

**PADRE PIO: A CATHOLIC
PRIEST WHO WORKED
MIRACLES AND BORE THE
WOUNDS OF JESUS CHRIST
ON HIS BODY**

Bro. Michael Dimond

Padre Pio spoke to a recently-widowed woman; her husband had left her and their two children to live with another woman for over three years. Suddenly cancer had taken his life. He consented to receive the last sacraments before his death, after many pressing appeals.

The woman asked: "Where is his soul, Padre? I haven't slept, worrying." "Your husband's soul is condemned forever," Padre Pio responded. The woman replied: "Condemned?" Padre Pio sadly nodded. "When receiving the last Sacraments, he concealed many sins. He had neither repentance nor a good resolution. He was also a sinner against God's mercy, because he said he always wanted to have a share of the good things in life and then have time to be converted to God."

Two Freemasons, who were bitterly opposed to God and the Catholic Church, decided to make mock confessions to Padre Pio of sins they simply made up. Their goal was to desecrate the Sacrament of Penance. These men went to him at separate times. As they began to confess their made up sins, Padre Pio stopped them, told them he knew what they were doing, and then began to tell each of them their real sins, as well as the time, the place and how they committed them. The two men were so overwhelmed that a few days later they repented of their sinful lives and converted.

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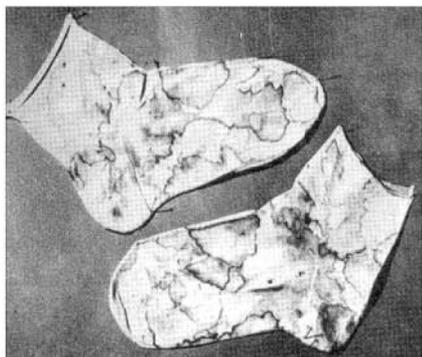


above: under obedience,
Padre Pio shows his stigmata
in 1918



above: a picture of Padre
Pio's stigmatized right hand
which was taken during
Mass

below and right:
examples of Padre
Pio's bloodstained
socks and shirt

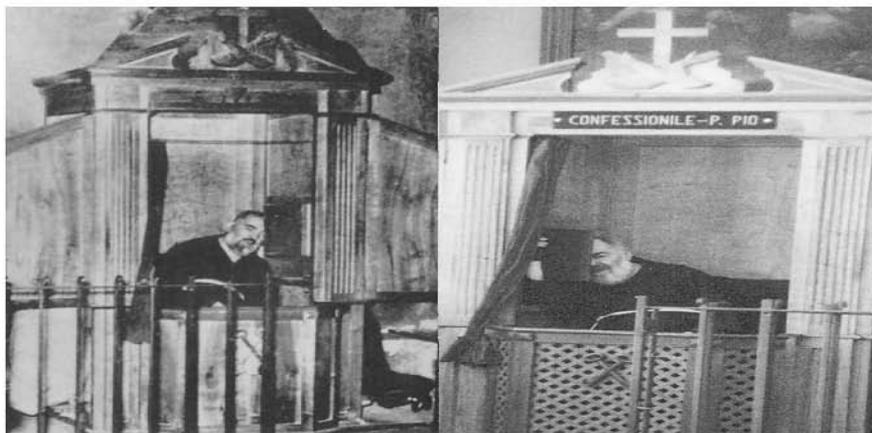




above: as soon as people heard that Padre Pio received the stigmata, huge numbers of people came to the monastery



above: a photo of Our Lady of Grace Friary about the time Padre Pio arrived in 1916



above: Padre Pio hearing confessions

Padre Pio: A Catholic Priest who worked miracles and bore the wounds of Jesus Christ on his body

Bro. Michael Dimond, O.S.B.

Padre Pio was a Franciscan Capuchin priest who bore the five wounds of Jesus Christ on his body visibly for more than fifty years. Padre Pio was also a seer, mind-reader, prophet, miracle-worker, confessor, mystic, ascetic, and missionary on a world-wide scale.¹ Hundreds of books and articles have been written about Padre Pio. Lengthy articles about him have appeared in many magazines including *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New York Times Magazine*.²

The event of receiving the Stigmata

Having the *stigmata* means having on one's body the "marks resembling wounds on the crucified body of Christ."³ There have only been about sixty accepted instances of the stigmata in the Catholic Church's history.⁴

Padre Pio was the first priest in the history of the Catholic Church to receive the visible stigmata. He had the visible stigmata for over fifty years, and his loss of blood over the years was so great that, according to medical science, he could not have survived for very long – certainly not fifty years.⁵

Padre Pio actually received the stigmata invisibly on August 14, 1910.⁶ Padre Pio prayed that his stigmata would remain invisible and hidden from the eyes of men.⁷ But on September 20, 1918, while making his thanksgiving after a Mass, he received the visible stigmata. He was commanded by his spiritual director to describe everything that happened on that day. Padre Pio described the event:

“...I saw a mysterious visitor before me ...feet and side were dripping blood. The sight frightened me... Then the vision of the visitor passed away, and I saw that my hands, feet and side were pierced and dripping blood. You will imagine the pain I felt then and that I kept experiencing almost every day continually.⁸ The heart wound bleeds continually, especially from Thursday evening until Saturday. Dear Father, I am dying of pain because of the wound and the resulting embarrassment... I will raise my voice and will not stop imploring Him until in His mercy he takes away, not the wound or the pain, which is impossible because I wish to be inebriated with pain, but these outward signs which cause me such embarrassment and unbearable humiliation.”⁹

His stigmata were very deep wounds at the center of his hands and feet and on the left side of his body. His hands and feet were pierced all the way through; you could even see light through the membrane that covered his wounds. He wore half-gloves over his hands (except during Mass), and stockings on his feet.¹⁰ Over the years, thousands of people saw Padre Pio's wounds exposed at his Masses.¹¹ The bandage that was located on his side wound would become soaked with blood during the night, and had to be changed the following morning. His stigmata was

examined by doctors on several occasions. The unbiased conclusion that they reached was that his wounds were unexplainable. Without direct permission of his superiors, no one was able to see the wounds.¹²

Dr. Bignami examined the wounds shortly after Padre Pio received them. He stated: "...I do not understand how these wounds have persisted for nearly a year now without getting better or worse."¹³

Corroborating the conclusion of the doctors, that the presence of the stigmata was unexplainable and miraculous, was the fact that Padre Pio had operations for a hernia and for a cyst. These conditions healed normally, but his stigmata didn't heal normally.¹⁴ Amazingly, Padre Pio's wounds on his hands were often open and exposed, but remained completely free from infection. He lost about a cup-full of blood every day from the wound on his side, which was covered always by a linen cloth.¹⁵

Another doctor, Dr. Sanguinetti, told a friend: "If you or I would suffer one-tenth of the pain that Padre Pio suffers from his wounds, we'd be dead."¹⁶

Padre Pio was asked why the wound in his side was in a slightly different place than the place where Our Lord's wound was. He responded: "It would be too much if it were exactly like the Lord's."¹⁷ Besides the stigmata, Padre Pio suffered the crowning with thorns and the flagellation almost once a week.¹⁸

The blood around the stigmata of Padre Pio gave off at times a pleasant fragrance "like a mixture of violets and roses." One doctor added, "One should consider

that of all the parts of the human organism, blood is the quickest to decompose. In any case blood never gives off a pleasant odor.”¹⁹

This miraculous pleasant fragrance was also smelled on things that belonged to Padre Pio and on some things that he touched. Some devotees of Padre Pio have smelled a pleasant fragrance, roses, wild flowers or a cigar smoke scent. They believe this indicates his presence, a warning or a message of some kind.

In the archives at Our Lady of Grace Friary, there are volumes of testimonies from more than a thousand different people who were pronounced hopelessly ill by doctors, but were cured of incurable maladies and the effects of crippling injuries through the intercession of Padre Pio.²⁰ Padre Pio also caused numerous conversions to occur among unbelievers, atheists and agnostics – and people who claimed to be Catholics, but had lapsed in the practice of the Faith.²¹

Padre Pio's childhood

Padre Pio's mother gave birth to eight children, three of whom died at a very early age.²² Padre Pio was born on May 25, 1887, named Francesco Forgione, and was baptized the following day.²³ At five years of age, Francesco was extremely sensitive to matters concerning God. At this time, he began to have visions – visions of holy things as well as visions of very evil things. These horribly evil visions scared him and caused him to cry.²⁴ Francesco (Padre Pio) didn't like to go out and play with children his age because, as he said, “They are not honest; they use bad language, and they swear.”²⁵

Francesco was a meditative and docile child. At five years old, he said that he already pledged fidelity to St. Francis of Assisi; at nine years old his Mother discovered that he had been attempting to sleep on the hard, cold floor, with a stone for a pillow.²⁶ As a child, it had become second nature for Francesco, when around girls, to control his eyes modestly, keep his head somewhat inclined, act very reserved, and avoid becoming too familiar with them.²⁷ Every night Padre Pio's family said the rosary together. The Rosary held a special place in their home. Other things could be sacrificed in their house, but not the Rosary.²⁸

One time, as a youngster, he saw a girl that he knew toiling away with her needle, sewing a band on a dress. He told her: "Andrianella, today we don't work. It's Sunday." Showing her annoyance, the girl replied: "Little boy, you are too small to talk like that." Francesco left her, and came back with a pair of scissors. He then grabbed the band she had been working on and cut it into pieces.²⁹

When Francesco Forgione (Padre Pio) was fourteen (1901), he was sent to work on a high school program under the direction of Angelo Caccavo. In 1902, Caccavo assigned Francesco the task of writing a paper entitled "If I Were King." This is what the fifteen year old Francesco Forgione wrote under the theme "If I Were King":

"[If I Were King] I would fight, first against divorce, which so many wicked men desire, and make people respect as much as possible the sacrament of matrimony. What happened to Julian the Apostate,

who was brave, self-controlled, and studious, but who made the big mistake of denying Christianity, in which he was educated, because he decided to revive Paganism? His life was wasted because he did not attain anything but the despicable name of apostate.”³⁰

On January 6, 1903, Padre Pio entered religious life as a Capuchin monk.³¹ Padre Pio’s health was so bad that his theology professor said to him: “Your health is not good, so you cannot become a preacher. My hopes for you are that you will be a great and conscientious confessor.”³²

The statement was prophetic, for it would be fulfilled in an incredible way. Padre Pio was ordained as a priest of the Catholic Church on August 10, 1910.³³

Confessions

John 20: 21-23: “As the Father hath sent me, I also send you. When He had said this, He breathed on them; and He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained.”

In the Gospel of John, we see the power to forgive sins conferred by Jesus Christ upon the Apostles. The power to forgive sins conferred upon priests validly ordained by a bishop would play a prominent role in the life and miracles of Padre Pio. From 1918 to 1923, Padre Pio heard confessions fifteen to nineteen hours every day. In the 1940s and 1950s, he generally heard confessions somewhat less than that, but still five to eight hours every day.³⁴

The average confession made to Padre Pio lasted only three minutes. According to one estimate, Padre Pio heard a total of approximately five million confessions.³⁵

So many people wanted Padre Pio to hear their confessions that they generally had to wait two or three weeks before their turn came.³⁶ The number of people became so large that it was necessary to open an office to give tickets out. The tickets were numbered; they indicated where people were in line for Padre Pio's confessional.³⁷ This numbering system began to be implemented in January, 1950.³⁸ There was also a rule instituted that you couldn't go to confession to Padre Pio more than once every eight days.

One man from Padua, who had gone to confession to Padre Pio, tried to go to confession again before the eight-day waiting period had elapsed. In order to circumvent the waiting-period, he lied about the amount of days that had passed since his last confession to Padre Pio. When he entered the confessional, Padre Pio sent him out and forcefully accused him of his lie. After being kicked out, the man said with tears, "I've told many lies during my lifetime, and I thought I could deceive Padre Pio too."³⁹ But Padre Pio had a supernatural knowledge of his action.

Padre Pio demanded that each confession be a true conversion. He didn't tolerate a lack of honesty in the explanation of sins. He was very hard on those who made excuses, spoke insincerely, or lacked a

firm resolution to change. He demanded frankness and total honesty from the penitent. He also required a true and sincere sorrow of heart, and an absolute firmness in a person's resolutions for the future.⁴⁰

Many of Padre Pio's penitents made the astounding statement that, when in his confessional, they would experience the awesome impression of being before the judgment seat of God.⁴¹

If the penitent wasn't honest, or just read through the list of his or her sins without the firm resolution to change, Padre Pio would often growl "get out."⁴² Many people said that Padre Pio was brusque and irate, that he would sometimes snap shut the panel in the penitent's face. Padre Pio would often denounce a penitent with a searing phrase.⁴³

One man who was thrown out of the confessional by Padre Pio stated: "What kind of blackguardly monk is that? He did not give me time to say a word, but straightway called me an old pig and told me to get out!" Another person said to this man that Padre Pio probably had good reasons for calling him an old pig and treating him in this way. "I can't think why," said the man who had been thrown out of the confessional; and then, after a pause, the man said: "unless it is because I happen to be living with a woman who is not my wife."⁴⁴

Padre Pio also threw certain priests and bishops out of his confessional.⁴⁵ Padre Pio once told a priest: "If you knew fully what a fearful thing it is to sit in the tribunal of the confessional! We are administering the Blood of Christ. We must be careful that we do not fling it about by being too easy-going or negligent."⁴⁶

Another man went to confession to Padre Pio in order to test him. He wanted to see if Padre Pio could pick up that he was lying. The man told Padre Pio that he wasn't there to confess his sins, but to ask for prayers for a relative. This wasn't true, and Padre Pio knew it immediately. Padre Pio struck him across the face and ordered him out of the confessional.⁴⁷

One woman who came on a long trip to see Padre Pio said to him in confession, "Padre Pio, four years ago I lost my husband and I haven't gone to church since then." Padre Pio replied: "Because you lost your husband, you also lost God? Go away! Go away!" as he quickly closed the door of the confessional.

