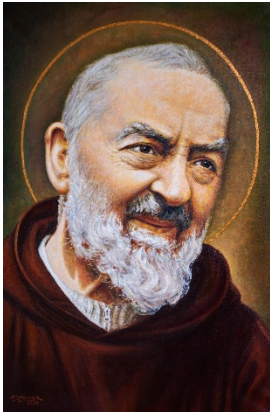


Liturgical Living: Saint Padre Pio



On September 23, we celebrate the Feast Day of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, also known as Saint Padre Pio. He was born Francesco Forgione on May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, a farming town in Southern Italy where his parents made their living as peasant farmers.

As a youth, his mother said that he was able to speak with Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and his Guardian Angel on a regular basis. He decided that he wanted to become a Capuchin Friar and at the age of 15, he entered the order.

In 1910, he was ordained a Priest and was sent to an agricultural community in San Giovanni Rotondo in Foggia. He remained there his entire life, with the exception of his military service. When World War I started, he was called to military service but was discharged several months later due to poor health.

In response to his growing reputation as a worker of miracles, he became a spiritual director and had five rules for spiritual growth – weekly confession, daily communion, spiritual readings, meditation, and examination of conscience. He summed up his theology teachings as, “Pray, Hope, and Don’t Worry”.

In September 1918, while praying in Church, Jesus appeared to him. When the ecstasy ended, Padre Pio received the visible stigmata, the five wounds of Christ. The stigmata were permanent and remained with him for the next 50 years of his life.

On September 21, 1968, on the 50th anniversary of him receiving the stigmata, he experienced great tiredness. The next day, he requested permission to not say the High Mass, but was denied, and was told to continue due to the large number of pilgrims present. He became so weak that it took many Capuchin friars to assist him off the Altar. Early on September 23, 1968 Padre Pio made his last confession and renewed his Franciscan Vows. Around 2:30am, he said, “I see two mothers”, his and the Virgin Mary. He breathed his last in his cell in San Giovanni Rotondo with his last breath whispering, “Maria”.

His body was buried on September 26, in the crypt in the Church of Our Lady of Grace. He often said, “After my death, I will do more. My real mission will begin after my death”. To this day, his body can be viewed as it lays in a glass casket – incorrupt.

St Padre Pio, pray for us!