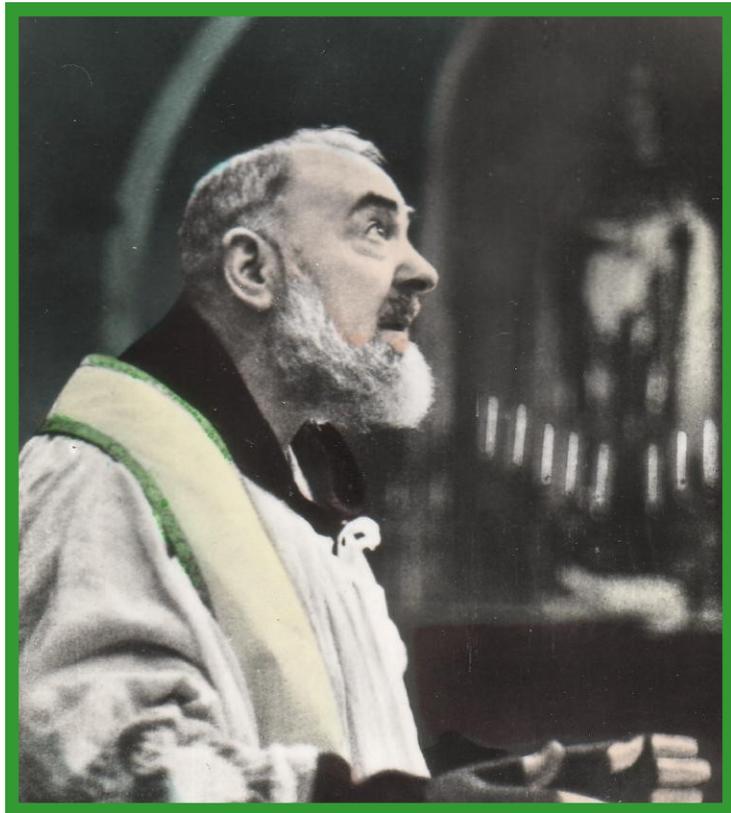
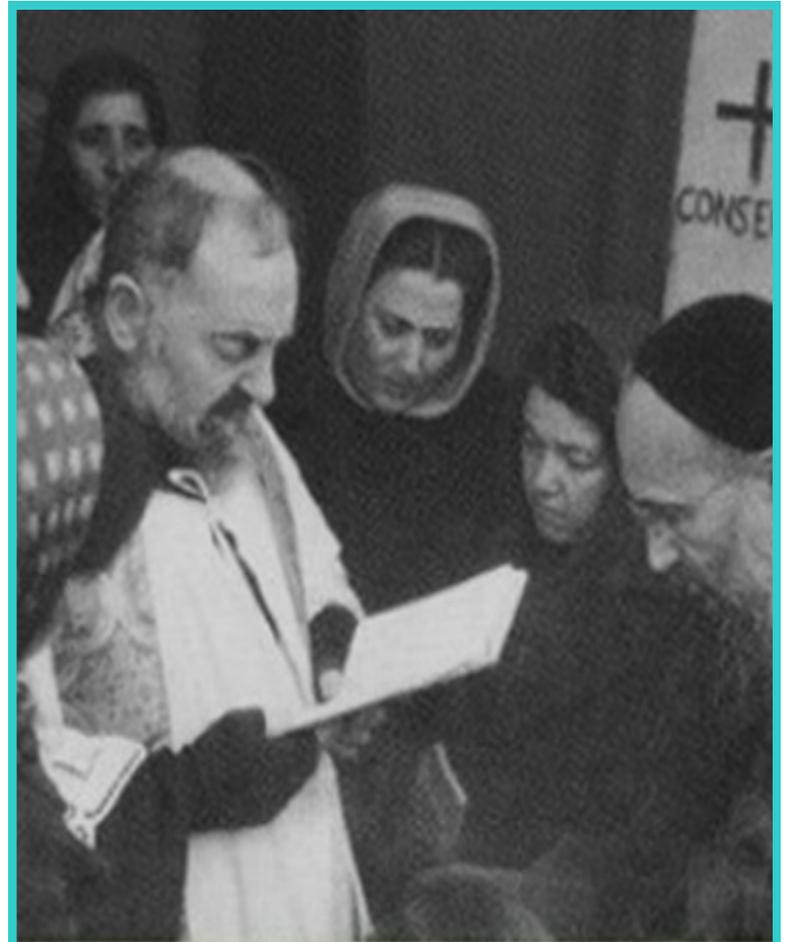


