

## The Gift of Padre Pio in my life

Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina has helped me tremendously while battling thru a cancer diagnosis. I was diagnosed in September of 2020 with Stage III Esophageal cancer at the age of 46. I was raised in the Protestant religion, so I knew nothing of the Catholic Church and never heard of a man named Padre Pio. One day my brother-in-law told me of Padre Pio and gave me a prayer to say each day along with some oils to use on my body as I was going thru treatment. He spoke of a man that had been given gifts from Jesus, who offered insight and hope and who answers prayers and heals the sick.

While not a Catholic, I have always been a man of faith and believe in the Holy Spirit. Given that my cancer came with a 2% survival rate in 2020, my thought was what harm could a prayer and some oils do even if I was not a member of the Catholic Church. I recited the *Act of Entrustment Prayer* each day and used the oils, still not knowing anything of Padre Pio. As a man of faith, I believe that everything happens for a reason and there was a reason this man is being shared with me just as there is a reason for my cancer diagnosis.

When the oils began to run dry, I made a trip to Barto, Pennsylvania where the National Shrine for Saint Padre Pio is located for what I thought to be a replacement of the oils. Upon my arrival I could feel this was no ordinary trip and certainly no ordinary man. The property is massive, and I knew that I needed to know more of this man, so I spent some time walking around, taking it all in. I picked up the oils and a few books to research my adopted Saint for when I got home. I could not believe what I started to read; why have I have never heard of him. Bilocation and receiving the gifts of perfume, conversion, and the Stigmata? Is this real? All the people and stories of healing and receiving gifts. The more I read, the more I was convinced that this man, who was completely devoted to Jesus and unknown to me, should continue to be in my life.

As time went on, I could sense and feel that something or someone; I have no idea what, was continuing to look over me. My mind, soul and heart continued to be calm as I said the prayer and used the oils, never missing a day. As my treatments continued, Stage III metastasized to Stage IV and things started to look grim. All the while, I still believed in my treatment plans including my faith plan and that together, everything will be ok. Almost 2 years to the day of my original diagnosis, recent scans show “no evidence of disease”, we did it!

Prayers do get answered and the sick do get healed! My Saint – Padre Pio is with me every day and I am extremely thankful to have found him and that he is in my life. I have received many gifts of love and prayers over the past two years that I cannot count at this point. Receiving the gift of Padre Pio in my life could be one of the greatest of those gifts.

**Christopher M. Laskey**