



“Pray, Hope and Don’t Worry”



Padre Pio Newsletter

Editors, Ron & Diane Allen

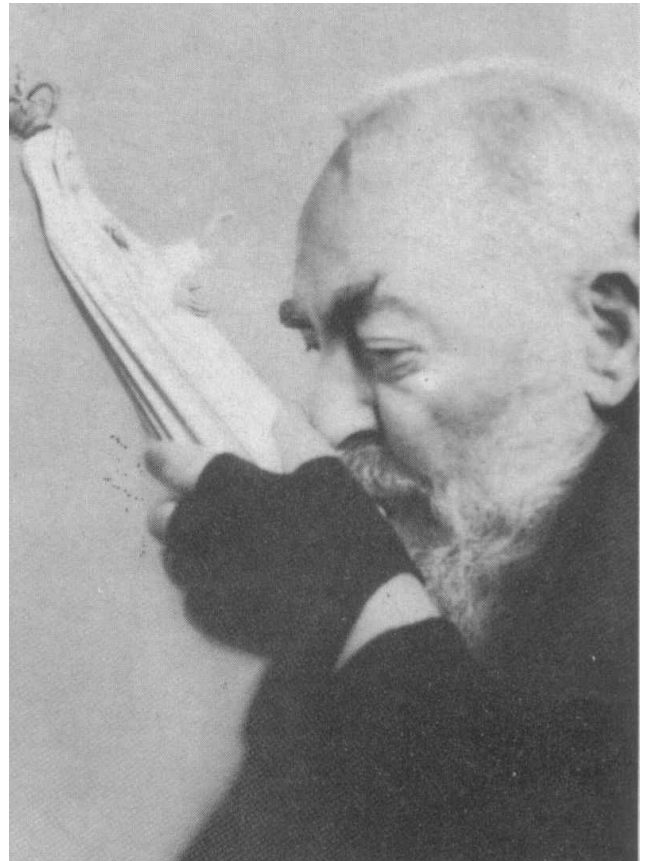
“Padre Pio imitated Jesus as the Crucified One out of love of what Our Divine Savior underwent for the sins of men. But Padre Pio also loved the mother of Jesus. He loved her as a son and honored her by always holding the Rosary and using it. For him the Rosary was an encounter with God through Mary.”
Fr. Augustine McGregor OCSO

St. Padre Pio’s Love for the Blessed Mother

One of the outstanding characteristics of Padre Pio’s (Francesco Forgione’s) spirituality was his deep devotion to Mary. His love for the Blessed Mother was one which was present from his earliest years and which lasted through his whole life. In the small town of Pietrelcina where he was born, devotion to the Madonna has been a characteristic of the people’s spirituality for many centuries. Our Lady Liberatrix (Our Lady of Liberty) was the special patroness of the area and was venerated in the main church. Every year there was a festival in her honor with a procession through the streets.

The Forgiones were an extremely devout family. When the church bells rang every morning the family gathered for morning prayers. They went to church every day and prayed the Rosary together as a family every evening. Prayer came before all other activities in the household. Maria Giuseppa, Padre Pio’s mother, also had a great devotion to Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Padre Pio was 14 years old when he visited the shrine in Pompeii dedicated to Our Lady. Our Lady of Pompeii was especially dear to his heart and often when he needed a special grace for himself or for someone else, he would ask his friends to pray to Our Lady of Pompeii for his intentions. He wrote “I should like to ask you, if it is not inconvenient, to do me the kindness of making three consecutive novenas to the Virgin of Pompeii for a grace to be obtained for me from her Son, a grace which will mean a great deal for a certain soul.” On another occasion he wrote, “I thank you for the novenas you made for me to Our Lady of Pompeii and I would ask you if it is not inconvenient, to continue because



St. Pio of Pietrelcina kisses a statue of Our Lady of Fatima to whom he had a great devotion. Throughout his life he was an apostle of the love of Mary.

I am in great need.”

In his letters to his spiritual directors, Padre Pio called the Blessed Mother, “beautiful Virgin Mary,” “most tender mother of priests,” “Mediatrice of all graces.” In Our Lady, he saw the advocate of sinners, the most beloved, the consoler. He frequently referred to Mary simply as “Mother.” Reciting the Angelus he rarely managed to restrain his emotions and when he spoke about her it was not unusual for him to shed tears.

The Sorrowful Virgin was another attribute of Mary that was close to his heart. He loved to contemplate her at the foot of the cross. To his spiritual children he would say, “Go and keep company with Jesus in His Passion, and with His Sorrowful Mother.”

