

Things became quite serious at one stage at the building site. An engineer from Foggia denounced him to the authorities "for illegally practicing the profession of architect." When he received the summons to present himself in court, Angelo went straight to the Padre saying: "Padre they will put me in prison." And Padre Pio at once assured them: "Don't worry my son the judges will see reason. The man who has denounced you, received his degree from man. You, instead have received from God."

He left the building site for the first time and was supposed to return, but when he returned it was only for short period, before he left San Giovanni Rotondo for good. He would return to his hospital only during the last days of his life in the last stages of his illness. It was during those days that he said to Father Pellegrino how he would like to visit Padre Pio's tomb but could not because he only had his pajamas. And when Father Pellegrino replied straightaway: "But what does it matter if you are in your pajamas? You are not well!" He answered "What me in pajamas at Padre Pio's tomb? It would be disrespectful!" It was Father Pellegrino who celebrated his funeral Mass.

That day his coffin was carried by his workmen on their shoulders to the building site and to his former office and then to the friary church. Here Father Pellegrino recalled to all an episode that he considered important in understanding Angelo and his character.

He recounted how when the workmen of the hospital were fulfilling in church the first Fridays of the month, Angelo had always been the last to go to confession and communion. Father Pellegrino noticed this and when he found the opportunity asked him directly: "But, Angelo is it because you are ashamed?" And Angelo answered him: "No, I do not want my workmen to see me go to Holy Communion before them, because some might then go only to please me and not out of personal conviction."

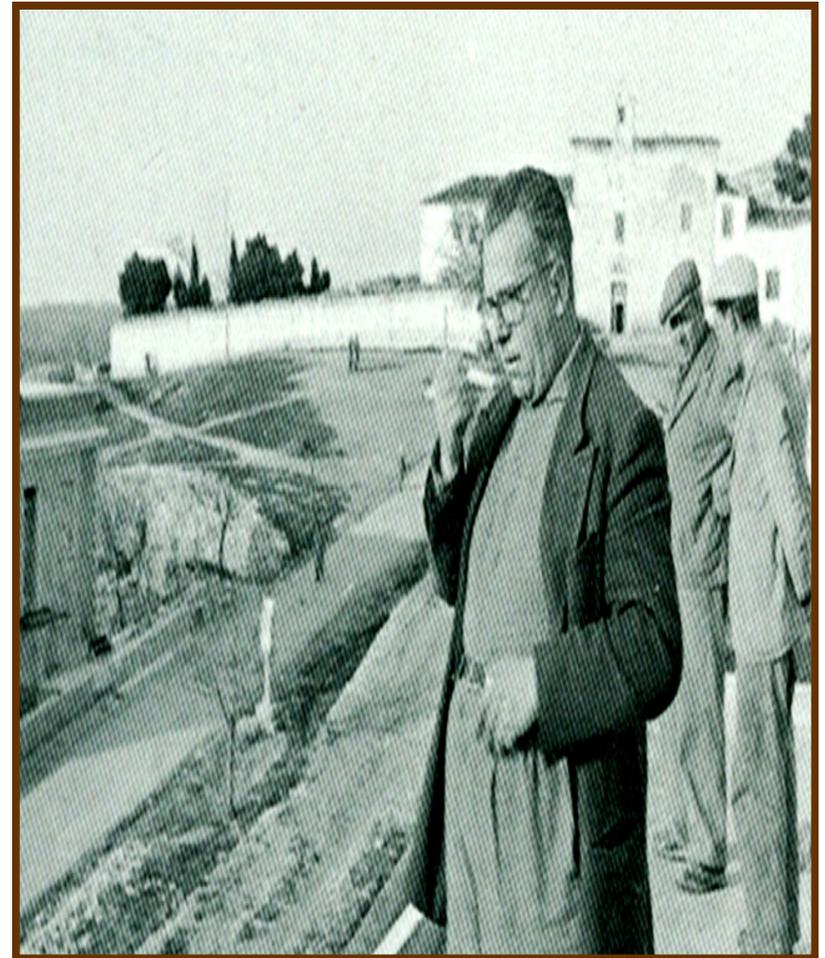
This then was the choleric, extravagant, defiant and genial "architect of Padre Pio" an architect with a Michelangesque character and "without a degree," but who knew how to realize the Capuchin friar's dream, a friar who was a Saint and the only person who was able to control him and docilely transform him, without rows, into a meek lamb.



