you of your sins. ... For your penance, you will say five Our Fathers, and five Hail Mary's and five Glory Be to the Father.' Then he was silent."

Another time, Padre Alessio asked him jokingly when they would go to Lourdes. Padre Pio replied: "I do not have to go to Lourdes. I go there every night. I see Our Lady of Lourdes every night."

The friars who lived with Padre Pio were not gullible. One of them told of a time he was with Padre Pio, when suddenly Padre Pio started to hear someone's confession. "I did not see anyone, but then he gave absolution. I thought he was going out of his mind."

"I could never understand that," the Brother continued, "until I heard the explanation that he had gone in bilocation to hear someone's confession. At the same time it seemed that he was having a great struggle with someone. He was sort of bouncing and turning and at the same time carrying on this dialogue: 'How long... And what else... And what else. ...'"

One evening Padre Pio appeared to her in a dream. He pressed his thumbs into her arm. In the morning the arm was completely healed.

A few months later, after confession, she asked Padre Pio if it had been he who had appeared to her and cured her. "Si," he answered, "Yes."

In World War II, during the North African Campaign, an Italian Regiment was being fiercely shelled by the Allies. One of the Italian soldiers had taken cover behind a large rock. Suddenly a "monk" as he called him, stood next to him, pulled him gently by the sleeve and told him to get out from behind the rock. The soldier refused to leave what he thought was a safe place.

The "monk" tugged on his sleeve more vigorously, but the soldier still would not move. Finally the "monk" grabbed his arm and pulled him away by force. At that very moment, a shell exploded where they had been standing and devastated the whole area. The soldier was safe. The "monk" disappeared.

Some days later, the soldier told his buddy the story. His friend showed him a picture of Padre Pio, which he always carried with him. "That's the monk who saved my life," the soldier exclaimed. He had never seen nor heard of Padre Pio before.

One of Padre Pio's spiritual children, a marquise from Rome, decided to go to confession in St. Peter's Basilica. It was quite late, and the attendant told her that all the confessors had left.

She entered anyway, intending to say a prayer. Half way through the Basilica, she met a Capuchin, who asked her: "*Signorina*, do you want to go to confession?" She accepted the invitation.

On the way out of St. Peter's, the attendant suggested that she return early the following morning. "No," she said, "I have already gone to confession."

"How?" He asked her, and made a gesture implying that she was out of her mind.

Many years passed. The marquise visited San Giovanni Rotondo with two lady friends. Padre Pio walked straight up to her and said: "I know you."

"Padre," she answered, "this is the first time I've been here."

"Don't you remember me," he asked, "from St. Peter's when I met you?"

Another of his spiritual daughters was Madre Teresa Salvadores, the Superior of the Escuela Medalla Milagrosa, in Montevideo, Uruguay. In bitter pain, she was at the point of death from cancer of the stomach and lesions of the arteries of her heart.

The nuns of her community wrote to Padre Pio, imploring his help. According to their calculations, the same day on which Padre Pio received the letter, a lady, a relative of Msgr. Damiani, the Vicar General of the Diocese of Salto, returned from Italy and gave Madre Teresa one of Padre Pio's gloves.

Let Madre Teresa tell her own story.

"The glove was applied to the side where I had a swelling the size of a fist, and to my throat where I felt I was suffocating. Then I fell asleep. In a dream I saw Padre Pio, who touched my side where the pain was. ... It is a fact that after three hours I woke up. I asked for my habit, so that I could get out of the bed where I had been lying for months.

"I got up without the help of anyone and went down to the Chapel. At noon I went to the dining room. For months I had not attempted to eat, but then I ate more than any of my companions. From that day, I have felt nothing." She immediately took up her usual activities, completely cured.

Dr. Gianbattista Morelli, Professor at the University of Montevideo, was her attending physician. After six months he and two other doctors examined her and declared her to be completely healed.

The Vicar General himself, Monsignor Damiani, also experienced the help of Padre Pio through bilocation. The details of the story are told by Cardinal Barbieri, then the retired Cardinal Archbishop of Montevideo.

Monsignor Damiani had been a frequent visitor to San Giovanni Rotondo. "I want to die here," he told Padre Pio. "I want to retire here and die here, so that you can assist me on my death bed."

"No," Padre Pio told him, "you will die in Uruguay. You have an obligation to return to your diocese."

"Then promise me," the monsignor demanded, "that you will assist me at the hour of my death."

Padre Pio hesitated a moment, seemingly lost in thought, and then answered: "Yes, I promise."

In 1941, Monsignor Damiani attended a meeting in Salto, with the Papal Nuncio and the Bishops of Uruguay. They all stayed at the Bishops residence, where Monsignor Damiani also resided.

One night, Cardinal Barbieri was awakened by someone knocking on his door. When he was fully awake, he noticed that his door was half open, and he saw a Capuchin passing by. He could not see the Capuchin's face.

The Cardinal got up, dressed, and went to the room of Monsignor Damiani. The Monsignor had had an attack of angina pectoris and was dying. The Cardinal summoned the other Bishops, and they all returned to Msgr. Damiani's room. They remained with him until he died.

On the Monsignor's desk the Cardinal found a slip of paper on which Monsignor Damiani had written in Italian: "Padre Pio came."

Cardinal Barbieri wished to verify for himself the identity of the person who had aroused him out of his sleep. The next time he visited San Giovanni Rotondo, he asked Padre Pio if it had been he. The Padre gave an evasive answer. The Cardinal pressed him for a direct answer, but Padre Pio did not want to say expressively that it had been he, nor would he deny it.

The Cardinal laughed and said: "I understand." Padre Pio nodded affirmatively.

Then the Cardinal asked Padre Pio if he would assist him on his deathbed. Padre Pio said that he, Padre Pio, would die before the Cardinal, but that he would assist him from heaven.

Padre Pio's gift of bilocation poses more questions than answers. What actually happened? How can a person explain it? How did Padre Pio explain it?

According to Mr. Pietruccio, the blind spiritual son of Padre Pio whom everyone in San Giovanni Rotondo knew, Padre Pio "disappeared" many times from the confessional. Then he would be seen perhaps an hour later, in the convento or in the church, as though nothing extraordinary had happened.

Padre Pio's confessional was conspicuous, and Padre Pio was conspicuous in it. Also, it was always surrounded by a throng of devotees and penitents. Padre Pio could not leave the confessional without being seen. Yet, he disappeared from the confessional.

Once his friends asked him where he went. "I flew over your heads," he answered them.

"Maybe he was joking," Mr. Pietruccio stated, "but the people didn't see him leave, and I did not see him leave. The people think he went away by bilocation." Padre Pio told Mr. Pietruccio that he went away because he