

Indeed, in 1209, when St. Francis travelled to Rome to submit the rule of his new order to Pope Innocent III, he was supported by a Roman noblewoman called Jacopa de Settesoli. Subsequently she followed St. Francis' life of austerity and was probably the inspiration for the founding of the Third Order of St. Francis. Jacopa was present at the death of St. Francis in Assisi. She died in Assisi in 1239 where her remains were placed in the "Saint's Crypt" bearing the inscription : HIC REQUIESCIT IACOPA SANCTA NOBLISQUE ROMANA

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Padre Pio and Jacopa and the Third Order



Jacopa dei Settesoli

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Giovanna Rizzani Boschi, a shy lady from Udine, became a spiritual daughter of Padre Pio in 1923. In 1905, while her father lay dying her mother gave birth to Giovanna in their courtyard where, during labour, she thought she saw a Capuchin friar. Meanwhile, in 1905, as a seminarian in the Capuchin friary Padre Pio wrote about a similar incident in which he found himself in a nobleman's home during the birth of a child as her father was dying. The Virgin Mary appeared to Padre Pio and said: ***"I am entrusting this child to you --- she will seek you out --- but first you will meet her in St. Peter's.***

The Boschi family moved to Rome in 1922. One afternoon Giovanna visited St. Peter's where she discussed doubts about her faith in a confessional with a Capuchin friar. She waited for this "gifted man" before the Basilica was closed to arrange a further meeting. The sacristan showed her that the confessional was empty; he had vanished. Later, she heard about Padre Pio for the first time and decided she must meet him and arranged a trip to San Giovanni Rotondo. While Padre Pio was passing through a large crowd he stopped in

front of her and said: ***"Giovanna, I know you. You were born the day your father died."*** And he continued to reveal details of her birth and her visit to St. Peter's. On a later visit he asked her to join the Franciscan Third Order, giving her the name Jacopa which she didn't like. But he insisted, saying that a noble Roman woman called Jacopa was present at the death of St. Francis of Assisi. "One day you will be present at my death".

In September 1968, the anniversary of the stigmata, Giovanna heard his voice calling her to San Giovanni because he was going away. She arrived and went to confession. After Mass, on September 22nd, Padre Pio became ill, but not seriously. That night, either in a dream or a vision, she found herself in Padre Pio's cell where he lay dying, surrounded by friars and two doctors. She woke up and cried out to her friend that Padre Pio was dying. She got dressed and outside the monastery was told by a friar that Padre Pio was dead. Later, she related the strange events to Fr. Alberto D'Apolito and described in detail the interior of Padre Pio's room (which before his death had never been photographed). He agreed with her description.