The Home for the Relief of Suffering

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Padre Pio and Angelo Lupi **"The Architect who Received his Degree from God"**



Mr. Lupi designed and directed the building of
"The Home for the Relief of Suffering."
He was a passionate and genial character
tamed by Padre Pio.

Padre Pio and Angelo Lupi

"The Architect who Received his Degree from God"

by Marianna lafelice

Ettore Feliciani in an article many years back in the Momento Sera daily paper, divided the people drawn to Padre Pio into two groups: one made up of those immense crowds that came and went every day, and another made up of those people who embraced Padre Pio's spiritual calling totally and who came to live in San Giovanni Rotondo, often building a small house so as to be able to attend his daily 5:00 a.m. Mass and other functions. To these two groups however, Feliciani added a third "type" made up of men and women who did not leave the world completely but who nevertheless wished to live close to the Capuchin Friar and who often "arrived in most singular ways and from unusual backgrounds." To this last group one can certainly include Angelo Lupi: the man who designed and directed the building of the hospital "The Home for the Relief of Suffering" and whose portrait bust, unveiled the evening of 1 May 1981, greets one at the entrance of the hospital, revealing a man of a passionate and not easy nature.



Angelo was neither an architect nor an engineer and had completed only his fifth grade at school. He was more in the Abruzzi, and before he came to the Gargano, he had lived in many different places and worked at a variety of jobs. He had lived in Rome, Pescara, Lanciano, Chieti, and abroad in Syria and Egypt. He had worked as a decorator, carpenter, stage designer and even photographer of the deceased.

As a young boy, in fact, in order to earn some money he would photograph the deceased of Castelfreddone using an inexpensive Kodak camera. The Abruzzi farmers because of their extreme poverty did not waste money on family portraits, but when a family member died as to have some momento of them, the family would call Angilolino, who would photograph the deceased member, having first opened their eyes with a damp cloth. The living relations remained very please with what looked like a life portrait.

Angelo came to San Giovanni Rotondo for the first time in 1947, to collect payment for an unpaid bill. That visit would change his life forever.

On that visit he, in fact, spoke with Padre Pio and the holy friar had ended their conversation with a strange and unexpected question. Padre Pio asked him when it

was that he had last done his laundry. Angelo responded abruptly and feeling uneasy: "My laundry is clean." He knew very well though, that the Padre was referring indirectly and with delicacy to his soul. And when he was leaving, Padre Pio stopped him and said: "You will be my architect." And it was so. When the go ahead was given to build a hospital in San Giovanni Rotondo on the mountain land close to the friary, an architect had to be found who could draw the plans. In many people's minds however, the way Angelo Lupi obtained the job was very nearly fraudulent. Out of the many designs submitted for the project, the one that was chosen was signed by the architect Candeloro from Pescara. It was discovered only later that that project was the work of Angelo and who was only the architect draftsman.



From the many photographs printed in the first numbers of the hospital magazine, there are many of Angelo seeing side-by-side with Dr. Sanguinetti at the building site. Angelo's brazen grin and unkempt appearance give one a glimpse of his rebellious nature. Many considered him to be unmanageable and not the right person for the job. It was also all very much a leap into the dark, because, everyone knew from the outset, that almost everything was lacking, most of all the funds.

Angelo however never listened to the skeptics who thought it madness to build a hospital on that mountain. He believed firmly in the Padre's vision and began rounding up men who could help him. They were mainly unskilled laborers who then became expert diggers and pick axe workers. Angelo, little by little transformed them into real builders, organizing them with proper wages and hours. A siren would signal the periods of work and rest between the constant blasts of dynamite that were necessary in those first times to excavate the mountain. It was necessary to drill and excavate, in fact, tons of hard rock, to clear the site for this monumental building, and in 1947, during the peak period of construction in San Giovanni Rotondo, even a kiln was built for the plaster.

Angelo would spend his days between the building site and his small office, in which he had hanging on the wall three clocks that struck, not quite in unison, every quarter of the hour.

Those who knew him well and his difficult character described him as "determined, brilliant, untiring, irascible and extravagant," a sort of "Michelangelesque genius," who could switch from moments of happiness to terrifying bouts of anger in which he spared no one, especially those who dared oppose him. Once those moments of anger had passed though, he would return to being a very entertaining and likable person.