From the day on which he became a priest he always preferred to say Mass at Our Lady's altar. The Mass he celebrated most frequently was the Mass of the Immaculate Conception. "The Immaculate Conception," he said, "is the first step on the path of salvation."

To a spiritual daughter who asked him for a thought on the Madonna, he said, "My daughter, it is enough for you to know that Mary is the Mother of Jesus. . .She loves us so much that she offered to God the Father His only natural Son to save His adopted sons. . .She is a great and inestimable treasure who encloses in herself an infinite treasure, the Son of God."

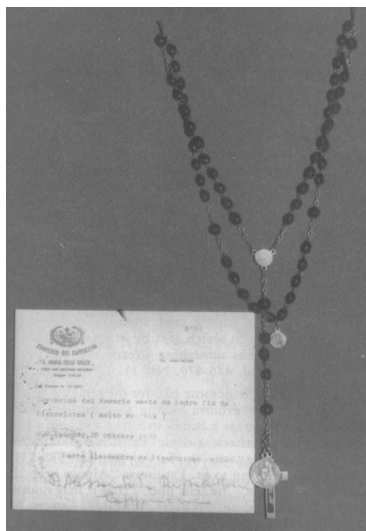
Padre Pio used to speak of being inundated with graces by her. "She treats me as if I were her only child on the face of the earth," he wrote. He spoke of the tenderness of Our Lady who accompanied him to the altar. "What care she took to accompany me to the altar this morning. It seemed to me that she has nothing else to think about except myself as she filled my whole heart with sentiments of holy love."

Padre Eusebio Notte, personal assistant to Padre Pio, once said to him, "You see Our Lady, don't you?" He answered, "She comes to me whenever I need her." He also said that she remained beside him when he heard confessions. "Her loving care toward me cannot be described in words," he said.

Padre Pio's love for Mary was evident as he prayed the Rosary whenever there was a free moment in his busy day and when there were no free moments, he found a way to pray even then. He preferred the Rosary above all other prayers and asked his spiritual children to carry a Rosary with them at all times and to pray it every day. For him the Rosary represented the continual meditation on the profound mysteries of God's designs for salvation.

Padre Pio said so many rosaries in one day that the number was unbelievable, although he had a special grace for doing this. His spirit of prayer made what seemed impossible, within his reach. "The Lord asks this of me; He does not ask the same of you," he said. Once someone asked him how he was able to pray so many rosaries. "You can do one thing at a time," he replied, but I can do three or four."

When his eyesight became weak, his Superiors allowed him to replace the recitation of the Divine Office with that of the Rosary. He always said the Rosary before retiring at night and he made sure his Rosary was in its proper place, under his pillow with in reach and ready for use.



Padre Pio's Rosary which he was never without. He called the Rosary, "Crown of graces."

Padre Pio said to one of the friars, "My son, if we do what we have always done, what our fathers did before us, we cannot go wrong. Satan wants to destroy this prayer, but in this he will never succeed. The Rosary is the prayer of those who triumph over everything and everyone. It was Our Lady who taught us this prayer, just as it was Jesus who taught us the Our Father." Padre Pio defined the Rosary as "The synthesis of our faith, the expression of our charity, and the foundation of our hope."

Daniel Hickey, from St. Albans, New York, was an American G.I. stationed in Italy during World War II when he met Padre Pio. When he returned to the U.S., Danny entered the seminary and became a Capuchin priest. Recalling his visits with Padre Pio he wrote, "Padre Pio was usually seen standing with his right hand in the front fold pocket of his Capuchin habit. A few times when he withdrew his hand, he was seen to be fingering a small chaplet of beads. It seems it was Padre Pio's habit not to waste a second but to fill each one with a prayer. Any lull in the conversation, no matter how short, his lips would be seen to move slightly as he prayed. But there was nothing ostentatious in all this; it was a long time before I was aware of what he was doing, though I had noticed his hand constantly in the breast pocket of his habit."

Father Alessio Parente said, "I was at his side for six years, and in all that time I never saw him without the Rosary in his hands night and day. Our Lady never refused him anything through the Rosary. The Rosary was his constant link with Our Lady."

Not only did Padre Pio have a profound devotion to the Mother of God, but he also seemed to know the dispositions of her heart. An image of the Madonna was found to be weeping in one of the parish churches in Italy. The bishop of the diocese asked for an investigation into the matter and after much study the bishop declared it to be authentic. When Padre Pio was told about this he said, "When Our Lady is weeping, things are not going well."

