

Padre Pio: The Saint Who Bore The Wounds of Christ for 50 Years!

Four days after his ordination, Padre Pio of Pietrelcina celebrated his first high mass in Pietrelcina, Italy. On the traditional commemorative picture, he wrote these words, "Oh Jesus, my breath and my life, on this day when I raised you up with my trembling hands in a mystery of love, may I be, in unison with you, the Way, the Truth and the Life for the world, and for you, a holy priest, the perfect victim."

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Padre Pio did become the perfect victim, bearing the painful, bleeding wounds of Christ, pierced side, and wounds piercing his hands and feet—miraculously given to him as he prayed before a crucifix in a church choir loft on September 20, 1918.

He had been told by Jesus that he would bear these wounds for fifty years—and then he would see Him! Fifty years later, he died on September 23, 1968. The wounds closed and healed completely days before his death.

During those fifty years, Padre Pio became an "alter Christus," another Christ on earth, as he served His Lord and Savior by serving others.

His miracles are many, from curing the lame to healing the little girl who was brought to him with no pupils in her eyes. She left seeing, through totally white eyes with no pupils!

He brought tens of thousands to Jesus Christ's open arms in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Using a number system, people waited up to 10 days to confess to the holy man, the first priest in church history bearing the stigmata, the wounds of Christ. Holy St. Francis, a brother, bore Christ's wounds also—but for a shorter time.

When Padre Pio prayed to be in union with Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life for the world, he had no idea he would be given God's greatest gift as a Confessor: he was able to see and read souls, knowing all unconfessed mortal sins. If a person came to confession, and didn't confess a serious sin, perhaps from years ago and long forgotten, Padre Pio gently reminded the person of the sin and the penitent acknowledged and confessed the sin with proper sorrow.

This all led to Padre Pio spending up to 16 hours a day in the confessional. Occasionally, a person would come to Confession and lie to him, or perhaps Padre Pio would see there is no sorrow at all for the sins. In that case, he would stop the person, telling the person why, and held out the offer to hear his or her Confession when the penitent returned. Some went right back to the end of the line and got ready for Confession in a proper manner.

Padre Pio's fame spread far and wide, drawing many to him for cures and for healing of their souls in Confession.

In spite of all his suffering from the constantly bleeding wounds of Christ, he was always willing to suffer for souls to have them turn to God and His love.

He had a close relationship with his Guardian Angel. "How comforting to think that, right at our side, stands a spirit who never leaves us from the cradle to the grave; not for an instant, not even when we dare to sin.

And this heavenly spirit guides us, protects us like a friend, like a brother."

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From the age of 5, when he knew he wanted to become a monk in the Franciscan order, he had visions of both Jesus and Mary. All through his life, they helped him in his battles with the evil one.

He was so close to Mary, he promised to say at least 15 rosaries a day, which he did faithfully.

Even at the moment of death, right after confessing to a priest, he said he saw two mothers. The priest saw only the picture of Padre Pio's mother. Padre Pio insisted there were two mothers there. The other mother was the tender, loving, caring mother he turned to all of his life—the Blessed Virgin Mary to take him to his Lord and Savior.

Today, 8 million pilgrims a year come to pray at his tomb in San Giovanni, Italy, in Our Lady of Grace Church. More millions come to this shrine than any other shrine in the world except for the Basilica of our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.

"I will do much more after my death," promised the holy priest. Obviously, his words have proved to be true. Not only do millions go to Italy, but many more have a great devotion to Padre Pio, including Pope John Paul II who beatified and canonized him for just two of his many miracles after death, raising Padre Pio to the altar as a saint on June 16, 2002. He was beatified three years earlier on May 2, 1999.

Pope John Paul II, while he was still a bishop in Krakow, Poland, was told by Padre Pio to learn many languages, and it is said, never denied by the Vatican, that Padre Pio prophesied directly to the young bishop that he would become Pope.

Padre Pio's wounds gave off a heavenly perfume. He was also able to be in two places at once, known as bilocation. We must remember that nothing is impossible with God.

One of the greatest pieces of advice Padre Pio has left us is the following: "Pray, hope and don't worry. Trust in the infinite goodness of Almighty God!"

Few men would have the courage to say what Padre Pio said, "My Jesus, save everyone; I offer myself as victim for them all. Strengthen me, take my heart, fill it with your love and then command whatever you will."

*Love the Madonna and make her loved by others.
Always pray the rosary....I wish I had a voice strong
enough to call the sinners of the whole world to love
our Blessed Mother.*

Jesus commanded that Padre Pio would suffer like no priest ever has! But he was also given great gifts too—from healing to prophecy, to reading and reconciling souls with God.

Every time we go to Confession, we know that Christ Himself hears us and forgives us. The priest is His divine instrument—and in the case of Padre Pio, it is evident he was given the light of Christ to see

each soul as Christ saw that soul.

Many books have been written about Padre Pio. An article cannot hope to encompass all this priest did, but can only shine some light on this holy saint, who constantly stands ready in Heaven to live up to his promise, “I will do much more after my death.”

Padre Pio’s legacy is two-fold: his Home for the Relief of Suffering which draws ill pilgrims from all over the world to San Giovanni Rotondo in southern Italy. It has state-of-the-art equipment, top physicians and above all, a reliance on Christ with prayer. Padre Pio never wanted it to be a hospital, but a home for ill pilgrims. Those who can pay, do so; those who can’t, offer their prayers.

The second part of his legacy is the Padre Pio prayer groups—all over the world, most of whom meet every week. Individuals devoted to Padre Pio outnumber these prayer groups for with sainthood, even more are devoted to this saint who became another Christ, “alter Christus,” on earth for all of our good.

The Rosary and the Madonna

Someone asked Padre Pio one day what the inheritance would be that he would leave his spiritual children. He answered at once, “The Rosary.”

Another asked him what prayer to choose for use throughout one’s life. He promptly replied, “The Rosary.”

Shortly before his death in 1968, Padre Pio was asked by some of his spiritual children for some words of wisdom. He answered, “Love the Madonna and make her loved by others. Always pray the rosary.”

Padre Pio also said, “I wish I had a voice strong enough to call the sinners of the whole world to love our Blessed Mother.”

Known for his long, devout Masses, Padre Pio said, “If men only appreciated the value of a holy Mass, they would need traffic officers at church doors every day to keep the crowds in order.”