

wife and I saw him alive. After the ceremony in Rome, we shared a couple of laughs together and again a few days later when we saw him again at San Giovani Rotondo, we again shared some happy moments together. He died at the age of sixty-six.

Towards the end of his life, Fr. Alessio relates the difficulty he had at times caring for Padre Pio with all the demands that were made on Padre Pio's time. It has been truly an honor to have known you and that that relationship continues today with your relatives. As you mentioned many times in the past that, Padre Pio said he would stand at the gate of heaven until the last of his Spiritual Children had entered. Padre Pio was definitely waiting for his indispensable assistant who served him on earth for six years but is now with him for eternity. As always, Fr. Alessio will be standing behind Padre Pio overlooking his right shoulder ready to assist him whenever it is necessary

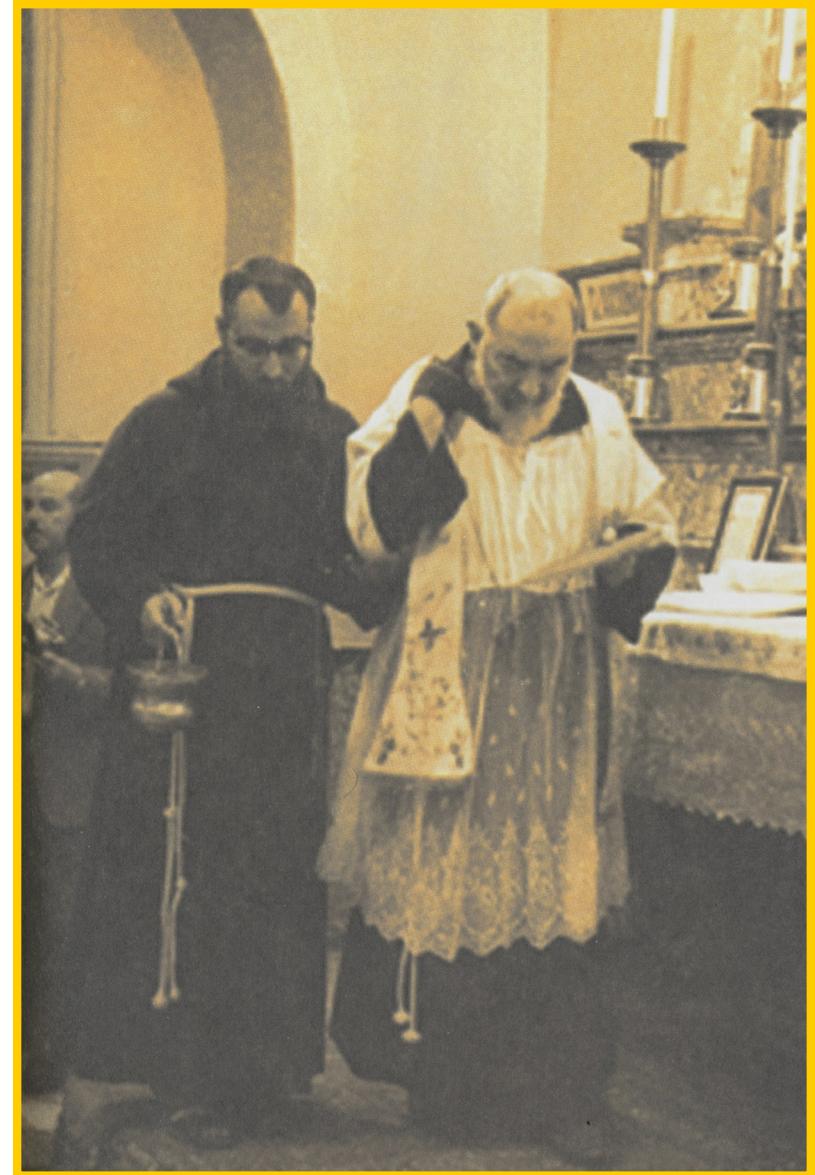
Probably the most notable book written by Father Alessio was *Send Me Your Guardian Angel*. In it, Fr. Alessio relates various stories of encounters that the Guardian Angels had with Padre Pio for requests from souls that were in need of help.