Bill Martin (who later became Father Joseph Pius Martin) from Brooklyn, New York, first met Padre Pio in 1959. It was during his second visit in 1964 that he found it very hard to leave. As he was waiting for the bus to take him to Foggia, to his great relief a friar came running to tell him that Padre Pio had sent him to say that he wanted Bill to stay. He entered the friary as a 3rd order Franciscan and was known to everyone as Brother Bill. He became Padre Pio's personal assistant. One afternoon as he was sitting next to Padre Pio on the balcony near Padre Pio's cell, he was thinking to himself how very fortunate he was that he had been able to be so close to Padre Pio through the years. He wondered to himself who had obtained this marvelous grace for him. No words passed between the two but at the moment that Brother Bill was thinking those thoughts Padre Pio turned to him and said, "It was Our Lady."

The Virgin Mary, ever close to Padre Pio, assisted him in a special way regarding the state of his health. Although Padre

Pio suffered from poor health his entire life he did not become discouraged. He offered all of his sufferings to the Lord for the conversion of sinners and for the souls in purgatory. He said that God had “put the problem of my health and a victorious outcome into the hands of our heavenly Mother.” Once when he was ill, he confided to his Superior, “What made me suffer more than anything was not being able to say even one Ave Maria.”

Not only was the Virgin present to Padre Pio in times of physical infirmity but in times of interior trials and spiritual suffering as well. On August 15, 1929 on the Feast of the Assumption, Padre Pio described an experience of Our Lady while he was celebrating Mass. “This morning I went up to the holy altar I know not how. Physical pain and interior grief competed as to which could most afflict all my poor being... A mortal sadness pervaded me through and through and I thought that all was finished for me....At the moment of consuming the Sacred Species of the Host, a sudden light flooded through me and I clearly saw the Heavenly Mother with the Christ Child in her arms who together said to me, “Stop worrying! We are with you, you belong to Us and We are yours.”

Pio testifies to the Virgin Mary’s help in a number of letters to his spiritual directors. On May 26, 1910 he wrote to Father Benedetto, “My only regret, dear Father, is that I have no adequate means with which to thank the Blessed Virgin Mary, through whose intercession I have undoubtedly received so much strength from the Lord, to bear with sincere resignation the many humiliations to which I am subjected day after day. . .and I do not believe this strength comes to me from the world.”

There were always crowds of people around Padre Pio, especially the sick, trying to get close to him and to touch him. To the sick and the suffering who implored his help, the Padre would say, “Entrust yourself to Our Lady.” He would often say, “Let us pray to Our Lady that she snatch this grace for you from the Heart of Jesus.” And for those who came to him with especially difficult personal problems, family problems, etc. he would often say, “Here we need the Madonna.”

Cleonice Morcaldi, one of Padre Pio’s spiritual daughters, spoke to Padre Pio on September 20th, just three days before he died. “Father, give me at least one word,” she said to him. “Love the Madonna and make her loved. Always recite her Rosary. That is an armor against the evils of the world today.” Cleonice asked him, “Is the Madonna close to you?”



Our Lady Liberatrix
Patroness of Pietrelcina

“A Mother...” he replied. “All of paradise is near her.”

Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968. Padre Pelegrino Funicelli, his brother in religion, assisted him in his last moments on earth. He said that a short time before Padre Pio’s death and with great tenderness, Padre Pio gazed at a picture of Our Lady Liberatrix that was hanging in his cell. He passed into eternal life peacefully, gently. He died with his Rosary. His last words were *Gésu, Maria*, – Jesus, Mary which he repeated over and over until he breathed his last.

*Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.
Gate of Heaven, pray for us.*

Padre Pio’s Words of Faith

“Reflect upon and keep before your mental gaze the great humility of the Mother of God, our Mother.”

“In my greatest sufferings it seems to me that I no longer have a mother on this earth, but a very compassionate one in Heaven.”

“Recommend me to the Lord and to the Virgin Mother because I am in extreme need of their help.”

“I feel myself held fast and bound to the Son by means of this Mother.”

“The greatest sign of love you can show me will be precisely this, that you too thank our Blessed Lady.”

