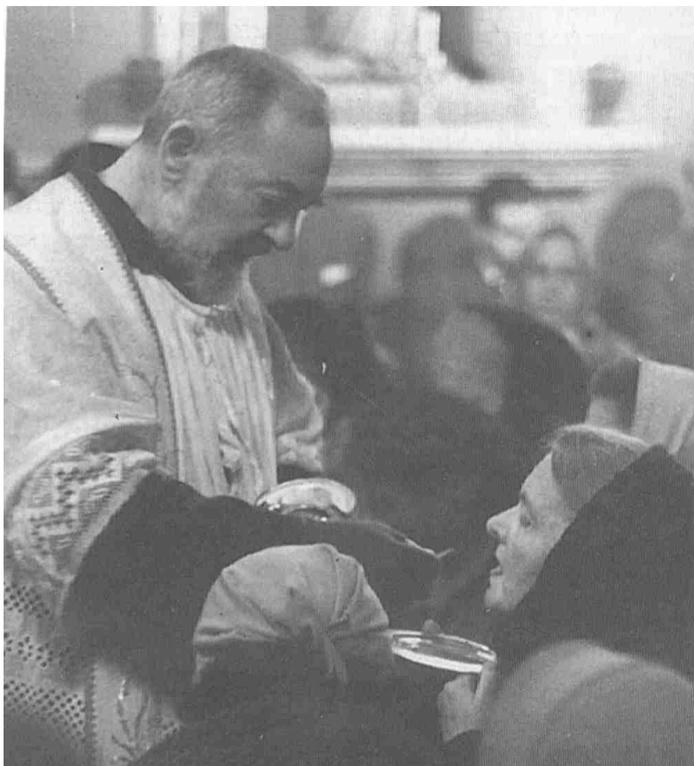




# “Pray, Hope and Don’t Worry”



Mary Pyle receiving Holy Communion from Padre Pio.

*“Therefore, since we are surrounded by this great cloud of witnesses, let us . . . persevere in running the race which lies ahead; let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith.” Hebrews: 12:1*

## Padre Pio and Mary Pyle Padre Pio’s American Friend

*One of the first of many collaborators in the apostolate of Padre Pio was Mary Pyle. Her many years of selfless service to his work were so significant and far reaching that the Capuchin friars in San Giovanni Rotondo hope that efforts toward her canonization will someday be realized. The following is part of her story.*

**Mary Pyle** was born in 1888 in New Jersey, into a very wealthy and socially prominent Protestant family. She was educated in the best of American private schools and was accustomed from childhood to every luxury. Later, Mary worked as assistant to the celebrated Italian educator, Dr. Maria Montessori and traveled for ten years throughout the world acting as interpreter for her.

As an adult, Mary converted to Catholicism and desired to grow in the ways of the Spirit. She had a great longing to find a spiritual director, and made a novena to the Blessed Mother with that intention. Shortly after completing the novena, a friend, Rina d’Ergin told her about Padre Pio and asked Mary to join her on a visit to his monastery. In 1923 at the age of 35, Mary and her friend went to San Giovanni Rotondo. Their visit and meeting with Padre Pio had a tremendous effect on both Rina and Mary. Mary said that when she first met Padre Pio, she was overcome with emotion. His eyes appeared to penetrate her soul. Mary said, “We just looked at each other at first, then I fell to my knees and said, “Father” and he placed his wounded hand on my head.” Mary knew at once that in Padre Pio, she had found her spiritual director. Mary was unable to sleep that first night in San Giovanni Rotondo, thinking to herself, “There is a saint living here and I am going to have to be leaving soon.”