Fr. Alessio made known the fact, that whenever he was late to help Padre Pio, Padre Pio would send his guardian angel "Angelino" to get Fr. Alessio. -- *Nick*



"Angelino" (resting)

Padre Pio and Father Alessio Parente



Padre Pio and Father Alessio Parente

Father Alessio Parente O.F.M. Cap., was an exceptional man in many ways. Saint Padre Pio was his mission in life. Promoting the teaching and lessons of Padre Pio, which, of course was the Gospel of Jesus as preached and practiced by this extraordinary mystic of our time, was Father's Alessio's very reason for living. Distance and time were no object, if it presented him with an opportunity to make Padre Pio better known, and his message understood. Those who had the honor and privilege of meeting him over the years, especially on his "home ground" of the English-speaking office in San Giovanni Rotondo, will have many happy memories of his hospitality, his patience, and his ability to be completely committed to his work. His office was an oasis for many, and it never ceased to amaze me as to how he could possibly satisfy the many who sought his attention to listen to their story, or to share their problems. In him we saw a glimpse of the demands made on his beloved mentor, Saint Padre Pio.

By the time of Padre Pio's Beatification, Father Alessio had run out of steam, and the sight of his emaciated body brought tears to the eyes of those who loved him. His work was done. In the words of Fr. Gerardo Di Flumeri, Ofm., Cap. (Vice Postulant of Padre Pio's cause for Beatification and Canonization) who celebrated Fr. Alessio's Months Mind Mass, : "Padre Alessio desired very much to see Padre Pio's glorification. Here on earth, he was able to assist at his Beatification. From heaven, he will assist at his Canonization."

It seems that everyone who came under his spell desired to help him in some way or other and once he had captured their friendship, he and they—remained faithful for life. My wife and I shared many laughs with him on our visits to San Giovanni Rotondo. A relative of Fr. Alessio, still to this day, assists us in the celebration of Masses that we hold in honor of Saint Padre Pio. It is truly remarkable that relatives of both Saint Padre Pio and Fr. Alessio are able to bring so much hope and comfort to those who attend our Masses and are able to relate stories about both of them. -- Nick

*Fr. Alessio was born in Montefusco in the province of Avellino on 17 December 1933. Alessio grew up in a devout atmosphere where

daily family prayers were the norm and sound religious principles constantly inculcated the children.

At the age of twelve, Fr. Alessio willingly responded to the call to religious life and entered the friary. During his student years, Alessio was perceived to be scrupulously observant of the rules, studious, and pious. Following his ordination, he was sent to San Giovanni Rotondo and remained there for much of his life. Towards the end of Padre Pio's life, Fr. Alessio was sent to Dublin to study English and it was then that he became firm friends with the Maguire family, with whom he stayed, and other devotees of Padre Pio. During this time he established firm links with Ireland which were to remain with him for the rest of his days.

*(excerpted from: www.padrepio.ie)

In my own personal experience, back in the 1970's, when I first learned of Padre Pio (my family being from Italy knew of him, but did not mention him too often), I would attend many weekend meetings in a local parish church where nuns from Ireland would visit us on a regular basis and talk and show us movies on the life of Padre Pio. The one movie I will never forget is *Thorns and Roses*. It was the stigmata back then that always attracted me to go back and hear and see more on the Life of Padre Pio. Today, I am just beginning to get a rudimentary understanding of the depth of Padre Pio's meaning to the world. All this was accomplished because of the work done by Fr. Alessio many years earlier. The last thing back then that I could have ever imagine was writing about Padre Pio, holding Masses in his honor or knowing any members of his family or anyone else associated with a saint. God does work in mysterious ways.

Following Padre Pio's death in 1968, Father Alessio's life's work was to be the promotion to devotion to this latter-day saint. This Fr. Alessio accomplished through a grueling round of travel, retreats and lectures throughout the English speaking world. Padre Pio's Beatification in May 1999, was a source of great joy for him. It was also the last time my