Memories of Padre Pio

One day Padre Pio and Padre Pellegrino Funicelli were sitting in the monastery garden. Not far away was Brother Costantino who was enjoying the fresh air and praying his Rosary. Padre Pio said, “Do you see Brother Costantino? Old and sick as he is, he seems now to be worth nothing; and yet, as an obedient son of Holy Mother Church, who knows how to hold a Rosary in his hand and knows how to pray to the Madonna, he is worth more than you or me. Do you know why he has so much peace of soul? Because he has placed all his trust in the Most Holy Virgin and because he interests himself as little as possible in the problems of the world. His spirit of prayer and his devotion to the Most Holy Virgin are virtues that wash away all defects and all human weaknesses. He draws on himself the gaze of the Madonna and his prayers have saved many souls. You think the penitents are attracted by the confessor, but instead they are spurred on to penance by these hidden prayers. The Madonna listens to these devout sons of the Holy Church. I would almost say that she gets her strength from the prayers of these men whom you consider useless. For me these brothers in the faith always say something on behalf of the Most Holy Virgin, on behalf of the Church and on behalf of God.”

Testimonial

I was diagnosed with cancer and the night before my scheduled surgery I dreamed of being with Our Lady. She told me there is a great healer named Padre Pio but that he had already passed on. She said he had a hospital and showed me a huge building but then my dream ended without entering it. Having no knowledge of who Padre Pio was, except for a short note written on my prayer book, I forgot about my dream. Before my chemotherapy started, my mother and I joined a pilgrimage and in the bus they were showing videos. To my amazement, one was about Padre Pio. What touched me most was when it mentioned his hospital that he had built. It was what I had seen in my dream. I have finished my chemotherapy and I am fine.

Marita Leonor

The Saints Love Our Blessed Mother

“Every time I enter a place consecrated to the Queen of heaven, I feel that I am in my Mother’s home.”

St. Francis de Sales

“We know very well that the Blessed Virgin is Queen of heaven and earth, but she is more Mother than Queen.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux

“The Virgin was so beautiful that one would be willing to die to see her again.”

St. Bernadette Soubirous

“The Blessed Virgin’s eyes were turned toward heaven; she stood erect upon a large white sphere...She held a little golden ball surmounted by a cross, and this she was offering to God.”

St. Catherine Labouré

“Some people are so foolish that they think they can go through life without the help of the Blessed Mother.”

St. Pio of Pietrelcina

PADRE PIO DEVOTIONS

Padre Pio Devotions are every 1st 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

Visit our Padre Pio website at www.saintpio.org

From our Spiritual Director

I like very much the true story regarding Mr. Joachim Boufflet and his encounter with Padre Pio that took place in August, 1968. Joachim was a student at the University of Paris and for a long time had been considering becoming a Carmelite priest.

A friend of Joachim’s, Janine, who was handicapped, wanted to visit Padre Pio but was not able to. She was hoping that someone would go in her name and ask Padre Pio to pray for her. Joachim decided to go to San Giovanni Rotondo with her request.

When he arrived at the monastery, Joachim became disillusioned. Padre Pio was elderly and in very poor health and was not easily accessible to the many who wanted to speak to him. There was also a long waiting list for the small number of confessions that he still heard.

One afternoon when Joachim was in the monastery church, a Capuchin priest approached him and asked him to help him carry a statue into the new church. They carried it through a side door into the cloister. There Joachim saw Padre Pio sitting a short distance away, in an easy chair.

They carried the statue into the new church and to its proper place. Joachim asked how to get back to the little chapel of Our Lady of Grace. The priest indicated the door they had just come through and Joachim returned to the cloister. He walked to where Padre Pio was sitting and knelt at his feet. He was very excited to be so close to this saintly priest whom he had traveled so far to see. Padre Pio put his hand on Joachim’s head. As Joachim made his confession, Padre Pio’s gift of reading hearts was evident. Joachim felt both a profound peace and a great anguish. He did not know how long the exchange lasted. Padre Pio then said to him, “Pray to the Madonna. Consecrate yourself to the Virgin of Carmel.” As Joachim was getting up to leave, Padre Pio said to him, “And tell Janine that it’s all right and that I am praying for her.” Joachim had completely forgotten about Janine and the fact that her request was the reason he had come to this remote monastery. Joachim then received his blessing. Padre Pio looked at him with a very serious expression and then closed his eyes.

Once back in the chapel, Joachim began to cry. He was overcome with a great joy. One month later Padre Pio passed into eternal life.

-Fr. Louis Solcia, CRSP

O my Mother, Mary most holy, treasure of all graces, refuge of sinners, consolation of the afflicted, hope of those who despair and most powerful help of Christians, I place all my confidence in you.

O Mary, conceived without sin, pray for us who have recourse to thee