Shortly after this event, the same woman recovered her faith, attributing it to the way Padre Pio treated her - probably acknowledging how she had put her attachment to her husband above God.⁴⁸

Andre Mandato spoke about the time he went to confession to Padre Pio: "I had been going to church every Sunday but I had no strong belief in confession. I went very seldom. I started to believe in confession only after I went to Padre Pio. The first time I confessed to him, he told me what sins I had committed."⁴⁹

Katharina Tangeri described going to confession to Padre Pio:

"...Padre Pio began with his asking us how long it had been since our last confession. This first question established contact between Padre Pio and the penitent; it suddenly seemed as if Padre Pio knew

everything about us. If our [the penitent's] answers were unclear or inexact, he would correct them; we would get the feeling that... his eye could see our soul as it really was before God."⁵⁰

Padre Pio commented on the amount of confessions he heard, and how he was able to do it: "There have been periods when I heard confessions without interruption for eighteen hours consecutively. I don't have a moment to myself. But God helps me effectively in my ministry. I feel the strength to renounce everything, so long as souls return to Jesus and love Jesus."⁵¹

John McCaffery went to confession to Padre Pio, and he writes of his extraordinary experience. McCaffery wanted Padre Pio to pray for some of his friends.

McCaffery recalls: "So, during a pause, I began to say 'And then, Padre...', but he interrupted me smilingly and said: 'Yes, I shall remember your friends too!'"⁵²

A woman named Nerina Noe went to Padre Pio for confession. She told him that she was thinking about giving up smoking; she didn't anticipate the gruff reply Padre Pio gave her: "Women who smoke cigarettes are disgusting."⁵³

Frederick Abresch was one of those penitents who had been converted after going to Padre Pio for confession. Here are some of the things he described about the story of his incredible conversion:

"In November of 1928, when I went to see Padre Pio for the first time, it had been a few years since I had passed from Protestantism to Catholicism, which I

did out of social convenience. I did not have the faith; at least now I understand that I was merely under the illusion of having it. Having been raised in a highly anti-Catholic family and imbued with prejudices against dogmas to such a degree that a hasty instruction was unable to wipe out, I was always avid for secret and mysterious things.

“I found a friend who introduced me into the mysteries of spiritism. Quite quickly, however, I got tired of these inconclusive messages from beyond the grave; I went fervently into the field of the occult, magic of all sorts, etc. Then I met a man who declared, with a mysterious air, that he was in possession of the only truth: ‘theosophy’. I quickly became his disciple, and on our nightstands we began accumulating books with the most enticing and attractive titles. With self-assurance and self-importance, I used words like Reincarnation, Logos, Brahma, Maja, anxiously awaiting some great and new reality that was supposed to happen.

“I do not know why, although I believe it was above all to please my wife, but from time to time I still continued to approach the holy Sacraments. This was my state of soul when, for the first time, I heard of that Capuchin Father who had been described to me as a living crucifix, working continual miracles.

“Growing curious... I decided to go and see with my own eyes... I knelt down at the confessional [and told Padre Pio that]... I considered confession to be a good social and educational institution, but that I did not believe in the divinity of the Sacrament at all... The Padre, however, said with expressions of great sorrow, ‘Heresy! Then all your Communion were

sacrilegious... you must make a general confession. Examine your conscience and remember when you last made a good confession. Jesus has been more merciful with you than with Judas.'

"Then, looking over my head with a stern eye, he said in a strong voice, 'Praised be Jesus and Mary!' and went over to the church to hear the women's confessions, while I stayed in the sacristy, deeply moved and impressed. My head was spinning and I could not concentrate. I still heard in my ears: 'Remember when you last made a good confession!' With difficulty I managed to reach the following decision: I would tell Padre Pio that I had been a Protestant, and that although after the abjuration I was rebaptized (conditionally), and all the sins of my past life were wiped out by virtue of holy Baptism, nevertheless, for my tranquility I wanted to begin the confession from my childhood.

"When the Padre returned to the confessional, he repeated the question to me: 'So when was the last time you made a good confession?' I answered, 'Father, as I was...' but at that point the Padre interrupted me, saying, '...you last made a good confession when you were coming back from your honeymoon, let's leave everything else aside and begin from there!'

"I remained speechless, shaken with a stupor, and I understood that I had touched the supernatural. The Padre, however, did not leave me time to reflect. Concealing his knowledge of my entire past, and in the form of questions, he listed all my faults with precision and clarity... After the Padre had brought all my mortal sins to light, with impressive words he

made me understand the gravity of these faults, adding in an unforgettable tone of voice, 'You have sung a hymn to Satan, while Jesus in His ardent love has broken His neck for you.' Then he gave me my penance and absolved me... I believe not only in the dogmas of the Catholic Church, but also in the least of its ceremonies... to take away this faith, one would have to take away my life as well."⁵⁴

Joe Greco, now a great devotee of Padre Pio, had a dream in which he met Padre Pio on a road and asked him to save his sick father. Joe's father suddenly recovered after the dream. In order to thank Padre Pio, Joe decided to travel down to see him in person. After waiting four days, Joe managed to go to Padre Pio for confession. Joe described the meeting:

"This is what did it really, when Padre Pio saw me he said: 'Well your father is all right, then.' Well it shattered me really because I never had been down in San Giovanni Rotondo before. I had never been down in that part of the world, nor did I know anyone down there. And yet I posed in my mind a question to him, I was saying 'was it you, was it you?' And he replied, 'in the dream, in the dream.' Well, I started shaking, I was scared stiff to tell you the truth. I said, 'yes Father, in the dream, Father.' I told him my sins, and before he gave me absolution he said to me: 'now then, there is something else you know' [that you didn't mention in confession]. I said, 'well Father, I can't remember anything else.' Padre Pio went on to describe an incident with a girl in the park when I was first in the army. Well it all came back to me. I wished the ground had opened up and swallowed me, I was so embarrassed. I then said to Padre Pio, 'Yes Father, it all comes back to me and I'm

afraid I forgot to tell it in confession, I'm so ashamed.' 'Well,' he said, 'you have been carrying this sin around with you ever since 1941, and the place was Blackburn to tell you the truth.' And I got up to go and Padre Pio said, 'There is something else you have forgotten,' and there was a slight smile on his face. I said, 'Oh no Father, truly there is nothing else I can remember.' I thought it was about some sin. And he said: 'look in your pocket.' So I took my rosary beads out [of my pocket], I gave them to him, he blessed them and gave them back to me. And that was it."

One man said to Padre Pio in confession: "But I am attached to my sins, for me they are a necessary way of life. Help me find a remedy." Padre Pio handed him a prayer to St. Michael the Archangel to be said every day for four months.⁵⁵

Don Nello Castello, a priest from Padua, Italy, who had gone to confession to Padre Pio hundreds of times, recalled his incredible experiences:

"I went to confession to Padre Pio at least a hundred times. I recall the first time, his words both jolted and enlightened me. The counsels he gave me reflected exact knowledge of my whole life both past and future. At times he would surprise me with suggestions unconnected with the sins confessed. But later events made it clear that his counsel had been prophetic. In one confession in 1957, he spoke five times with insistence on the same question, using different words, and reminding me of an ugly fault of impatience. Furthermore, he enlightened me on the underlying causes that provoked the impatience. He described to me the behavior I should follow to avoid impatience in the future. This happened

without my having said a word about the problem. Thus he knew my problems better than I did and advised me how to correct them.”⁵⁶

Among those who came to see Padre Pio, there were professed unbelievers. Some of them came to see him out of curiosity, others to mock both Padre Pio and God.

Two Freemasons, who were bitterly opposed to God and the Catholic Church, decided to make mock confessions to Padre Pio of sins they simply made up. Their goal was to desecrate the Sacrament of Penance. These men went to him at separate times. As they began to confess their made up sins, Padre Pio stopped them, told them he knew what they were doing, and then began to tell each of them their real sins, as well as the time, the place and how they committed them. The two men were so overwhelmed that a few days later they repented of their sinful lives and converted.⁵⁷

An unbelieving Communist also came to Padre Pio for confession. At the time he still hadn't abandoned his evil beliefs. Padre Pio chased him out of the confessional, saying: “What are you doing in front of God's tribunal if you don't believe? Go! Go away! You are a Communist!”⁵⁸

In the confessional, Padre Pio would say things such as:

“Why did you sell your soul to the Devil? ... How irresponsible! ...You are on the way to Hell!” ... O you careless man, go first and get repentance, and then come here...!”⁵⁹

One person in confession questioned the very existence of Hell. Padre Pio responded, "You will believe it when you get there."⁶⁰

Padre Pio considered going to confession frequently to be something necessary for growth in the spiritual life. He went to confession at least once a week. He never wanted his spiritual children to go without confession more than ten days.⁶¹

One time Padre Pio was asked: "We confess everything that we can remember or know, but perhaps God sees other things that we cannot recall?" He responded: "If we put into [our confession] all our good will and we have the intention to confess [all mortal sins]... all that we can know or remember – the mercy of God is so great that He will include and erase even what we cannot remember or know."⁶²

For this reason one should say at the end of a confession, "and I confess any sins that I may have forgotten and did not mention in this confession."

Padre Pio on modern-day fashions

1 Timothy 2:9: "In like manner I wish women also in decent apparel: adorning themselves with modesty and sobriety..."

Galatians 5:19: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are fornication, uncleanness, immodesty..."

Padre Pio had extremely strong views on female fashions in dress. When the mini-skirt craze started, no one dared to come to Padre Pio's monastery

dressed in such an inappropriate fashion. Other women came not in mini skirts, but in skirts that were shortish. Padre Pio got very upset about this as well. One woman tried to change her skirt before going to confession; she borrowed a longer one from a friend. When she entered the confessional, he drew back the little shutter, and then snapped it shut again, stating: "Well? Have we been dressing up for a carnival, then?"⁶³ Any woman who came into his confessional wearing a skirt that was not eight inches below the knees was sent away immediately without being able to go to confession.⁶⁴ Other women, who managed to enter dressed somewhat improperly, were ordered out by Padre Pio, with him sometimes shouting "out! out! out!"⁶⁵

Padre Pio tolerated neither tight skirts nor short or low-necked dresses. He also forbade his spiritual daughters to wear transparent stockings. His severity increased each year. He would dismiss women from the confessional, even before they got inside, if he discerned their dress to be inappropriate. Many mornings he drove one out after another – ending up hearing only very few confessions. He also had a sign fastened to the church door, declaring:

"By Padre Pio's explicit wish, women must enter his confessional wearing skirts at least eight inches below the knees. It is forbidden to borrow longer dresses in church and to wear them for the confessional."

Padre Pio would rebuke some women with the words, "Go and get dressed." He would at times add: "Clowns!" He wouldn't give anyone a pass, whether they were people he met or saw the first time, or long-time spiritual daughters. In many cases, the skirts

were many inches below the knees, but still weren't long enough for Padre Pio's severity. Boys and men also had to wear long trousers, if they didn't want to be kicked out of the church.⁶⁶

On Sins of Impurity

Jacinta of Fatima: "The sins which cause the most souls to go to Hell are the sins of the flesh."

It was well known among the older priests that Padre Pio was not against using harsh, rough, and shocking language, as we saw already. This was especially true when he was dealing with cases of impurity, scandal, calumny, and sins against Motherhood. He didn't forgive these people without a rebuke, and often a very severe one. While serious sinners were often admonished with a severe warning, others were refused absolution because they were not sufficiently prepared.⁶⁷ Padre Paolo Rossi, the postulator general of the Capuchins, stated: "Padre Pio had a rough character."⁶⁸

A man who was being unfaithful to his wife confessed to Padre Pio that he was having "a spiritual crisis." Padre Pio stood up and yelled, "What spiritual crisis? You're a vile pig and God is angry with you. Go away!"⁶⁹

Another young woman confessed that she had committed sins against purity. However, she knew that when she returned home she would fall back into the same temptation and commit the sin again. She lacked the firm purpose of amendment (the firm resolution to change her life and cease sinning) – an

essential component in making a valid confession. Padre Pio refused to absolve her. She came back again and made the same confession, but Padre Pio again did not absolve her. This happened four times in a row. Right before her fifth confession, she thought to herself: "I'd rather die than commit this sin again," and she thought about this during her whole confession. Padre Pio examined her closely, and then absolved her.⁷⁰

A woman who had an abortion met Padre Pio. She said, "I never knew abortion was a sin." He replied: "What do you mean, you didn't know that this was a sin? That's killing... it's a sin, a great sin."⁷¹

One woman said she had read immoral books. Padre Pio said: "Have you confessed this before?" "Yes," she replied. "What did your confessor say to you?" Padre Pio asked. "I wasn't to do it anymore," she said. Without saying a word, Padre Pio closed the confessional door in her face and began to hear the next confession.⁷²

Padre Pio's Influence with People

God's use of Padre Pio to miraculously intercede for others was so well known that the people in the area had a profound, even absurd attachment to him. When it was said that Padre Pio might be transferred to a different location, the local people attempted to prevent it by threatening violence if he were transferred. This was, of course, a terrible and sinful decision on the part of these people. It serves to show, however, that Padre Pio's miraculous intercession was well-known among the people.