After Diana left San Giovanni Rotondo, she realized what a great impact the visit to Padre Pio had made on her. "It was the only time in my life that I have come in contact with a man of almost perfect goodness and spiritual strength," she said of Padre Pio. After returning to Rome, she felt a great sense of detachment from all earthly concerns. She no longer felt like she must desperately cling to life and she was now prepared to accept death, whenever it came. Seeing Padre Pio face to face gave her the strength to do so. Nothing else seemed to matter. Diana Graves died peacefully shortly after her visit to San Giovanni Rotondo.



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Padre Pio and Diana Graves



Padre Pio with Fr. Dominic Meyer (on right)

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Padre Pio and Diana Graves

Diana Graves was an actress by profession who lived and worked in London, England. She suffered from emphysema and bronchiectasis. Both diseases were progressive and incurable, and as time passed, Diana was spending more and more time in the hospital, being treated for her chronic condition. When her health took a turn for the worse, her doctors strongly advised her to move to a milder climate. The damp and cold of London weakened her lungs and aggravated her breathing problems. For the sake of her health, she needed to relocate to a place that had a warm and dry climate.

Diana, who was thirty-five years old, decided to move to Rome where the climate would be more conducive to her health. Diana's cousin, Jenny, lived in Rome, which was an added bonus. Rome also had the Cinecittà, a large film studio that hosted international movie productions as well as television productions. It was considered to be the hub of Italian cinema. With all of her acting experience, Diana hoped to be able to work there.

Life was not easy for Diana after she moved to Rome. She had some serious financial setbacks which were a cause of great anxiety to her. She also became so ill that she had to be hospitalized on numerous occasions. Her cousin, Jenny, suggested that they make a trip to San Giovanni Rotondo. Hopefully, they would be able to ask Padre Pio to pray for Diana's recovery. Diana thought it was an excellent idea.

After Diana had regained some of her strength, she and Jenny took a night train to Foggia and then a taxi to San Giovanni Rotondo. They arrived at the church of Our Lady of Grace just as the Mass was concluding. Diana was so weak and exhausted from the journey that she feared she might faint. She needed to get off of her feet but there wasn't a single empty seat available in the church for her to sit in.

As Padre Pio made his way toward the confessional, a large group of people crowded around him. He looked ill and he appeared to be fighting for breath in the stifling atmosphere. Diana knew that Padre Pio suffered from the same general health problems that she did. He had chronic bronchitis and asthma which often made it difficult for him to breathe.

Diana was able to speak to one of the Capuchins, Father Dominic Meyer. She explained to him that she was very sick and wondered if it could be arranged for her to receive a blessing from Padre Pio. Father Dominic told Diana that there were people in the church who had been waiting weeks for the same opportunity. However, he said he would try to help.

An hour later, Father Dominic motioned for Diana and Jenny to follow him. Amidst a huge crowd of people who were pushing and shoving, they were able to enter the sacristy. With great effort, Father Dominic managed to close the door. There were about twelve people in the sacristy, and many looked as though they were very ill. When Padre Pio came into the sacristy, Father Dominic whispered in his ear, pointing certain people out to him. Padre Pio would then go to the person that Father Dominic had spoken to him about, and give that person an individual blessing. When Father Dominic pointed to Diana, Padre Pio smiled at her. He put his hand on her head and spoke words which she did not understand.

On the last day of their visit, Diana and Jenny went back to the monastery and spent time in the church of Our Lady of Grace. At one point, a woman who was standing directly behind Diana, let out a piercing scream. There was an atmosphere of sheer pandemonium in the church that day. Padre Pio was very upset by the noise. "Silence!" he exclaimed. "This is a holy place. No one should be making noise!"