Mary described the deeply moving experience of seeing Padre Pio celebrate Mass. She said, “His hands during Mass were without mittens and even though he kept the sleeves pulled down as much as possible I could see the holy stigmata. His hands during Mass seemed to be made of ivory--white and transparent, of a supernatural beauty--with dark pink nails, almost red, as if the tips of those white fingers had been put in the chalice--as if they had touched the divine blood. During the prayer for the living, which lasts a long time, there is a profound silence. His body moves a little, he prays, he is with Christ. Then he continues with a voice which seems to come from afar almost as if his spirit had been outside the body. During Mass, his face matches his voice. Padre Pio is not with us during that time--he is with God. He is no longer the one who gives but the one who receives. His heart must have two doors, one for God and the other for men. When the door to God is open,

the door to the world is closed and when the door to the world is opened the one to Heaven is closed momentarily. During Mass, Padre Pio has the door to Heaven opened and one can almost feel the grace of God coming down over him. Afterward in the sacristy where everyone goes to greet him, one feels a river of love and warmth coming from his heart to heal physical and moral ills, to console the suffering, to bless objects, animals, medals, crucifixes, rosaries, people, and with a special love, children. Then he returns to the confessional where he stays for hours at a time with those hands touched by God, resting on the little window of the confessional.”

When it was time to say goodbye to Padre Pio and return home, Mary asked him for a blessing. Padre Pio surprised her by saying, “My daughter, this is your home. Stop traveling around; remain here.” Mary told Padre Pio that she had to go back to her work with Professor Montessori. Padre Pio said, “Who is this woman that she should keep you tied up in this manner. You must stay here.” But Mary left to continue her work.

After Mary had rejoined Professor Montessori, she said to her one day, “There is a saint living in this world and it saddens me not to be near him. I wish to see him again.” Mary took Dr. Montessori with her for the second visit. Again Padre Pio asked Mary to remain in San Giovanni Rotondo and so she made the decision to stay. Dr. Montessori assumed Mary would travel with her back to Rome to get her belongings. The bus pulled up and as they were about to board it, Mary said, “I can’t get into the bus. I feel paralyzed, as though someone has nailed my feet to the ground.” Mary, literally, could not move. Only after the bus was gone, was Mary able to move about again.

Shortly after Mary moved to San Giovanni Rotondo, she wrote a letter to her parents. She said, “My dear parents, I am really happy. I have found that living in this deserted place, that there is another life. . . There lives here in a cold and small monastery, a competitor of St. Francis of Assisi, who is named Padre Pio. His hands and feet are pierced by the stigmata. Every morning he celebrates Mass before sunrise. All his daily life is an example of humility and dedication to his Lord. He scorns worldly goods and considers supreme, only the love of Christ.”

Mary had a home built close to the monastery and dedicated the rest of her life to the cause of Padre Pio. She became the secretary to a saint. In the beginning, Padre Pio used to tease Mary a little bit, saying, “Oh, how elegant we are today,” with a playful smile on his face. She began to discard all the outward signs of her wealth, her elegant clothes and jewels. She led a life of great austerity and became a great asset to Padre Pio and his religious community because of her great willingness to serve in any capacity.

Padre Pio’s parents, Maria Giuseppa and Orazio Forgione



**Mary Pyle with Padre Pio’s sister, Sister Pia, a Brigittine nun and his father, Orazio Forgione.**

both lived with Mary during the last years of their life and it was in her home that they both passed away. They told Mary many beautiful and precious stories concerning Padre Pio’s childhood which she recorded so that they would not be lost to future generations.

Many times Padre Pio would come to visit his parents at Mary’s house mounted on a mule, because the narrow, rocky path leading from the friary to her home was too rough for his wounded feet to walk on. Padre Pio’s father, Orazio lived with Mary the last eight years of his life. He wanted to be close to his son. People would often come to Mary’s house to meet Padre Pio’s father and say to him, “Orazio, what a beautiful son you have” and tears would well up in Orazio’s eyes. When his mother was dying, Padre Pio came to her bedside to prepare her for her great journey into eternity. Those present could see the blood flowing from the wounds in his hands.

Mary opened her home to pilgrims who came to see Padre Pio as well as to orphans and destitutes. Fifteen of the destitute children that Mary took in to her home went on to the Capuchin seminary, all with her financial help, where they became Capuchin priests and brothers. Frequently Mary’s guests included Padre Pio’s brother and his two sisters.