In August 1923, Padre Pio's superiors told him he was going to be transferred. On August 10, 1923, a man named Donato came up to Padre Pio and pointed a gun at him, saying, "Dead or alive, you're going to stay with us here in this village." Instantly, the people surrounded Donato and disarmed him.⁷³

People used to snip pieces of Padre Pio's habit and keep the pieces as relics. Padre Pio said about this: "Look at what they do! This is paganism! I have to be harsh with them."⁷⁴

Padre Pio restores sight to the blind

A blind man begged Padre Pio to restore his sight "even if only in one eye," so that he might again see the faces of his dear ones. Padre Pio questioned him repeatedly, "Only in one eye?" Padre Pio told the man to be of good heart and that he would pray for him. Some weeks later the man returned in tears to thank Padre Pio because his sight was restored! Padre Pio said: "So, you are seeing normally again?" The man replied, "Yes, from this eye here, not from the other." Padre Pio said: "Ah! Only from one eye? Let that be a lesson to you. Never put limitations on God. Always ask for the big grace!"⁷⁵

One young man asked Padre Pio to cure him of his blindness. Padre Pio asked him: "Do you want to have your sight restored, or to save your soul?" The man responded: "If it is a strict choice, I should rather save my soul." "It is a strict choice," said Padre Pio, and it was a very bitter and hard thing for the young man to accept.⁷⁶

In 1919, a priest named Padre Carlo Naldi came with his Jewish friend, Lello Pegna. The priest explained that Pegna had recently become totally blind. They had come to Padre Pio to see if he could be healed. Padre Pio told Pegna: "The Lord will not grant you the grace of physical sight unless you first receive sight for your soul. After you are baptized, then the Lord will give you your sight."

Months later, Pegna came back without the dark glasses that he normally wore. Pegna explained to Padre Pio that, despite opposition from his family, he had become a Christian and was baptized. At the beginning, he was discouraged when his blindness continued, but after a number of months his sight returned. The physician who had earlier told Pegna that he was hopelessly blind now had to admit that his eyesight was in perfect condition. Fr. Paolino kept in contact with Lello Pegna for nearly thirty years, and reported that his vision was still perfect.⁷⁷

A Girl Without Pupils Sees!

Gemma di Giorgi was a child born without pupils in her eyes. Gemma was declared to be incurable by a number of specialists. At the age of seven (1947), Gemma's grandmother brought her to meet Padre Pio.⁷⁸ About half way there Gemma began to see. Gemma's grandmother and other friends marveled at this miraculous occurrence; they called it a miracle! When Gemma arrived, Padre Pio, although never having seen Gemma before, called Gemma by name in front of the congregation at church, and heard her confession. During the confession, despite the fact

that Gemma mentioned nothing of her blindness, Padre Pio made the sign of the cross over each eye. At the end of the confession, he blessed her, and said: "Be good and saintly."⁷⁹

Decades after this event, Gemma sees perfectly and still undergoes eye examinations by specialists who agree that there is no explanation for her ability to see. Gemma has no pupils, and it is a scientific fact that without pupils a person cannot see. Gemma's grandmother also said: "Many eye doctors have arrived here in our home and all have declared the same thing: that without pupils in one's eyes one should not be able to see and that, therefore, this is a miracle."⁸⁰

A Mrs. Dryden explains how Padre Pio was involved in the healing of her daughter. "When my daughter became ill with cancer of the cervix six years ago, her doctor gave her five years to live. At her last check up she was told that she was completely cured. I believe this is all due to Padre Pio. A Catholic friend told me about him, so I prayed to him and put my trust in him. I am not a Catholic, but I believe this was a miracle."⁸¹

Stories such as the one above are numerous. There are many stories of physical healings and special interventions of Padre Pio, but I won't cover more of these, since this booklet is not focused on his miraculous physical healings. One can read testimonies of people who were miraculously healed through the intercession of Padre Pio in many books; some of these are dedicated primarily to this topic.⁸²

Personal Stories

Padre Pio spoke to a recently-widowed woman; her husband had left her and their two children to live with another woman for over three years. Suddenly cancer had taken his life. He consented to receive the last sacraments before his death, after many pressing appeals.

The woman asked: "Where is his soul, Padre? I haven't slept, worrying." "Your husband's soul is condemned forever," Padre Pio responded. The woman replied: "Condemned?" Padre Pio sadly nodded. "When receiving the last Sacraments, he concealed many sins. He had neither repentance nor a good resolution. He was also a sinner against God's mercy, because he said he always wanted to have a share of the good things in life and then have time to be converted to God."⁸³

Another woman told her fiancé that she couldn't go through with marriage unless he agreed to return to the Church. Upset and cynical, he agreed to go with her to Padre Pio's monastery. They went together to the very early Mass. During the Mass the girl was amazed to see her fiancé staring at the altar, pale and appearing to be shocked. "Does this happen every day?" he quietly said to her. "Yes," she responded in puzzlement, ignorant of the reason for his unusual question. Only after they came out of the Church was his reaction clearly explained to her. He saw a mass of thorns on Padre Pio's head, and blood running down his face; and he thought everyone was seeing what he saw.⁸⁴

One day a priest brought a husband and wife to Padre Pio so that he could bless them. Three of their sons were in prison for burglary. Padre Pio said to them:

“I absolutely refuse to bless you! You didn’t pull in the reins when your children were growing up, so don’t come along now when they are in jail and ask for my blessing.”⁸⁵

Alberto Del Fante was a journalist who despised Padre Pio. He denounced him in magazines as a charlatan who preyed upon gullible people. A few years later, Del Fante’s grandson, Enrico, was struck with kidney disease and tuberculosis. The doctors gave little hope that Enrico would recover. Relatives of Enrico traveled to see Padre Pio and ask him to pray for him. Padre Pio assured them the boy would recover. Desperate and distraught, Del Fante himself even said: “If Enrico gets well, I will make a pilgrimage to San Giovanni Rotondo myself.” He was convinced that nothing would happen, but the boy was healed. Del Fante was deeply moved by this miracle, and went to see Padre Pio who helped him turn to God. After Del Fante’s conversion, he became a dedicated promoter of Padre Pio.⁸⁶

A woman came to Padre Pio whose daughter had just died in the process of giving birth. The woman couldn’t think of anything else but the loss of her daughter. Padre Pio said to her: “And why are you weeping so much for her when she is already in Paradise? You would do much better to devote more attention to the activities of your seventeen-year-old

daughter who comes home late at night from dances and entertainments.”⁸⁷

One young man in Rome was ashamed of his normal custom of tipping his hat when passing in front of a Catholic church. He was scared that his friends would make fun of him. But one time he heard Padre Pio’s voice in his ear saying: “Coward.” Later on, he met Padre Pio in person and without saying anything Padre Pio said, “Next time it will be a sound box on the ear!”

An elderly lady said to Padre Pio: “Padre, today I’m sixty. Say something nice to me.” Padre Pio whispered to her: “Death is near.”⁸⁸

One time Padre Pio was coming around the altar and spoke to a man taking photographs. He told the man that he must take no more than one or two photographs during the mass. The person agreed, but then shot two whole spools. They all came out blank.⁸⁹

A doctor took a single camera shot of Padre Pio, and then decided he would take some more pictures. When the doctor re-adjusted his camera and was about to shoot, Padre Pio said: “No, Doctor; no photographs, please!” “Right Padre, sorry!” And then the doctor proceeded to take one photograph after another. They all came out blank except the one picture the doctor shot before being forbidden.⁹⁰

Cesare Festa was a lawyer and the cousin of Padre Pio’s personal physician. Festa decided to go and

see the famous priest whom his cousin had told him so much about. When they met, Padre Pio said, "You are a Mason." In an arrogant expression of loyalty to the lodge, Festa said: "Yes, Father." "And what is your task as a Mason?" Padre Pio asked. "It is to carry on our fight against the Church in the political sphere," Festa replied. Padre Pio then said things to Festa that convinced him that he couldn't have had such knowledge of him and his past except by supernatural means.⁹¹

A Communist approached Padre Pio and started to speak to him. Padre Pio interrupted him saying, "May I see your membership card?" The man took it from his wallet and gave it to him. Padre Pio took the card and tore it to pieces.⁹²

One time Padre Pio said to a man named Antonio, "How can you call yourself a Catholic and a Communist at the same time? Take your pick. You are one or the other, but you can't be both." These statements jolted Antonio, and caused him to renounce Communism and return to the Catholic Faith.⁹³

Giovanni da Prato was a taxi-driver and a violent Communist. When he would get drunk, da Prato would sometimes beat up his wife. One evening he had done just that, and was staggering into his bedroom, and he threw himself on the bed. At that moment, he began to feel the bed being shaken strongly from the lower bed-rail, and looking down in amazement he saw a friar holding the rail and looking at him angrily. The friar told him very clearly what he thought of him and his activity, and then seemed to disappear. The violent Communist Giovanni

sprang from his bed, quickly locked the front door, and then shouted to his wife: "Now then, where's that so-and-so monk?"

Pushing aside her denials and protests, Giovanni searched the house and found no one. As some time passed, he got sober enough to be convinced by his wife's sincerity. His wife had been praying to Padre Pio for help; she wondered if this event was the answer to her prayers. She told her husband that she believed it was Padre Pio who had appeared in the bedroom. Giovanni said sternly, "Look, no monk makes a monkey out of me. I'm going down to have a look at this Padre Pio of yours and hear what he has to say for himself. I'll also find out if he flies!"

Some days later, true to his word, Giovanni made a long trip in his taxi to see Padre Pio. He arrived and found Padre Pio. He recognized Padre Pio, and spoke to him. He was thunder-struck and Padre Pio led him to make a confession. After his confession, Giovanni admitted: "What I forgot, he recalled for me. I was weeping..." And at the end of the confession, Giovanni pulled out his Communist Party Membership Card and asked Padre Pio to destroy it. "Yes, I shall. But you have another of these cards in the drawer by the head of your bed. Destroy that too when you go home." Padre Pio then said to him, "You have given great scandal, and now you must do something to make up for it. For your penance you will go every Sunday to Holy Communion at the last Mass in the main church until I tell you to stop." In those days, the fasting rule was to abstain from all solid foods from midnight until Holy Communion. Giovanni had to do this for the better part of a year.

Giovanni had been an important figure among his Communist companions, but now he was just a regular “holy Joe.” He challenged some of the Communists that he knew by saying: “Why don’t you come down with me and see how you make out?” Month after month Communists would go down to see Padre Pio; they were always impressed and sometimes converted.⁹⁴

One man named Francis wrote to the official magazine of Padre Pio about how Padre Pio tried to help him. He wrote: “As you can see from the above address, I am in prison in England. I have been here for five years... Don’t worry I blame no one for where I am except my own stupid self. Yes, I am to blame... I am an alcoholic and that’s where all the trouble started... One night I was sleeping and I had a dream of Padre Pio warning me if I did not stop drinking I would end up in a lot of trouble. Well I never took any heed of the dream and here I am today in prison on a life sentence... I won’t go into the details, but I still say my rosary and of course my novena to the good man himself.”⁹⁵

Another interesting story sent to the magazine was the story of R. Van Gisbergen: “I’m a twenty-eight year old man from Holland... I was as a young child against everything of a religious kind. My parents always took me to church on Sunday, but when I had the opportunity I tried to escape out of their area. Yes something in me was against God. My life was filled with all kinds of sins against God... At this time I often tried to commit suicide and was full of hate against myself, people and the world... On September 23, 1988 the devil appeared in my dream and I was very scared. Outside this dream I didn’t believe in

God or the devil. The devil appeared in the shape of dog heads and dragon heads with tongues full of blood. I was in a real panic. Then there came a monk with a beard and a brown habit. He said to me: 'Don't be afraid my son, I will protect you by Almighty God!' And immediately I was awake and there was in me an inexplicable joy and happiness...

