

Answering a specific formal question by **Mons. Raffaello Rossi** Padre Pio confirmed that one day he left the confessional of men walking over their heads: "The sacristy was overcrowded with men, it was hot; we were suffocating. I saw that the best thing was to leave, so that they would leave too. I remember that there was no room to walk: I had to step over those men; then I found myself outside. From there I turned, and sent them away."

Padre Raffaello Rossi before becoming bishop and cardinal



Brother Bill Martin, later Father Joseph Pius, from Brooklyn, New York, helped Padre Pio during his last three years (1965-1968). He caught Padre Pio falling in his last Mass. He reported: "It was near the end of Padre Pio's life. Another brother and I were helping him to the altar. He was going to say Mass. I remember thinking 'Why his weight on my arm feels like nothing at all.' That's when I looked at the floor. Padre Pio's feet were six inches off the ground. He was just gliding. He was levitating on his way to say Mass. I exchanged a glance with the other monk. We had come to the same realization at about the same time. We never spoke about it. We just knew."



IMAGE IN THE SKY DURING BOMBINGS

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PADRE PIO - THE "FLYING MONK"



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Padre Pio - The “flying monk”

It is impossible to do justice to the entire array of miracles worked by Padre Pio. They are endless, and they have transcended his death. One day, recounts author Bernard Ruffin, a priest named Padre Constantino "entered Pio's room and was struck by what he saw. 'His countenance was shining with a rosy flame of light such as I had never seen before and shall, I think, never see again. It was but for an instant, but I shall never forget it.' This phenomenon was observed in Moses when he came down from Sinai with the two tables of the Law in his hands."

As for the sky phenomenon: “There are many stories concerning allied pilots who attempted to bomb San Giovanni but were stopped by an apparition of a 'monk' standing in the air with his arms outstretched,” says Ruffin. “There are fliers who swore that they had sighted a figure in the sky, sometimes normal size, sometimes gigantic, usually in the form of a monk or priest. The sightings were too frequent and the reports came from too many sources to be totally discounted. Several people from Foggia, where thousands were killed in the air raids, said that a bomb, falling into a room where they had huddled, landed near a photograph of Padre Pio. They claimed that when it exploded, it 'burst like a soap bubble.' Others reported that while bombs were raining down upon the city, they cried, 'Padre Pio, you have to save us!' While they were speaking, a bomb fell into their midst, but did not explode.”

Bernardo Rosini, a general of the Italian Air Force, told a story: “At Bari was located the general command of the U.S. Air Force. I know several officers who told me of having been saved by Padre Pio during air missions.

“One day,” General Rosini continued, “an American commander wanted to lead a squadron of bombers himself to destroy the German arms depository of war material that was located at San Giovanni Rotondo. The commander related that as he approached the target, he and his pilots saw rising in the sky the figure of a friar with his hands held outward. The bombs released of their own accord, falling in the woods, and the planes completely reversed course without any intervention by the pilots.”

Someone told the commanding general that in a convent at this little town of San Giovanni Rotondo, there lived a saintly man, a friar in the odor of sanctity. At war's end, the general wanted to go meet this person. “He was accompanied by several pilots,” Rosini continued. “He went to the convent of the Capuchins. As soon as he crossed the threshold of the sacristy, he found himself in front of several friars, among whom he immediately recognized the one who had 'stopped' his planes. Padre Pio went forward to meet him, and putting his hand on his shoulder, he said, 'So, you're the one who wanted to get rid of us all!'"

During WWII many Allied Aviation Pilots of different nationalities and religions were based in Puglia.

General Bernardo Rosini of the United Air Command reported that "Each time that the pilots returned from their missions, they spoke of this Friar that appeared in the sky and in stretching out his wounded hands, prevented them from dropping their bombs, and diverted their airplanes, making them turn back.



Everyone was talking about these incredible stories. But since the episodes kept recurring, the **Commanding General of USAF general Nathan F. Twining** who happened to be in Bari, and decided to pilot himself a squadron of bombers to destroy a target near San Giovanni Rotondo.



When he and his pilots were in the vicinity of the target they saw the figure of a monk with upraised hands appear in the sky. The bombs got loose from the planes falling in open areas, and the planes made a sharp turn to return to base without the pilots intervening.

Back on the ground everybody asked everybody else about the happening and wanted to know who that friar was. The General was told about Padre Pio and decided to visit him with the pilots in that squadron. The pilots immediately recognized Padre Pio.

When Padre Pio saw the general he told him: "So you are the one that wanted to destroy everything." The general became a friend of Padre Pio.

Other Stories

Padre Andrea D'Ascanio testified: "The sacristy was full of people and they were looking at the door from where Padre Pio had to go to the confessional. There was no way that Padre Pio could reach the confessional walking through such a large crowd. The door didn't open, and I saw Padre Pio walking over the heads of those people and go to the confessional. Later I asked him about it. "I assure you, my son; it was like walking over bricks." (*sopra un mattonato*).