Because Mary spoke five languages fluently, she acted as interpreter between Padre Pio and his foreign visitors. She began to record Padre Pio’s spoken words and his counsel. She also copied the messages and prayers that he wrote on the back of holy cards so as to pass on these priceless gems to posterity. One time a twelve year old girl from Chicago

came to receive her first holy communion from Padre Pio. Mary was going to act as translator but Padre Pio decided to speak with the young girl privately. The girl told Mary that although she spoke only English, when Padre Pio began speaking to her and giving her counsel in Italian, she understood him perfectly. Mary was so edified by this that she exclaimed, "What a marvelous thing, what a marvelous thing!"

Once a woman who made her confession to Padre Pio shared her experience with Mary. During the confession she mentioned that she was worried about a friend. She asked Padre Pio if perhaps he had some words of counsel for her friend that she could take back to her. Padre Pio gave the woman a message to relay to her friend, but his words seemed very harsh. She determined at once that she would never share the message. Mary said to the woman, "If Padre Pio told you to do something, I recommend that you do it. Otherwise, why would you seek his advice?" The woman took Mary's counsel, relayed the message, and the result was that her friend's life was completely changed as she experienced a deep conversion of heart.

Mary was asked to answer the foreign mail that was arriving in huge volumes from all parts of the world. From her home she prepared the hosts for holy communion which were needed in great quantities at the friary church. She kept the accounting records for the donations that were coming in for Padre Pio's hospital and at Padre Pio's request, Mary became the official organist at Our Lady of Grace church. She played the organ every afternoon when Padre Pio gave benediction after Vespers service. Often in the late afternoon when Mary returned to the church to pray, she could hear Padre Pio sobbing as he prayed alone in the balcony.

Mary said, "Everything is extraordinary in this mystical corner of the world, in this school for souls, where the great healer, teacher and father, Padre Pio, is preparing a net of souls in order to encircle the entire world, fishing for souls for Jesus. He calls them forth with his vibrant voice and with his suffering. He calls them with the waves of his perfume. How lucky for me to have met with the greatest saint since St. Francis."

Through the years, Mary was the witness to many miracles brought about through the intercession of Padre Pio. One miracle that she personally witnessed involved a letter that had traveled from San Giovanni Rotondo to Turin, a distance of over 600 miles, in thirty minutes. A man from Turin came to San Giovanni Rotondo to seek counsel from Padre Pio regarding a personal matter. The answer had to be received in Turin before a certain day and hour. Although the man made a great effort to speak to Padre Pio regarding the matter, he was never able to see him and obtain his advice until the day and almost the hour that the information needed to be received in Turin. When he finally got a chance to speak to Padre Pio about the matter, he sadly

said that the counsel had come too late for there was not even time for a telegram to be sent to Turin. Padre Pio told him to write a letter and mail it anyway and to do it immediately. The man obeyed him and in half an hour the letter was received in time for its purpose. Mary saw the envelope and clearly visible was the post mark of San Giovanni Rotondo and the post mark of Turin with the times of posting only one half hour apart. This letter and envelope are kept carefully preserved in the archives at San Giovanni Rotondo.

Another miracle that Mary recorded concerned the healing of a young wheat farmer. Shortly after the end of World War II, the farmer had a serious accident from which he suffered a double embolism, one on each lung. The young farmer was taken to the hospital but his condition worsened and he realized that he was dying. Being young and strong he did not want to die just yet. He prayed to God, asking Him to let someone intercede on his behalf. That night while he slept, a bearded monk appeared at his bedside. The monk laid his hand on the farmer's chest and then smiled and disappeared. The farmer felt better immediately. To the amazement of his physician, he seemed cured. The farmer told no one except his mother of the apparition and he let his doctor come to his own conclusion. The farmer and his mother believed that the monk must have been a great saint. Several months later the farmer was in Padua to sell his wheat. He went to a customer's home and there on the wall was a photograph of the monk who had appeared to him the night he was at death's door. He was told that the monk's name was Padre Pio. That evening the farmer took a train to San Giovanni Rotondo and arrived at about four o'clock in the morning, just in time for Padre Pio's dawn Mass. He went to confession to Padre Pio and Padre Pio said to him, "Tell me, how are your lungs now?" "They are just fine" the farmer replied. "Thanks be to God," Padre Pio said, "Thanks be to God."