"Anyway, I phoned my mother and told her about this dream. She asked me to come over. I came up to her place and she showed me a book which was titled: *Padre Pio from Pietrelcina*. My mother opened it and I smelled a kind of perfume... Then she turned the pages and I couldn't believe my eyes because the photo showed the same monk of my dream. I shouted, '...this is the same man as in my dream.' My mother was full of wonder... suddenly I heard in Dutch, 'come to my grave, come to my grave.' His voice was so clear... and last year I thanked Padre Pio... at his grave."⁹⁶

Bilocation

Padre Pio was also known to have the gift of bilocation: the ability to be in more than one place at a time. Though he almost never left his monastery, a bishop saw Padre Pio at the beatification of St. Therese. Padre Pio was also seen at the tomb of Pope St. Pius X.⁹⁷

In 1916, an Italian General Cadorna suffered a terrible defeat in battle. Under his leadership there had been many casualties, and he was relieved of his command as a result. The general picked up his gun, and was about to commit suicide, when Padre Pio

simultaneously appeared in front of him in his tent. Padre Pio told him to lay aside his gun. After the war was over, the general, who had never before met Padre Pio, visited the monastery in San Giovanni Rotondo. He immediately recognized Padre Pio as the monk who had appeared in his tent.⁹⁸

Padre Pio seen in the Air

During World War II, some American and English pilots were ordered to bomb the area of San Giovanni Rotondo in Italy. When they were getting ready to drop the bombs, the pilots reported seeing in the air a monk who, with outstretched hands, convinced them not to drop the bombs. They later recognized Padre Pio as the one who appeared before them in the sky.⁹⁹ A Presbyterian, Colonel Loyal Bob Curry, reported this as well. Colonel Curry served in the 464th Bomb Group of the Fifteenth Air Force, under General Nathan F. Twining, from December 1944 until his plane was shot down and he was imprisoned by the Germans a month later. He heard about the apparitions of Padre Pio in the sky. Curry said: "Everybody was talking about it, both the American servicemen as well as the Italians who took care of the quarters."¹⁰⁰

On his relationship with angels

Padre Pio often recommended that if people wanted to send him a message or a petition they could send him their guardian angel. Fr. Dominic, who handled the American mail for Padre Pio, asked him: "Padre... a woman wants to know if she sends her guardian

angel to you, does he come?" Padre Pio replied: "Tell her that her angel is not like she is. Her angel is very obedient, and when she sends him, he comes!"¹⁰¹

Padre Pio lived in close contact with his guardian angel, who taught him to translate letters in French and Greek. The angel would keep Padre Pio up at night so that they could both chant God's praises. Padre Pio's angel would also ease the pain that he suffered from beatings that he received from demons.¹⁰²

Padre Pio had many titles for his guardian angel, including: little angel, friend, brother, companion, conductor, secretary, heavenly messenger, companion of my infancy, and others.¹⁰³

Padre Pio, *Letter*, April 20, 1915: "Often repeat the beautiful prayer: 'Angel of God, my guardian to whom the goodness of the heavenly Father entrusts me, enlighten, protect and guide me now and forever.'"¹⁰⁴

A lawyer named Attilio De Sanctis was completely amazed by the fact that he had driven his car for twenty-seven miles while asleep without an accident. During a visit to see Padre Pio, he asked him what had happened that night that he had driven for miles while asleep. Padre Pio told De Sanctis: "You fell asleep and your guardian angel drove your car."¹⁰⁵

Padre Pio said about the angels: "The angels envy us for one thing only: they cannot suffer for God."¹⁰⁶

Padre Pio wrote the following to his spiritual director on November 5, 1912:

"I cannot tell you the way these scoundrels [the demons] beat me. Sometimes I feel I am about to die. On Saturday, it seemed to me that they intended to put an end to me and I did not know what saint to invoke. I turned to my angel and after he had kept me waiting a while, there he was hovering close to me, singing hymns to the divine Majesty in his angelic voice... I rebuked him bitterly for having kept me waiting so long when I had not failed to call him to my assistance. To punish him, I did not want to look him in the face; I wanted to get away, to escape from him. But he, poor creature, caught up with me almost in tears and held me until I raised my eyes to his face and found him all upset. Then he said: "I am always close to you, my beloved young man..."¹⁰⁷

Padre Pio on the Devil

Padre Pio once told a group of people that the number of devils active in the world is greater than all the people who had been alive since Adam.¹⁰⁸

Padre Pio also said: "If all the devils that are here were to take bodily form, they would blot out the light of the sun!"¹⁰⁹

At one period during his life, Padre Pio served as a spiritual director of boys at a seminary. One night a boy was awakened by scornful laughs, the noise of iron pieces being twisted around and dropping on the ground, and of chains hitting against the floor, while Padre Pio was heard to sigh over and over again, "O my Madonna!" The following morning,

the boy examined the ironwork supporting the curtain around Padre Pio's bed, and discovered all the pieces twisted. He also looked at Padre Pio and saw him "with a swollen, sick-looking eye."¹¹⁰ This story was circulated among the seminarians, who asked Padre Pio about it. Padre Pio replied and described what had transpired in order to convince the boys of the absolute necessity of prayer in the battle with the Devil. Padre Pio said:

"You want to know why the devil gave me a terrific beating? It is because I, as your spiritual father, am willing to defend one of you." Identifying the boy by name, he continued, "He was suffering a strong temptation against purity, and when he called on the Madonna, he was spiritually also calling on me for help. I rushed at once to assist him, and with the help of Our Lady's Rosary I was successful. The boy that had been tempted slept until morning, while I went through the battle, suffered the blows, but won the fight."¹¹¹

A former seminarian, for whom Padre Pio had been a spiritual director and confessor, wrote that he and his fellow students heard the frightening noise of iron bars banging together in Padre Pio's room. They also heard a sound like a train traveling at high speed through a tunnel.¹¹² One of the students, who became Fr. Matrice, also explained how one night he woke up because of a terrible uproar coming from the area where Padre Pio was sleeping. He described hearing "a burst of derisive laughter and the sound of iron-bars being twisted as well as of chains clamoring on the floor."¹¹³

The Astounding Tortures the demons put Padre Pio through

Padre Pio was in his room mainly at night. Loud thuds were heard that scared the friars. When they would go to Padre Pio's room they would discover him "drenched in sweat, and his clothes had to be changed from head to foot."¹¹⁴

Certain people who came to the friary didn't believe the reports of such strange occurrences; they laughed at it as the product of a monk's imagination. One time Bishop Andrea D'Agostino was a guest at the monastery. He looked at Padre Pio's story as a fabulous, medieval tale. However, while he was eating with the friars, he was startled by a great rumbling noise above in the ceiling. He turned pale and trembled.¹¹⁵ The bishop's assistant, who was eating in the guest room, ran into the refectory filled with fear. The bishop was so scared that he didn't want to sleep alone that night. The next morning he left the monastery and never came back.¹¹⁶

Early one morning, after everyone had fallen asleep, Padre Pio heard a knock on his door. It seemed to be Fr. Agostino (his spiritual director) asking to come in. Padre Pio said, "Come in... why have you come... How did you get here?" Fr. Agostino said: "God sent me. He is displeased with you." Padre Pio was stunned: "What?" said Padre Pio as he swung his legs over the bed and began to get out of bed. "No, no, no need to rise. I only came to say God does not approve of your practice of penance." Padre Pio said: "If you are truly here at God's request, you must give me a sign. I ask you to say the name of Jesus." At that

moment Agostino's lips parted and he started to laugh; his voice changed. Padre Pio tried to reach out and touch his brown robe. The apparition vanished, leaving behind a strong smell of sulphur.¹¹⁷ Speaking about this event in a letter on July 28, 1914, Padre Pio said: "The Devil, as you know, is a great artificer of evil... he could deceive you by some diabolical illusion or apparition disguised as an angel of light... This unhappy apostate even knows how to disguise himself as a Capuchin and to act the part quite well. I beg you to believe one who has undergone an experience of this nature."¹¹⁸

In a letter to his spiritual director on December 18, 1912, Padre Pio said: "The other night the Devil appeared to me in the likeness of one of our Fathers and gave me a very strict order from the Father Provincial not to write to you any more, as it is against poverty and a serious obstacle to perfection. I confess my weakness, dear Father, for I wept bitterly, believing this to be a fact. I should never have even faintly suspected this to be one of the ogre's snares if the angel had not revealed the fraud to me."¹¹⁹

Padre Pio was attacked quite frequently by devils which were called by Padre Pio "impure fiends" and "ugly monsters." There were interior and exterior assaults, which included howls, tremors, noises, and flying objects. One incident he described to his spiritual director:

"It was late at night and they began their assaults with devilish noise. Although I saw nothing at first, I understood who was producing the strange sound. Instead of getting terrified, I prepared for the battle

by facing them with a sneering smile. Then they came before me under the most detestable appearances. Then to get me to abuse God's grace, they began to treat me with kid gloves. But thank heaven I told them off good, and dealt with them according to what they were worth. When they saw their efforts go up in smoke they hurled themselves on me, threw me to the floor, and gave me terrific blows, throwing into the air pillows, books, and chairs, at the same time letting out desperate cries and uttering extremely filthy words."¹²⁰

Padre Pio's letter to his spiritual director, October 14, 1912 states: "The Devil wants the absolute ending of all relations and communications with you. He threatens that if I obstinately refuse to pay attention to him, he will do things to me that the human mind could never conceive."¹²¹

Speaking about the Devil and his demons, Padre Pio revealed the mind-boggling ferocity of their devilish malice: "The ogre won't admit defeat. He has appeared in almost every form. For the past few days, he has paid me visits along with some of his satellites armed with clubs and iron weapons and, what is worse, in their own form as devils."¹²²

Padre Pio revealed more of the incredible sufferings the Devil put him through: "Who knows how many times he has thrown me out of the bed and dragged me around the room? ... The other night was one of the worst. From ten o'clock when I went to bed until five o'clock in the morning, that evil one did not stop beating me... I really thought that it was the last night of my life; or, if I did not die, I would go insane. At five o'clock in the morning, when the evil one left, my

whole being was enveloped in such cold I was shivering from head to foot. It lasted a few hours. I was bleeding from the mouth..."¹²³

Another time Padre Pio described the demons' reaction when he received a letter from his spiritual director: "When I received your letter recently and before I had opened it, those wretches told me to tear it up or else throw it in the fire. If I did this, they would withdraw for good and would never trouble me again. I kept silent without giving them any answer, while in my heart I despised them. Then they added: 'We want this merely as a condition for our withdrawal. In doing so you will not be showing contempt for anyone.' I replied that nothing would make me change my mind. They flung themselves upon me like so many hungry tigers, cursing me and threatening to make me pay for it. My dear Father, they kept their word! From that day onward they have beaten me every day."¹²⁴

The Devil appeared sometimes in the form of an ugly black cat, or as a naked young woman performing an impure dance, or as a prison-guard who would whip him, or under the appearance of Christ Crucified, his spiritual father, his Father Provincial, his guardian angel, Our Lady, or St. Francis.¹²⁵ Other times the Devil would spit in his face and torment him with deafening noises.¹²⁶

Padre Pio sometimes referred to the Devil and demons as: "the ogre, scoundrel, evil spirit, filthy wretch, foul beast, woeful wretch, hideous faces, impure spirits, those scoundrels, wicked spirit, horrible beast, accursed beast, infamous apostate,

impure apostates, howling wild beasts, malignant deceiver, prince of darkness.”¹²⁷

On the evening of July 5, 1964, a cry for help was heard in the friary: “My brothers, help me!” It was Padre Pio asking for help. His brothers ran to help him and found Padre Pio lying on the floor, bleeding from the nose and forehead, and with a number of wounds above his right eyebrow.”¹²⁸

One time the evil one spoke through a possessed person, and shouted: “Padre Pio, don’t snatch the souls from us and we will not molest you!”¹²⁹

A spiritual son said to Padre Pio, “Father, some people deny the existence of the Devil”; Padre Pio responded: “How can one doubt his existence when I see him around me all the time?”¹³⁰

One time the Devil entered the confessional and pretended to make a confession. Padre Pio recalled the incredible occurrence:

“One morning, while I was confessing the men, a tall, thin man dressed in a rather refined manner and with good manners presented himself to me. When he knelt down, this stranger began to confess his sins which were of every kind against God, against his neighbor, against the moral law; they were all aberrant! One thing struck me. After my reprimanding all those accusations, using the word of God, the Teaching of the Church, and the moral teaching of the saints to back up my words, this puzzling penitent counterbalanced my words, justifying, with great ability and rare gentility, all types of sins, emptying them of all malice and trying,

at the same time, to make all sinful acts appear to be normal, natural, humanly indifferent. And this did not only concern horrifying sins against Jesus, Our Lady and the Saints... but also sins that were morally so dirty and coarse that they reached the most nauseating levels imaginable.

“The replies that this mysterious penitent gave every now and then to my arguments, with able subtlety and with cotton-wooled malice, made a terrible impression on me. I thought to myself: ‘Who is this? What world does he come from? Who is he?’ And I tried to look at him carefully in the face in order to perhaps eventually read something from between the lines of his face, and at the same time I listened very carefully to his every word so that none of them would escape me and I could weigh them up in all their significance. At a certain point, by way of an interior, vivid and brilliant light, I clearly perceived who it was before me. And with a decided and urgent tone I said to him: ‘Say: Live Jesus! Live Mary!’ As soon as I pronounced these most sweet and powerful names, Satan immediately disappeared in a flicker of fire, leaving behind him a suffocating stench.”¹³¹

In a letter on March 2, 1917, Padre Pio said: “You must turn to God when you are assaulted by the enemy; you must hope in Him and expect everything that is good from Him. Don’t voluntarily dwell on what the enemy presents to you. Remember that he who flees wins...”¹³²

Padre Pio also explained that the Devil cannot harm us spiritually unless we let him in:

“The Devil is like a mad dog tied by a chain. Beyond the length of the chain he cannot catch hold of anyone. And you, therefore, keep your distance. If you get too close you will be caught. Remember, the Devil has only one door with which to enter into our soul: our will. There are no secret or hidden doors. No sin is a true sin if we have not willfully consented.”¹³³

Padre Pio said: “I don’t have a minute of free time; it is all spent releasing brethren from the grip of Satan. Blessed be God! The greatest charity is that of liberating souls captivated by Satan and winning them for Christ.”¹³⁴

At the end of Padre Pio’s life (at the age of 80) he was not able to even turn over by himself in bed. Padre Pio also had to be lifted into and out of his chair. At times when he would be in his chair, praying the rosary, he would suddenly be thrown out of the chair and onto the ground by the Devil.¹³⁵

Padre Pio said: “If the Devil is making an uproar, it is an excellent sign: what is terrifying is his peace and concord with a man’s soul.”¹³⁶

Padre Pio’s sufferings

One of the main reasons that the Devil hated Padre Pio so much was that he was winning so many souls through his sufferings. He often remarked on the extent of these astounding sufferings.

