



St. Pio

Padre Pio, Franciscan friar and mystic

Born Francesco Forgione, May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy to devout parents who lived a simple life with their large family. Francesco entered the nearby Franciscan monastery at the age of 15 as a novice taking the name Fra (brother) Pio, and was ordained a priest in 1910 at age 23. Padre (father) Pio, was forced to live outside his religious community because of ill health. His severe asthma and digestive problems greatly improved in 1916 when he visited Our Lady of Grace Friary in San Giovanni Rotondo. His directors immediately assigned him to the friary.

World War I saw most of the friars drafted, including Padre Pio who was assigned to the 100th company of the Medical Corps, declared physically unfit and sent back to the friary. Padre Pio offered himself to God as a victim to take a share of the suffering of the war.* On September 20, 1918 Christ appeared to him and inflicted his own wounds, the Stigmata - Christ's wounds in his side, hands, and feet. Numerous medical examinations confirmed their authenticity, they were inexplicable, permanent and "incurable".

The Stigmata and the healing power of his prayers brought him notoriety that was not wanted, and not helpful. An attempt was made to transfer him, but was stopped when the entire town, mayor, and police chief stormed the friary to prevent his movement!

Padre Pio used his natural, and miraculous gifts in the exercise of his office as priest, directing and assisting the souls of the thousands who came to the remote friary. For this end he was given the gifts of supernatural knowledge, healing, bilocation (being in two places at once), and miracles of all types. Padre Pio's gift of supernatural knowledge allowed him to foretell events ranging from the birth of children, to catastrophes. He often spoke of specific events as dependent on God's will, but also on our prayers. By the time of WWII he was well known throughout Europe and thousands would seek his help in locating missing loved ones. He would often know the location of a person, be it a prisoner of war camp, a hospital, or Heaven. U.S Air force pilots over Foggia, Italy were forced to abandon their mission they saw a friar (Padre Pio) in the air waving them off!

His ability to bilocate - to appear in two distant places at the same time is well documented, and his healings even more so. People under the care of doctors were healed of all types of serious and terminal illness. Blindness, cancer, paralysis...all cured when the patients sought his intercession through prayer. Battling the Devil took many forms, exorcisms, moral and even physical assaults. Padre Pio also made full use of his guardian angel, often sending him on spiritual errands!

Padre Pio passed from this life September 23, 1968, and will be seen by all in the resurrection of the just. Declared a saint in 2002 he continues his work from Heaven.

* Padre Pio believed all suffering is self inflicted by our own sins, which distort God's original perfect design for our world. Because God can neither increase in virtue or be deformed by sin, all of our actions good or bad have their effect in our world alone. Because God cannot suffer the distortion of sin, he became man to do so. Christ's atonement frees our soul of sin, permitting us to share in God's own life (salvation) by the indwelling of his own spirit, the Holy Spirit. Padre Pio knew the entire body of Christ shares not only in the benefits of Christ, but in the atonement suffering of Christ, (Col 1:24, Mt 10:38, 1Cor 12:26. Padre Pio also knew the power of prayer. Prayer is the spiritual component of any good action. It is a real (although not material) act of construction. Just as our hands give form to matter, our spiritual efforts give proper form to attributes of goodness distorted by sin.

Copyright © 2005 St.Joseph House Publishing, permission granted for non profit reproduction. Down load a free mini-catechism and prayer sheet at www.freecatechism.com. "God did extraordinary miracles through the hands of Paul, so that pieces of cloth were carried from his body to the sick, diseases left them and evil spirits came out of them." (Acts 19:11-12). To obtain a third class cloth relic of Padre Pio, write to "National Centre for Padre Pio, 2213 Old Route 100, Barto PA 19504", www.padrepio.org. A one dollar donation for relic and postage is requested but not required; Online biography of Padre Pio at www.ewtn.com/padrepio/. Free Catholic book catalog www.tanbooks.com, 1-800-437-5876.



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