

The New York Center

JOEY'S STORY

On June 27 of 1947, Joey Lomangino, age 16, was struck in the face by the exploding steel rim of a truck tire he was trying to fill using a defective air pressure gauge. The explosion knocked him flat, shattering his blue eyes and crushing the bones around his eye sockets and forehead. Cold steel severed his optic and olfactory nerves and lodged against his frontal cortex.

Knocked unconscious, Joey would lay in a hospital bed for two weeks in a coma on the edge of death. On the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, July 16 of 1947, by a true miracle he awoke to a darkness that could not be lifted. On that fateful day, Joey came to learn he had lost his eyesight and sense of smell. His life had been spared but the doctors pronounced him totally and incurably blind.

By the early nineteen sixties, Joey had learned to live without sight. He completed his education and started a small business to support himself as well as his parents and five younger siblings. Exhausted from these efforts, his doctor advised a lengthy vacation.

Through the kindness of his extended family Joey was taken to the pre dawn mass of Padre Pio at San Giovanni Rotondo. Afterwards, to everyone's astonishment, the saint crossed the anteroom to welcome him, calling to him by name and now began to bring about the conversion of this blind American.

Padre Pio presided over the miraculous recovery of Joey's sense of smell; a divine prodigy which was included in the Padre's cause for canonization.



In the Sacrament of Penance, Padre Pio read Joey's soul, kindly recounting his offenses to him in English when Joey, overcome with shame, fell silent in the confessional. At the end of this encounter, Padre Pio gave Joey absolution and obtained for him, through Jesus and Mary, the grace to carry the cross of his blindness and spiritual sight for his soul.

Newly converted and desiring to deepen his spiritual life, Joey agreed to travel with a friend to the ongoing apparition site at Garabandal. Concerned that the apparition might be a deception that would set him back on the path to joy and peace, Joey sought the blessing of Padre Pio for this trip.

The Testimony of Joey Lomangino was helpful in establishing grounds for belief in Garabandal for many who were not able to witness the apparitions in person and only came to know of them through others.

At Garabandal, Joey soon befriended the visionaries and was shown kind hospitality by the family of Conchita Gonzalez. Conchita asked Joey to promote the Message in New York, placing in his hand a small holy card – personally inscribing the Message in Spanish on the back.





Joey's life would change again in late March of 1964 when, back in the United States, he received a handwritten note from Conchita bearing the news that on March 19, 1964 – the Feast of Saint Joseph, Our Lady revealed that on the day of the Great Miracle, Joey would receive *new eyes* – *for the glory of God*.

Conchita wrote again in early 1965 inviting him back to the village for the Second Message and he gladly returned to Garabandal with family and friends.

Joey, who now desired to live in a Franciscan spirit of poverty and to give his private time to the rehabilitation of alcoholics and drug addicts

and to the encouragement of those who endured physical affliction without hope of a cure, had found a way to combine those intentions with the witness of Padre Pio and the Message of Garabandal.

Joey had experienced both these Acts of God personally and believed they could convert and inspire those in the United States who felt abandoned by God and crushed by the harsh cruelty of these times. He had found his calling.