Padre Pio: “The heavenly Father has not ceased to allow me to share in the sufferings of his Only-

Begotten Son, even physically. These pains are so acute as to be absolutely indescribable and inconceivable."¹³⁷

Padre Pio said that his sufferings could be compared "to that which the martyrs experienced when burned alive or brutally put to death when giving witness to their faith in Jesus Christ."¹³⁸

Padre Pio, November 25, 1915: "My condition is becoming unbearable and I remain alive only by a miracle."¹³⁹

Padre Pio, *Letter*, November 3, 1915: "The Lord caused me to experience the pains the damned endure in the infernal regions."¹⁴⁰

Padre Pio, *Letter*, August 13, 1916: "...I am not exaggerating when I say that the souls in Purgatory certainly suffer no greater pain."¹⁴¹

Padre Pio: "...I am suffering immensely and I feel I am dying at all times."¹⁴²

Speaking to a person about some of his physical sufferings, Padre Pio said: "It is not so much the days. You see, when the events of the day begin, one thing carries me on to the next, and so the day passes. It is the nights. If I ever allow myself to sleep, the pain of these (and he held up his wounded hands to indicate the stigmata) is multiplied beyond measure."¹⁴³

Responding to a person who asked him if his stigmata hurt, Padre Pio replied: "Do you think that the Lord gave them to me for a decoration?"¹⁴⁴

Padre Pio: "Just imagine the anguish that I felt then and I still experience practically every day. The wound in the heart bleeds abundantly..."¹⁴⁵

"...I have been aware that there is in me something that feels like a sheet of iron that extends from the bottom part of my heart to the lower right side of my back. It causes very sharp pain and doesn't let me get any rest..."¹⁴⁶

Padre Pio refused all types of artificial heat, gas or electric heaters, even charcoal heat for the cold winter nights.¹⁴⁷

One time Padre Pio went for twenty-one days without eating. He only received Holy Communion. "You must eat," said the superior. "Please, I cannot eat." "You must," the superior insisted and within minutes Padre Pio vomited everything he tried.¹⁴⁸ Padre Pio often had a lack of appetite, spells of vomiting and perspiring. He had periods of high fever that baffled all the doctors, who didn't know how to treat him.¹⁴⁹

Some of Padre Pio's temperatures were so high that the mercury shot out of the thermometer. Some ordinary thermometers broke under his armpit.¹⁵⁰ On one occasion, using a different thermometer that didn't break, his temperature came out to 127.4 degrees Fahrenheit.¹⁵¹

The temperatures in excess of 125 degrees Fahrenheit would sometimes come on without any reason whatsoever. Fr. Michaelangelo, a Franciscan who lived with him, said: "No ordinary thermometer could measure Padre Pio's temperature... I was present once when the doctor wanted to take his temperature and see if it would break his

thermometer. Padre Pio said: 'No, the thermometer will break!' In an instant, Bang! The mercury shot up and broke it immediately."¹⁵²

One doctor, who was speaking to another doctor about Padre Pio's high temperatures, stated: "When I took his temperature, it went right off the scale. I had to have a special thermometer sent down, and it registered 125 degrees last night and 120 degrees this morning. He shouldn't even be alive."¹⁵³

Padre Pio said about suffering: "No suffering borne out of love for Christ, even poorly borne, will go unrewarded in eternal life. Trust and hope in the merits of Jesus and in this way even poor clay will become the finest gold which will shine in the palace of the King of Heaven."¹⁵⁴

Our Lord once spoke to Padre Pio about his sufferings in the following manner: "My son, I need victims in order to appease my Father's justifiable and divine anger: renew your sacrifice and make it without reservations."¹⁵⁵

Padre Pio: "If people would only understand the value of suffering, they would not seek pleasure, but only to suffer."¹⁵⁶

Padre Pio also complained of problems with blindness as far back as November 18, 1912.¹⁵⁷ On January 30, 1915, Padre Pio wrote: "...my sight ...has improved from time to time."¹⁵⁸

Padre Pio had an additional suffering of being drafted into military service for a period of time, despite the incredibly terrible state of his physical health.¹⁵⁹

Another suffering (although not physical) was the fact that although God often made clear the status of the souls of others, Padre Pio remained in the dark about his own soul.¹⁶⁰ Padre Pio said: "In other souls, through the grace of God, I see clearly, but in my own I see nothing but darkness."¹⁶¹

Padre Pio wanted to be a missionary

When there was the possibility of Padre Pio being transferred to a different location, he was ready to go, but he preferred the mission field. He even wrote to his superiors for permission to work as a missionary in India. This permission was refused.¹⁶²

Padre Pio said: "How much I desire, and how happy I would be, if I could find myself there in India so as to offer my poor work for the spread of the Faith. But if that good fortune is not reserved for me, but for other souls more noble and more dear to Jesus, I will exercise my mission with humble, fervent and efficacious prayer."¹⁶³

Food and sleep

In 1945, Padre Pio's intake of food was measured at three and one half ounces a day, yet he weighed more than one hundred and seventy pounds.¹⁶⁴ The amount of food and drink that Padre Pio consumed would not have sustained the life of an infant.¹⁶⁵

When Padre Pio was able to sleep well, which was not often, he slept for about two to three hours. Many nights were spent without sleeping at all. This lack of

sleep amazed doctors; they were baffled as to how he could work without being refreshed by sleep.¹⁶⁶

Prayer and Padre Pio

When Padre Pio's spiritual Father asked Padre Pio to redouble his prayers, Padre Pio said that this was not possible because his time was "all spent in prayer."¹⁶⁷

Padre Pio said: "What mankind lacks today is prayer."¹⁶⁸

Padre Pio: "We seek God in books, but it is in prayer that we find Him. Prayer is the key that opens the heart of God."¹⁶⁹

Padre Pio: "All prayers are good when they are accompanied by good intentions and good will."¹⁷⁰

Padre Pio recommended people to make short mental prayers, offering everything they did, no matter how trivial, to Jesus Christ.¹⁷¹

Padre Pio, *Letter*, December 14, 1916: "Try to practice mental prayer, that is holy meditation, and let this habitually be on the life, passion and death of Jesus."¹⁷²

Padre Pio would have his penitents recite the following prayer: "My past, O Lord, to your Mercy, My present to Thy Love, My future to Thy Providence!"¹⁷³

Padre Pio said: "The Lord only allows me to recall those persons and things He wants me to remember.

In point of fact, on several occasions our merciful Lord has suggested to me people whom I have never known or even heard of, for the sole purpose of having me present them to Him and intercede for them, and in this case He never fails to answer my poor feeble prayers. On the other hand, when Jesus doesn't want to answer me, He makes me actually forget to pray for those persons for whom I had firmly decided and intended to pray." ¹⁷⁴

In a letter on September 16, 1916, Padre Pio said: "Pray for the re-establishment of God's reign; for the propagation of the Faith; for the exaltation and triumph of our holy mother, the Church. Pray for ...the unfaithful, for heretics and for the conversion of sinners." ¹⁷⁵

Padre Pio on distractions in prayer: "You must not be distracted voluntarily. But if you are distracted, continue to pray, and you will have great merit, for Our Savior knows that you are not an angel praying to Him, but a poor woman. Go on praying without ceasing. And when you find it difficult to concentrate, don't waste more time stopping to consider the why and the wherefore. It's like a traveler who loses his way. As soon as he realizes he is on the wrong road, he immediately sets himself on the right road again. So you must continue to meditate without stopping to reflect on your lack of concentration." ¹⁷⁶

Padre Pio on the Blessed Mother and the Rosary

Padre Pio's devotion to the Virgin Mary was rooted in the truth that Jesus specifically wills such devotion. Jesus chose to come to earth through Mary. Similarly, Jesus chooses that we come to Him through her; for her soul magnifies the Lord. As Scripture teaches:

"And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me." (Luke 1:46-49)

Scripture gives us a clear prophecy about the devotion which "all generations" of Christians (Catholics) will give to the Mother of God. It even uses the very word used in the Hail Mary, which Catholics pray: "Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee, *blessed* art thou among women, and *blessed* is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

Sacred Scripture also indicates that the Virgin Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. The Ark of the Old Covenant was a chest which contained the Tables of the Law which God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai. God's Divine Presence or glory cloud ("shekinah") would dwell above the Ark. Hence, the Ark had mysterious powers over the enemies of God (1 Kings/1 Samuel chapters 5-6). In Exodus 40: 34-35, the Old Testament uses the word "overshadow" ("episkiasei" in Greek)

to describe how God's glory cloud or visible presence (the "Shekinah") overshadowed the Temple and the Ark of the Old Covenant. In Luke 1:35 we find the exact same word used to describe the Holy Ghost overshadowing Mary, since she is the Ark of the New Covenant, the living temple of the true Word of God (Jesus Christ).

Luke 1:35: "And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

In the Gospel of Luke the Virgin Mary is clearly identified as the new and perfect Ark of the Covenant, the living tabernacle of the Divine Presence, Jesus Christ. Consider the amazing parallel that Scripture gives us between what happened to the Ark of the Old Covenant in the first two books of Kings (or Samuel), and what happened to the Ark of the New Covenant, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Luke's Gospel.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:9: "And David was afraid of the Lord that day, saying: How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?"

Luke 1:43: "[Elizabeth said:] And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

David says: "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" while Elizabeth asks how is it "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth says the same thing to Mary that David said about the Ark because Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. This

is confirmed without any doubt as we carry the story of 2 Kings further. Shortly after David said: “How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?” we read that the Ark stayed with Obededom, the Gethite, for three months.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:11: “And the ark of the Lord abode in the house of Obededom, the Gethite, three months: and the Lord blessed Obededom, and all his household.”

Likewise, in Luke chapter 1 we read that Mary (the Ark of the New Covenant) stayed with Elizabeth for three months.

Luke 1:56: “And Mary abode with her [Elizabeth] about three months and she returned to her own house.”

Also notice that as the Ark stayed with Obededom for three months the Lord blessed his household. Likewise, as Mary (the Ark) stayed with Elizabeth for three months, the Lord blessed her household by granting her a new child, as we read in Luke 1:57.

We then read that David leapt and danced before the Ark when he came into its presence.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:16: “And when the ark of the Lord was come into the city of David, Michol, the daughter of Saul, looking out through a window, saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord: and she despised him in her heart.”

In the same chapter of Luke we read that the infant in Elizabeth’s womb leapt before Mary (the Ark).

Luke 1:41: "And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."

In the Apocalypse we also see that the Virgin Mary is identified with the Ark of the Covenant.

Apocalypse 11:19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven: and the ark of His testament was seen in His temple, and there were lightnings, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail." Apocalypse 12:1: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head, a crown of twelve stars."

When the Bible was written it wasn't written with chapters and verses indicated. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses came in the 12th century. So, the author of the Apocalypse, St. John the Apostle, wrote his book in one continuous stream. Thus, the words which end chapter 11 flow immediately into the words which begin chapter 12, without any major division. This means that the appearance of the Ark at the very end of chapter 11 – "the ark of his testament was seen in his temple" (Apoc. 11:19) – is immediately explained by the vision of "the woman" clothed with the sun which begins chapter twelve, the very next verse (Apoc. 12:1). This indicates, once again, that "the woman" clothed with the sun, who bore the Divine Person in her womb (the Virgin Mary), is the Ark of the New Testament.

As we've seen, God uses types and foreshadowing throughout Scripture. The Old Testament type – a true event in the history of God's people – foreshadows the New Testament fulfillment. The

necessity of having God's chosen people pass through the water of the Red Sea is a type of the necessity of being saved through water baptism. The Passover Lamb is a type of Our Lord's death on the Cross. The miraculous manna in the wilderness, recounted in the book of Exodus, is a type of the Eucharist. The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament is clearly a type of Our Lady.

The New Testament fulfillment is always greater than the Old Testament type. Our Lady, as the living tabernacle of the Divine Presence, is greater than the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Old Testament housed the words of God, but the Ark of the New Testament housed the Word of God Incarnate. Moses placed the manna from the desert inside the Ark of the Old Covenant, but Mary contained the true living bread that has come down from heaven (John 6), Jesus Christ. Moses also placed the rod of Aaron inside the Ark, which eventually budded to prove the true High Priest; whereas Mary contained the actual and eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. The Ark of the Old Testament was inlaid with the purest gold (Exodus 25:11) with no stain of alloy, but the Ark of the New Covenant is the greatest human person to have ever lived with no stain of original or actual sin - filled with a superabundance of God's grace: "full of grace" (Luke 1:28). Oza was struck dead for touching the Ark of the Old Covenant (2 Kings/2 Samuel 6:6-8), and Mary is an ever-virgin who "knows not man," untouched and preserved by God for a special purpose (Luke 1:34).

Since the New Testament fulfillment is always

greater than the Old Testament type, the Ark of the New Covenant's (Mary's) power over God's enemies is even greater than that of the Old Testament Ark.