Mary was also the witness to countless conversions through the years. She said, "When Padre Pio interests himself in a soul, it is for good; there is no turning back." Once Padre Pio said to Mary, "When I have saved a soul, I

### **Padre Pio Devotions**

**Padre Pio Devotions are every 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month at Our Lady of the Rosary Catholic Church in San Diego. Rosary begins at 6:35 pm and Mass begins at 7 o'clock. Benediction and prayers follow. For info. call (619) 697-5958.**

*If you would like to receive more information about St. Padre Pio and a copy of the prayers he said daily-- send 3 stamps and your address to:*

**D. Allen • P.O. Box 191545 • San Diego, CA 92159**

*The information will be sent to you in a special envelope.*

never let it fall again.” To those who sought his spiritual guidance he would say, “I can see all of your life passing like a motion picture film.” He did not need long explanations from his spiritual children regarding their needs or their situation. He used to say, “I know you inside and out, just like you know yourself in a mirror,” and he promised them, “I’ll take care of everything.” He said to one of his spiritual children, “You think you know my love for you but you don’t know that it is much greater than you can imagine. I follow you with my prayers, with my suffering and with my tears.”

Mary had such esteem for Padre Pio that she used to say, “I should be happy to be the nail of Padre Pio’s little finger.” She often said, “Neither in Heaven nor on earth do I wish to remain without Padre Pio.” Sometimes she became a little frustrated with the operations of Padre Pio’s hospital, “Home for the Relief of Suffering.” Padre Pio said to her, “Do not criticize the hospital, Mary, because it will be the place where you will spend your last days on earth.” He also told Mary that she would enter eternal life before he would. He proved to be right in both cases.

After living in San Giovanni Rotondo and serving Padre Pio for 45 years, Mary passed away in 1968. Padre Pio was too ill to visit Mary in the hospital during her last illness. He said, “I am going to pray to the Lord that He take her home to Heaven to be with the Angels.” And with a touch of humor he added, “Mary will be able to hear the celestial music without having to play the organ anymore.” She was buried in the Capuchin chapel in the cemetery at San Giovanni Rotondo where Padre Pio’s parents and other family members had their final resting place.

*Give rest to the souls of your servants, O Christ, in the gathering of the saints—where there is no pain, no sorrow, and no anxiety, but only endless life.*



**Padre Pio baptizes his nephew Michael with Mary Pyle acting as godmother.**

*“Father, I have glorified you on earth and have finished the work you gave me to do.” John 17:4*

### **From Our Spiritual Director**

## **Calvary Love**

All his life, St. Padre Pio experienced “Calvary Love.” This means, first of all, to die to oneself. Secondly, it means to nail everything to the cross, as St. Paul told us. Third, it means to climb on to the cross and become one with Jesus as Padre Pio did. Many times we do not want this Calvary Love. We are just like the giant in “Gulliver’s Travels.” While the giant was sleeping, the little people tied him down and he was unable to move. We are giant sleepers.

#### **What ties us down is when:**

We fight Calvary Love as in the three examples above.

We do not apologize when we are wrong.

We look at the speck in another’s eye.

Our religion is based on fear and not faith.

We get easily offended.

We seek the first place.

We do not control our thoughts of pride, envy, and lust.

We do not help others and do not take the initiative.

We do not listen to the Holy Spirit and do not change.

We do not bury our pride. (St. Francis de Sales said that pride will die one hour after we are buried.)

We should do great deeds like Padre Pio did and always make the effort to help others. Let us climb the road of Calvary. Let us radiate Christ to all.

Fr. Louis Solcia, CRSP

*“Let your entire life be spent in resignation, prayer, work, humility, and rendering thanks to the good God. Consider that we are always in the presence of God, to whom we have to give account for our every action, both good and bad.” St. Padre Pio*

Join Bishop Gilbert Chavez with Fr. Louis Solcia on SEPTEMBER 28, 2003 to Celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina at the IMMACULATA in San Diego. Holy Hour begins at 3 PM, Mass at 4 PM followed by a Procession and Blessing with Relic of St. Pio.