Padre Pio understood all of this. Padre Pio said many times: "I wish I had a voice loud enough to tell all the sinners of the world to love Mary. She is the ocean across which one must travel in order to reach Jesus."¹⁷⁷ Above Padre Pio's door were the words: "Mary is the reason of all my hope."¹⁷⁸

Padre Pio instructed: "Recite the Rosary and recite it always and as much as you can."¹⁷⁹

One person said: "We always saw him with his rosary in his hand - in the friary, in the halls, on the stairs, in the sacristy, in the Church, even in the brief interval when going to and coming from the confessional."¹⁸⁰ Another person added, "When at the end he did not talk to us anymore, we told him our thoughts. We asked for help. And all he did was to show us the rosary, always, always."¹⁸¹

Speaking of Our Lady, Padre Pio said: "Each grace passes through her hands."¹⁸²

Padre Pio instructed his spiritual children: "In all the free time you have, once you have finished your duties of state, you should kneel down and pray the Rosary. Pray the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament or before a crucifix."¹⁸³

Concerning the Rosary, Our Lady herself said to Padre Pio: "With this weapon you will win." Convinced of the power of the Rosary, Padre Pio always held the Rosary in his hands. When his death

was approaching, he recommended the Rosary to his spiritual children by saying: "Love Our Lady and make her loved. Always recite the Rosary."¹⁸⁴

Padre Pio on the Rosary as the Weapon

As Padre Pio was getting into bed (a few days before he died), he said to the friars who were in his room, "Give me my weapon!" And the friars, surprised and curious, asked him: "Where is the weapon? We cannot see anything!" Padre Pio replied: "It is in my habit, which you have just hung up!" After having gone through the pockets of his religious habit, the friars said to him: "Padre, there is no weapon in your habit! ...we can only find your rosary beads there!" Padre Pio immediately said: "And is this not a weapon? ...the true weapon?!"¹⁸⁵ Padre Pio wore the Rosary around his arm at night.¹⁸⁶

Some other Visions given to Padre Pio

Padre Pio received many fascinating and startling visions during his life. In March 1913, Padre Pio wrote his confessor, Fr. Agostino, and told him the following:

"Friday morning I was still in bed when Jesus appeared to me. He was very sad and upset. He showed me a multitude of priests regular and secular, among them various ecclesiastical dignitaries. Some were celebrating the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Others were putting on the sacred vestments; still others were taking them off.

“The sight of Jesus in distress gave me much pain, so I asked Him why He was suffering so much. He did not reply, but kept looking towards those priests. When He became tired of looking, He glanced away. He raised his eyes towards me and two tears ran down His cheeks. He walked away from the crowd of priests with an expression of disgust and scorn, crying: ‘Butchers!’ Turning to me He said: ‘My son, do not believe that my agony lasted only three hours. No, I shall be in agony until the end of the world because of those for whom I have done the most. During my agony, my son, we must not sleep. My soul seeks a few drops of human pity. But alas, they leave me alone under the weight of indifference. The ingratitude and the sleep of my ministers make my agony more difficult to bear. Alas, how they return my love. What pains me even more is that they add scorn and unbelief to their indifference. How many times I was ready to destroy them, but I was held back by the angels and the souls that love me. Write to your confessor and tell him what you have seen and what you have heard this morning. Tell him to show your letter to the Provincial.”¹⁸⁷

While praying in church, Padre Pio heard Jesus say the following: “With what ingratitude is my love for men repaid! I should be less offended by them if I had loved them less. My Father does not want to bear with them any longer. I myself want to stop loving them, but, alas! My heart is made to love! Weak and cowardly men make no effort to overcome temptation and indeed they take delight in their wickedness. The souls for whom I have a special predilection fail me when put to the test, the weak give way to discouragement and despair, while the strong are relaxing by degrees. They leave me alone by night,

alone by day in the churches. They no longer care about the Sacrament of the altar. Hardly anyone ever speaks of this Sacrament of love, and even those who do, speak, alas, with great indifference and coldness. My heart is forgotten; Nobody thinks anymore of my love and I am continually grieved. For many people my house has become an amusement center...

I behold, my son... many people who act hypocritically and betray me by sacrilegious communions, trampling under foot the light and strength which I give them continually..."¹⁸⁸

Padre Pio and Purgatory

2 Machabees 12:46: "It is therefore a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, that they may be loosed from sins."

Matt 12:32: "...but he that shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world, nor in the world to come."

1st Cor 3:13,15: "Every man's work shall be manifest: for the day of the Lord shall declare it, because it shall be revealed in fire: and the fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is. If any man's work burn, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

One night Padre Pio was sitting alone in a room absorbed in prayer when an old man entered and sat next to him.

"I looked at him but never thought of how he managed to get in the friary at that hour. I asked him: 'Who are you? What do you want?' The man answered: 'Padre Pio, I am Pietro di Mauro,

nicknamed Precoco. I died in this friary [in a fire] on September 18, 1908, in room number 4. I am still in Purgatory, and I need a Mass to free my soul from it. God has given me permission to come to you and ask for your prayers.' After I had listened to his story, I said: 'You can rest assured that I will celebrate Mass tomorrow for your liberation.'"

Padre Pio then said that the Mass he celebrated the next day freed the man's soul from Purgatory. One of the other priests at the friary later on checked the village records and found that such an individual had indeed died under the circumstances described by Padre Pio.¹⁸⁹

One day, some of the friars saw Padre Pio abruptly leave the table and begin to speak, as if he were speaking to someone. But no one was around Padre Pio to whom he could have been speaking. The friars thought Padre Pio was going crazy, and they asked him who he was speaking to. "Oh don't worry, I was talking to some souls who were on their way from Purgatory to Heaven. They stopped here to thank me because I remembered them in my Mass this morning."¹⁹⁰

Padre Pio said: "More souls of the dead from Purgatory than of the living climb this mountain to attend my Masses and seek my prayers."¹⁹¹

One time someone asked Padre Pio how Purgatory could be avoided. He replied, "By accepting everything from God's hand. Offering everything up to Him with love and thanksgiving will enable us to pass from our deathbed to paradise."¹⁹²

Heaven

1ST Cor. 2:9 “...eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for them that love Him.”

Padre Pio said of Heaven: “Heaven is total joy, continuous joy. We will be constantly thanking God. It is useless to try to figure out exactly what Heaven is like, because we can’t understand it. But when the veil of this life is taken off, we will understand things in a different way.”¹⁹³

“...at night when I close my eyes the veil is lifted and I see paradise open up before me: and gladdened by this vision I sleep with a smile of sweet beatitude on my lips and a perfectly tranquil countenance...”¹⁹⁴

Padre Pio didn’t know everything

Since Padre Pio was given miraculous gifts that surpass even the greatest saints of Church history, some have fallen into the false idea that he somehow knew everything. But Padre Pio, being a mere human and an instrument of God’s will, only knew what the Lord revealed to him and what the Lord wanted him to know. Like everyone else, he remained ignorant of many other things.

For instance, his spiritual director, Fr. Agostino, asked Padre Pio whether a physician who died in a war was saved or lost. Padre Pio said: “I know nothing.” Fr. Benedetto asked Padre Pio about Fr. Luca who could not be found after a battle. Padre Pio replied: “Concerning Fr. Luca of happy memory, I know

nothing... But my mind tells me that he must not be sought among the living. May it please God to disprove my presentiment." Padre Pio was proven to be wrong: Fr. Luca turned up alive.¹⁹⁵

Sometimes Padre Pio's judgments and assessments were incorrect. For instance, there is the case of Padre Pio's nephew. Padre Pio's nephew, Ettore Masone, had been kicked out of college because the administration discovered that he had epilepsy, and the college didn't want the responsibility of taking care of him. When Padre Pio learned that his cousin was no longer in school, he presumed that he had dropped out. "Get away from me, you bum!" shouted Padre Pio to his nephew. "You have a lot of gall just to come into my presence!" he said. "Why are you talking to me this way, Uncle?" his nephew replied. "Because you dropped out of college. Go away!" "Uncle, read this letter." When Padre Pio read the real reason for Ettore being asked to leave, he put his head on his desk and began to cry.¹⁹⁶

On the Church, his order, the justice of God, the world, and souls being lost to Hell

Concerning his Franciscan Province, in a letter December 29, 1912, Padre Pio wrote: "For some time past He [Our Lord] has not been pleased to answer me whenever it is a question of matters appertaining to our Province, for He is very disgusted by the way our Province is behaving."¹⁹⁷

Padre Pio could also see that the almost universal apostasy and desolation was growing and well in place all the way back in 1914.

In a letter on April 20, 1914, Padre Pio said: "...it afflicts my heart to see so many souls apostatizing from Jesus. What freezes the blood close to my heart is the fact that many of these souls become estranged from God solely because they are deprived of the divine word. The harvest is great but the laborers are few. Who is then to reap the harvest in the fields of the Church when it is almost ripe? Will it be scattered on the ground by reason of the scarcity of workers? Will it be reaped by Satan's emissaries who are, unfortunately, both numerous and extremely active? Ah, may the most sweet God never allow this to happen. May He be moved to pity for the poverty of men which is becoming extreme."¹⁹⁸

Padre Pio, *Letter*, April 25, 1914: "Let us pray to our most merciful Jesus to come to the aid of His Church, for her needs have become extreme."¹⁹⁹

Padre Pio, *Letter*, February 16, 1915: "...she would need to have a director [spiritual] who is very enlightened in the ways of God. But where is such a one to be found in these dreadful times? The most merciful Jesus Himself has complained of this. Oh, my dear Father, what very sad times are these! ... May the divine Father soon put an end to this disastrous situation!"²⁰⁰

Padre Pio, *Letter*, August 28, 1917: "Pray for this soul that weeps over the universal desolation and especially over the desolation of our poor Province."²⁰¹

Padre Pio lamented to God the Father thus: "Father, I entreat you, either quickly put an end to the world or put an end to the sins that are continually committed against the adorable Person of your only-begotten Son."²⁰² Padre Pio saw World War I as a punishment for man's unbelief.²⁰³

In July of 1946, Padre Pio sent striking words to the Archbishop of Benevento, Italy: "Benevento was bombed, lost the cathedral and Episcopal residence as a punishment for the Archbishop... Worse, not even after this punishment from God is the Archbishop willing to understand his responsibility. He is truly hard of heart... souls are being lost and the enemies of God are wreaking havoc, all because the Archbishop sleeps..."²⁰⁴

Padre Pio on the necessity of the Catholic faith, on the necessity of works with faith, and on other religions and sects

The Athanasian Creed: "Whoever wishes to be saved, needs above all to hold the Catholic faith; unless each one preserves this whole and inviolate, he will without a doubt perish in eternity."

The Profession of Faith of the Council of Trent: "This true Catholic faith, outside of which no one can be saved... I now profess and truly hold..."

Pope Eugene IV, Council of Florence, "Cantate Domino," 1441, ex cathedra: "The Holy Roman Church firmly believes, professes and preaches that all those who are

outside the Catholic Church, not only pagans but also Jews or heretics and schismatics, cannot share in eternal life and will go into the everlasting fire which was prepared for the devil and his angels, unless they are joined to the Church before the end of their lives; that the unity of this ecclesiastical body is of such importance that only to those who abide in it do the Church's sacraments contribute to salvation and do fasts, almsgiving and other works of piety and practices of the Christian militia produce eternal rewards; and that nobody can be saved, no matter how much he has given away in alms and even if he has shed blood in the name of Christ, unless he has persevered in the bosom and unity of the Catholic Church."

John 3:5: "Jesus answered: Amen, amen, I say to thee, unless a man be born again of water and the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

Mark 16:16: "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not, shall be condemned."

Matthew 18:17: "And if he will not hear them: tell the church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and the publican."

Matthew 16:18-19: "...thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give to thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind upon earth, it shall be bound also in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven."

1st Timothy 3:15: "...the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."

James 2:24: "...Do you see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only?"

Apocalypse 20:12-15: "And I saw the dead, great and small, standing in the presence of the throne, and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged by those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it: and death and hell gave up their dead that were in them: and they were judged every one according to their works. And hell and death were cast into the pool of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the pool of fire.

Apocalypse 22:12: "Behold, I come quickly: and my reward is with me, to render to every man according to his works.

The letters from Padre Pio clearly prove that he didn't respect false religions and that he held firmly to the dogma that it is necessary for salvation to be a Catholic.

Here's what Monsignor George Pogany (who personally knew Padre Pio) said about Padre Pio's view of other religions. "...Padre Pio insisted that the Catholic faith was the only religion founded by Jesus Christ. He accepted everyone as a man, but he was convinced that other religions were founded by different men, as by Luther, as by Calvin, or by Zwingli..."²⁰⁵

Padre Pio, *Letter*, January 27, 1918: "...the Church; this dear and sweet dove, which alone can lay the eggs, giving birth to the little doves of the Bridegroom. Continually thank God that you are a daughter of the Church..."²⁰⁶

Speaking about mankind's sins, Padre Pio said: "He (Jesus) sees all the ugliness and the malice of creatures in committing them. He knows to what extent these sins offend and outrage the Majesty of God. He sees all the infamies, immodesties, blasphemies which proceed from the lips of creatures accompanied by the malice of their hearts, of those hearts and those lips which were created to bring forth hymns of praise and benediction to the Creator. He sees the sacrileges with which priests and faithful defile themselves, not caring about those sacraments instituted for our salvation as necessary means for it; now, instead, made an occasion of sin and damnation of souls."²⁰⁷

A blind man named Pietruccio asked Padre Pio what a person has to do to save his soul. Padre Pio answered: "It is enough if you keep the commandments of God and of the Church."²⁰⁸

Padre Pio was once heard to say about a kind doctor, "What a pity he is a Jew."²⁰⁹

In a letter on April 7, 1913, Padre Pio said: "How many wretched brothers of ours respond to Jesus' love by casting themselves with open arms into the infamous sect of Freemasonry!"²¹⁰

During Padre Pio's days, various non-Catholic sects were actively trying to convert Italian people. One of these sects opened a kindergarten near Padre Pio. Padre Pio knew that the children were being exposed to criticism of the Catholic faith. Padre Pio was very angry; he said to the superior: "Do something quickly! Go in my name to the archbishop and get permission to open a kindergarten right near

theirs..." A kindergarten was started, and in a short period of time the sect had to close their kindergarten and move out.²¹¹ Padre Pio fought evil not only with prayer, but also with action.

On Spiritual Reading

Padre Pio said: "If the reading of holy books has the power to convert worldly men into spiritual persons, how very powerful must such reading be in leading spiritual men and women to greater perfection."²¹²

Padre Pio, *Letter*, December 14, 1916: "Continue with your spiritual reading because if it is the soul that speaks to God in meditation, in spiritual reading it is God who speaks to the soul through the correct reading of those books."²¹³

On people who seek the extraordinary

While extraordinary events were common in Padre Pio's life, he counseled others not to seek the extraordinary; and he often admonished those seeking it that they lacked faith or worse. He stated: "I am convinced that so many people don't want to live by faith, but seek the extraordinary." Padre Pio advised those who responded to letters from people seeking the miraculous to answer them by writing: "Live by faith!"²¹⁴

Some women would sometimes grab at him, and he often shouted: "Oh, get away, get away!" He would take his cord and twirl it menacingly towards them. At times, he roared: "This is paganism! This is fanaticism!" More than once, Padre Pio remarked:

“There should be a big fence around this area with the sign, ‘Lunatic Asylum.’”²¹⁵

One young woman believed she was having visions of Jesus. Padre Pio told her not to believe the visions. The lady refused to let Padre Pio guide her in this matter. She said that Padre Pio was contradicting the things that Jesus told her in her visions. After a couple of months the woman committed suicide.²¹⁶

Padre Pio on getting to Heaven and the fewness of the saved

1st Peter 4:18 “And if the just man shall scarcely be saved, where shall the wicked and the sinner appear?”

Matthew 7:13 “Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who enter by it.”

Padre Pio, *Letter to a priest, February 23, 1915*: “May Jesus and Mary assist you always and may they give your words the power to convert and to stem the headlong rush of many souls towards the precipice.”²¹⁷

Padre Pio said: “Don’t you know that we must be alert on the road to salvation? Only the fervent succeed in reaching it, never the tepid or those who sleep!”²¹⁸

In a letter on May 27, 1914, Padre Pio said: “Dear God! If all were aware of your severity as well as of your tenderness, what creature would be so foolish as to dare to offend you?”²¹⁹

One of the brothers asked Padre Pio, "Why do you cry?" Padre Pio responded: "Why should I not cry seeing humanity damning itself at all cost."²²⁰

Speaking of the Divine Blood of Jesus: "Only a few will profit by It, the greater number run the way of perdition."²²¹

Padre Pio on the Faith

Padre Pio: "We must remember that faith is the greatest gift that God has offered man on this earth, because from an earthly man he becomes a citizen of Heaven. Let us guard this great gift jealously. Woe to him who forgets himself, who forgets Heaven, whose faith grows weak, and worse still who denies his faith. This is the greatest affront that man can offer to God."²²²

Padre Pio: "...renew your faith in the truths of Christian doctrine, especially at times of conflict. And renew in a most particular way your faith in the promises of eternal life which our most sweet Jesus makes to those who fight energetically and courageously. You should be encouraged and comforted by the knowledge that we are not alone in our sufferings, for all the followers of the Nazarene scattered throughout the world suffer in the same manner and are all exposed like ourselves to the trials and tribulations of life."²²³

Padre Pio: "In temptations against faith, invoke St. Michael and Sts. Peter and Paul."²²⁴

Padre Pio on pleasing God alone

In a letter on December 3, 1916: "You must try to please God alone, and if He is content everybody is content."²²⁵

Padre Pio on the world

In a letter on August 4, 1915, Padre Pio said: "Keep far away from... profane assemblies, from corrupt and corrupting entertainment, from all ungodly company."²²⁶

Padre Pio: "...do not bother about the ridicule of the foolish. Know that the saints were always sneered at by the world and worldlings; they have trampled them under foot and have triumphed over the world and its maxims."²²⁷

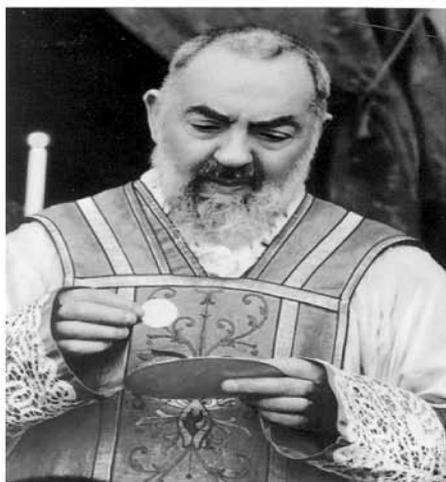
Padre Pio, *Letter*, March 16, 1921: "...the world is full of malice, and no prudence of vigilance is sufficient to avoid being contaminated. Only by fleeing from it can it be beaten."²²⁸

Padre Pio, *Letter*, September 13, 1920: "I praise your resolution to desire to consecrate yourself entirely to God in the shadow of the sacred cloister. Therefore, if your father is not in absolute need of you, try by every means, even by running away, to carry out this holy plan. The Lord's calling must be followed immediately, otherwise we place our salvation in danger."²²⁹

Padre Pio on Pride

In a letter to a spiritual child on January 30, 1915, Padre Pio wrote: "You tell me you want to remain unnoticed because you are afraid of falling into pride. I myself cannot see how a person can become proud on account of the gifts he recognizes in himself. It seems to me that the richer he sees himself to be, the more reason he has to humble himself before the Lord, for the Lord's gifts increase and he can never fully repay the giver of all good things. As for you, what have you in particular to be proud of? What have you that you did not receive? If then you received all, why do you boast as if it were your own? Oh, whenever the tempter wants you to be puffed up with pride, say to yourself: all that is good in me I have received from God on loan and I should be a fool to boast of what is not mine."²³⁰

Speaking about humility, Padre Pio said: "Don't you see? It is as if someone here gave you a beautiful gold watch to take up to Milan to be repaired, and during the journey you took it out and displayed it as your own to the other occupants of the compartment. Wouldn't you be a very foolish fellow? Or, if you actually meant to keep it, wouldn't you be a very wicked one?"²³¹



Padre Pio offering the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and distributing Holy Communion



Padre Pio on the Mass

Matthew 26:26-28 "...Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke, and gave to His disciples, and said: Take ye, and eat: This is my body. And taking the chalice He gave thanks: and gave to them, saying: Drink ye all of this. For this is my blood of the new testament which shall be shed for many, for the remission of sins."

1st Cor. 10:16 "The chalice of benediction which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? And the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?"

1st Cor. 11:26-29 "For as often as you shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice, you shall shew the death of the Lord until He come. Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink the chalice of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and of the blood of the Lord... For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord."

According to some estimates, around twenty million people have seen Padre Pio offer the Mass.²³²

Concerning the value of the Mass, 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."²³³

Padre Pio was asked what his Mass meant to him. He responded: "It is a sacred participation in the passion of Jesus. All that the Lord suffered in His passion, I suffer, to the extent that it is possible to a human being. And that is apart from any merit of mine, but entirely due to His goodness."²³⁴

Before Padre Pio offered the unconsecrated host on his paten, he would run his fingers around the host to make sure there were no loose particles.²³⁵

Padre Pio: "Every holy Mass, heard with devotion, produces in our souls marvelous effects, abundant spiritual and material graces which we, ourselves, do not know. It is easier for the earth to exist without the sun than without the holy Sacrifice of the Mass."²³⁶

Padre Pio: "I am going to the wine-press of the Church, to the holy altar, where from the Blood of that delightful and unusual Grape, is distilled the sacred Wine with which only a few fortunate people are permitted to become inebriated."²³⁷

Padre Pio on Receiving Communion

John 6:54-55 "Then Jesus said to them: Amen, amen, I say to you: Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, you shall not have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day."

Padre Pio was asked about receiving Holy Communion. He responded: "It is an internal and external mercy. An embrace."

Question: "When Jesus comes does he visit only the soul?"

Padre Pio: "The whole being."

Question: "What does Jesus do at Communion?"

Padre Pio: "He finds delight in His creature."

Question: "Is Communion an incorporation?"

Padre Pio: "It is a fusion. Like two candles that melt together and are no longer distinguishable."²³⁸

Padre Pio, *Letter to a spiritual child on receiving Communion*: "Continue to receive Communion, and don't worry about not being able to receive the Sacrament of Penance. Jesus will prize your good will. Remember what I have told you so often: as long as we are not certain of being in serious sin, we need not abstain from Communion."²³⁹ "Unless you are positive that you are in mortal sin you ought to take Communion every day."²⁴⁰

Padre Pio: "My heart feels drawn by a higher power before being united with Him in the Blessed Sacrament. I have such hunger and thirst before receiving Him that it would take little more for me to die of longing... And rather than remain satisfied after I have received the Sacrament, this hunger and thirst increases even more. At the moment that I am in possession of this greatest good, then yes, the plenitude of sweetness is truly so great that I almost say to Jesus: Enough! I cannot stand any more! I forget that I am even in this world. The mind and heart desire nothing more... I sometimes ask myself if there are souls that do not feel their chest burn with divine fire, especially at the moment that they find themselves before Him in the Blessed Sacrament. It seems to me impossible, particularly if the individual is a priest or religious."²⁴¹

Special Devotions of Padre Pio

Padre Pio always carried with him the holy relic of the Cross. He wanted his spiritual children to carry

one also or to wear a crucifix permanently around their necks.²⁴²

Padre Pio had a special devotion to the Passion of Our Lord, Our Lady and St. Michael the Archangel. He exhorted others to these devotions. Padre Pio emphasized that St. Michael is our protector against the snares of the devil.²⁴³ He recommended Saint Michael to souls, telling them to have recourse to him always during temptations. Padre Pio also recommended people to go to Monte St. Angelo in order to venerate Saint Michael.²⁴⁴

Padre Pio on marriage

Padre Pio had a very special place in his heart for the large family. He would say “matrimony is for children,” and, as the Bible states, “Children are a gift of the Lord” (Ps. 126:3).²⁴⁵

The good hope he had for marriages was that their marriage would be “beautifully crowned with children,” in order to “populate the earth and paradise.”²⁴⁶

Padre Pio forcefully refused to accept anyone who of set purpose refused the begetting of children. He refused them absolution. One time he said to a person: “May the Lord’s vengeance not fall upon you.” And he said to someone else: “When you married, God made the decision of how many children He ought to give you.”²⁴⁷

Some of the sins that upset Padre Pio the most were sins against motherhood; the limitation of families;

sins against life; cursing; blasphemy; lying; calumny; and the scandal of dressing immodestly.²⁴⁸ Padre Pio didn't want to deviate from traditional Catholic doctrine at all.²⁴⁹

The End of Padre Pio's Life

When Padre Pio died in 1968, he was receiving five thousand letters per month.²⁵⁰ Padre Pio received so many letters which were saved by the friars that they built a storehouse as large as a garage to keep them. There were an estimated two million letters from around the world.²⁵¹

When Padre Pio heard about the growing number of radical priests, nuns, and laity, as well as dissent from Catholic teaching and the lack of vocations, he was reported to have remarked more than once: "Thank God I am old and near death!"²⁵² Padre Pio urged the frequent recitation of the prayer, "O Jesus, save the elect in the hour of darkness."²⁵³ And contrary to what some have said, Padre Pio never celebrated the New Mass. Padre Pio died in 1968; the New Mass wasn't promulgated until April 3, 1969.

Since Padre Pio was so well known and sought after for his extraordinary gifts from God (he was the most photographed person in the world at his time),²⁵⁴ it's not surprising that certain people – perhaps to advance a particular agenda – have circulated certain stories about him which are not true. Certain people claim that he said and did certain things which, in fact, he never said or did. For instance, it was widely circulated that Padre Pio supposedly told a particular person that "one day you will be Pope," when he

never did. The person who was supposedly told this by Padre Pio later publicly admitted in a prominent magazine that Padre Pio never said this to him. Some claimed that Padre Pio made a prophecy about the three days of darkness, when he didn't. Others claim that Padre Pio respected false religions, or admired those who practiced them. This is not true; it finds no basis in, and is contradicted by, his personal letters which show that he absolutely rejected a false ecumenical religion and held that the Catholic Faith is necessary. Of course Padre Pio didn't respect other religions or admire those who practiced them, for then he would be testifying that all his efforts and sufferings (such as hearing confessions, which he held to be necessary to forgive serious sins) were meaningless.

Perhaps as a warning of the growing Great Apostasy, a few days before his death, when greeted by a spiritual daughter, Padre Pio placed his hand on her head and said twice in a forceful way: "Daughter, be constant and persevering in the faith of our fathers."²⁵⁵

Shortly before his death, on September 23, 1968, the wounds of Padre Pio's stigmata miraculously healed up. By the time Padre Pio died, there were no traces of the stigmata.²⁵⁶ Doctor Sala declared that the healing of the wounds was clinically unexplainable. Padre Pio had always wanted the stigmata to be invisible and Jesus granted his prayer at the very end of his life.²⁵⁷ Fr. Onorato pointed out well that as the ministry of Padre Pio was ending, the signs were also ending.²⁵⁸ On the evening before the death of Padre Pio, the crypt that would hold his body was completed and blessed.²⁵⁹ During the four days and

nights after the death of Padre Pio around two hundred thousand people passed before his casket.²⁶⁰

For most prospective Saints, the cause for canonization includes about five cartons of documentation that is submitted to the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints. In Padre Pio's case, over one hundred cartons of documentation were initially submitted.²⁶¹

In 1968, when Padre Pio died, he left behind a huge hospital called *The Home for the Relief of Suffering*, which *The New York Times* described as "one of the most beautiful as well as one of the most modern and fully-equipped hospitals in the world."²⁶² His legacy included 726 prayer groups with 68,000 members. There are also twenty-two Padre Pio centers for handicapped children and one center for the blind. As an example of the profound influence of his life, in 1997 six and a half million people visited Padre Pio's tomb.²⁶³

Padre Pio said what he would do after he died. "I have made a pact with the Lord: when my soul has been purified in the flames of purgatory and deemed worthy to be admitted to the presence of God, I will take my place at the gate to paradise, but I shall not enter until I have seen the last of my spiritual children enter."²⁶⁴

Endnotes

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- 115 Fr. Stefano Manelli, *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, Franciscans of the Immaculate, New Bedford, MA., p. 56.
- 116 Gennaro Prezioso, *The Life of Padre Pio*, Society of St. Pauls, Staten Island, NY. p. 81.
- 117 Dorothy Gaudiose, *Prophet of the People*, Alba House, NY, NY. p. 27.
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- 120 Padre Pio, *The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 19.
- 121 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 346.
- 122 Fr. Tarcisio, *The Devil in the Life of Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 60.
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- 129 Fr. Tarcisio, *The Devil in the Life of Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. Italy. p. 111.
- 130 Fr. Tarcisio, *The Devil in the Life of Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 11.
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- 133 Clarice Bruno, *Roads to Padre Pio*, Seventh Edition, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 157.
- 134 Gennaro Prezioso, *The Life of Padre Pio*, Society of St. Pauls, Staten Island, NY. p. 122.
- 135 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 55.
- 136 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. III*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 627.
- 137 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 973.
- 138 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 41.
- 139 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, Our Lady of Grace Friary, San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy, p. 770.
- 140 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 607.
- 141 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 884.
- 142 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. III*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 525.
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- 148 Dorothy Gaudiose, *Prophet of the People*, Alba House, NY, NY. p. 24.
- 149 Fr. Stefano Manelli, *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, Franciscans of the Immaculate, New Bedford, MA., p. 55.
- 150 Gerardo Di Flumeri, *The Mystery of the Cross in Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 16.
- 151 Padre Pio, *The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 21.
- 152 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 31.
- 153 Dorothy Gaudiose, *Prophet of the People*, Alba House, NY, NY. p. 39.
- 154 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 177.
- 155 Augustine McGregor, *Padre Pio, His Early Years*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 198.
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- 157 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 43.
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- 162 C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 197.
- 163 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 142.
- 164 C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 237.
- 165 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 27.
- 166 Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 120.
- 167 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 33.
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- 173 Madame Katharina Tangari, *Stories of Padre Pio*, TAN Books, Rockford, IL. p. 9.
- 174 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. II*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 102.
- 175 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. III*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 256.
- 176 Dorothy Gaudiose, *Prophet of the People*, Alba House, NY, NY. pp. 164-165.
- 177 Clarice Bruno, *Roads to Padre Pio*, Seventh Edition, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 12.
- 178 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 91.
- 179 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 89.
- 180 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Spirituality Series*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 164.
- 181 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Spirituality Series*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 164.
- 182 Clarice Bruno, *Roads to Padre Pio*, Seventh Edition, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 219.
- 183 Madame Katharina Tangari, *Stories of Padre Pio*, TAN Books, Rockford, IL. p. 215.
- 184 Fr. Tarcisio, *The Devil in the Life of Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 54.
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- 186 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Spirituality Series*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 74.
- 187 Dorothy Gaudiose, *Prophet of the People*, Alba House, NY, NY. p. 31.
- 188 *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. pp. 385-386.
- 189 *Padre Pio The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 172.
- 190 *Padre Pio The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 172.
- 191 *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 173.

- ¹⁹² *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 179.
- ¹⁹³ *Padre Pio, The Wonder Worker*, Our Lady's Chapel, New Bedford, MA. p. 178.
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- ¹⁹⁵ C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 182.
- ¹⁹⁶ C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 319.
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- ¹⁹⁸ *Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, Letters Vol. I*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 523.
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- ²⁰⁵ C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 417.
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- ²⁰⁸ Fr. John A. Schug, *Padre Pio*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 156.
- ²⁰⁹ C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 300.
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- ²¹¹ Gennaro Prezioso, *The Life of Padre Pio*, Society of St. Pauls, Staten Island, NY. p. 178.
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- ²¹⁵ C. Bernard Ruffin, *Padre Pio: The True Story*, Our Sunday Visitor, Huntington, IN. p. 293.
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- ²³⁶ Gerardo Di Flumeri, *The Mystery of the Cross in Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 16.
- ²³⁷ Gerardo Di Flumeri, *The Mystery of the Cross in Padre Pio of Pietrelcina*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA. p. 27.
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- Sanctus, Padre Pio Man of God*, National Centre for Padre Pio, Barto, PA.

Frederick Abresch was one of those penitents who had been converted after going to Padre Pio for confession. Here are some of the things he described about the story of his incredible conversion:

"In November of 1928, when I went to Padre Pio for the first time; it had been a few years since I had passed from Protestantism to Catholicism, which I did out of social convenience. I did not have the faith; at least now I understand that I was merely under the illusion of having it. Having been raised in a highly anti-Catholic family and imbued with prejudices against dogmas to such a degree that a hasty instruction was unable to wipe out, I was always avid for secret and mysterious things.

"I found a friend who introduced me into the mysteries of spiritism. Quite quickly, however, I got tired of these inconclusive messages from beyond the grave; I went fervently into the field of the occult, magic of all sorts, etc. Then I met a man who declared, with a mysterious air, that he was in possession of the only truth: 'theosophy'. I quickly became his disciple, and on our nightstands we began accumulating books with the most enticing and attractive titles. With self-assurance and self-importance, I used words like Reincarnation, Logos, Brahma, Maja, anxiously awaiting some great and new reality that was supposed to happen.

"I do not know why, although I believe it was above all to please my wife, but from time to time I still continued to approach the holy Sacraments. This was my state of soul when, for the first time, I heard of that Capuchin Father who had been described to me as a living Crucifix, working continual miracles.

"Growing curious... I decided to go and see with my own eyes... I knelt down at the confessional [and told Padre Pio that]... I considered confession to be a good social and educational institution, but that I did not believe in the divinity of the Sacrament at all... "The Padre, however, said with expressions of great sorrow, 'Heresy! Then all your Communion were sacrilegious... you must make a general confession. Examine your conscience and remember when you last made a good Confession. Jesus has been more merciful with you than with Judas.'

"Then, looking over my head with a stern eye, he said in a strong voice, 'Praised be Jesus and Mary!' and went over to the church to hear the women's confessions, while I stayed in the sacristy, deeply moved and impressed. My head was spinning and I could not concentrate. I still heard in my ears: 'Remember when you last made a good confession!' With difficulty I managed to reach the following decision: I would tell Padre Pio that I had been a Protestant, and that although after the abjuration I was rebaptized (conditionally), and all the sins of my past life were wiped out by virtue of holy Baptism, nevertheless, for my tranquility I wanted to begin the confession from my childhood.

"When the Padre returned to the confessional, he repeated the question to me: 'So when was the last time you made a good confession?' I answered, 'Father, as I was...' but at that point the Padre interrupted me, saying, '...you last made a good confession when you were coming back from your honeymoon, let's leave everything else aside and begin from there!'

"I remained speechless, shaken with a stupor, and I understood that I had touched the supernatural. The Padre, however, did not leave me time to reflect. Concealing his knowledge of my entire past, and in the form of questions, he listed all my faults with precision and clarity... After the Padre had brought all my mortal sins to light, with impressive words he made me understand the gravity of these faults, adding in an unforgettable tone of voice, 'You have sung a hymn to Satan, while Jesus in His ardent love has broken His neck for you.' Then he gave me my penance and absolved me... I believe not only in the dogmas of the Catholic Church, but also in the least of its ceremonies... to take away this faith, one would have to take away my life as well."

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| 10) The Amazing Heresies of Paul VI | | |
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| 12) Abortion, Rock Music, and Freemasonry Exposed | | |
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The best book in the world that disproves evolution

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| In the Beginning (328 page color book) by Dr. Walt Brown | \$25.00 a copy in US \$40.00 a copy outside US | included | |

This amazing book totally refutes evolution from all aspects of science, and shows how the Biblical Flood not only occurred, but is earth's defining geological event. It contains many color pictures, figures and charts, and is well worth the price. This book is somewhat deep and technical at times, but for those interested in the detailed arguments disproving evolution and proving the Flood, it is a tremendous read: the best, most devastating and scholarly work on this topic.

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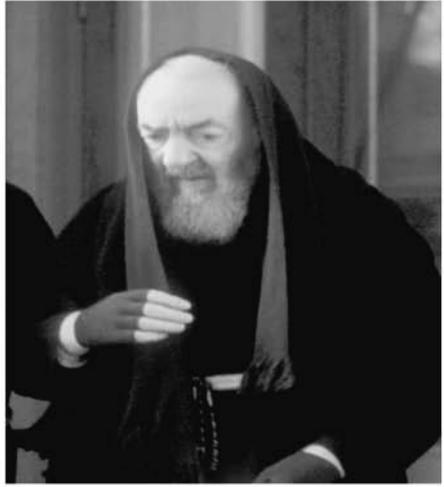
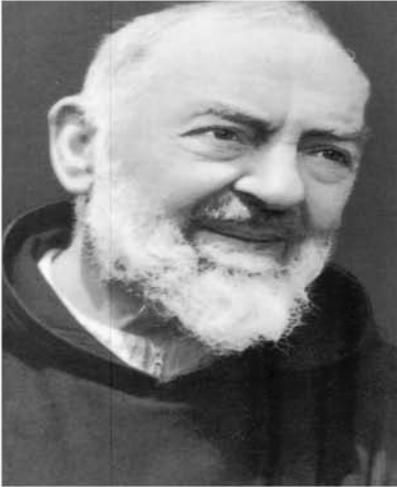
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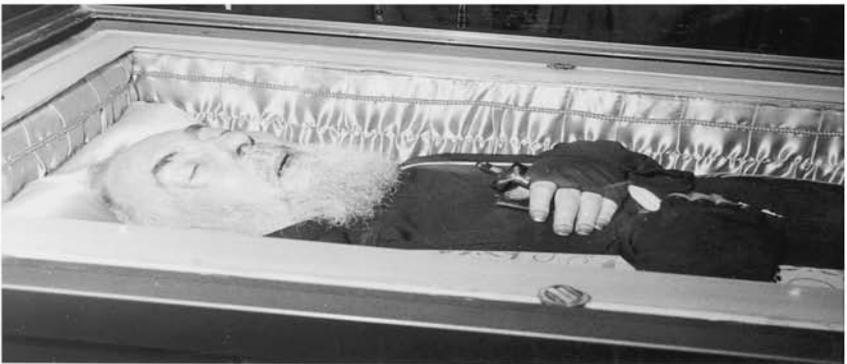


below left: a picture of Gemma Di Giorgi, who was totally blind up to the age of seven, due to having no pupils in her eyes. Eye doctors have examined her eyes and say that there is no way she should see without pupils, but she does see thanks to the miraculous intercession of Padre Pio.



below: Padre Pio in casket.
Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968.

His body is awaiting the general resurrection on the day of the Final Judgment at the end of the world.



Joe Greco, now a great devotee of Padre Pio, had a dream in which he met Padre Pio on a road and asked him to save his sick father. Joe's father suddenly recovered after the dream. In order to thank Padre Pio, Joe decided to travel down to see him in person. After waiting four days, Joe managed to go to Padre Pio for confession. Joe described the meeting:

"This is what did it really, when Padre Pio saw me he said: 'Well your father is all right, then.' Well it shattered me really because I never had been down in San Giovanni Rotondo before. I had never been down in that part of the world, nor did I know anyone down there. And yet I posed in my mind a question to him, I was saying 'was it you, was it you?' And he replied, 'in the dream, in the dream.' Well, I started shaking, I was scared stiff to tell you the truth. I said, 'yes Father, in the dream, Father.' I told him my sins, and before he gave me absolution he said to me: 'now then, there is something else you know' [that you didn't mention in confession]. I said, 'well Father, I can't remember anything else.' Padre Pio went on to describe an incident with a girl in the park when I was first in the army. Well it all came back to me. I wished the ground had opened up and swallowed me, I was so embarrassed. I then said to Padre Pio, 'Yes Father, it all comes back to me and I'm afraid I forgot to tell it in confession, I'm so ashamed.' 'Well,' he said, 'you have been carrying this sin around with you ever since 1941, and the place was Blackburn to tell you the truth.' And I got up to go and Padre Pio said, 'There is something else you have forgotten,' and there was a slight smile on his face. I said, 'Oh no Father, truly there is nothing else I can remember.' I thought it was about some sin. And he said: 'look in your pocket.' So I took my rosary beads out [of my pocket] I gave them to him, he blessed them and gave them back to me. And that was it."

Extra copies of this booklet: 1 booklet for \$2.00, 5 to 9 copies are \$1.00 a copy, 10-99 copies are 50 cents a copy, 100 copies are \$35.00, or 180 copies are \$50.00 (all prices include shipping)

Other tapes and information available from:

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Brother Michael Dimond