

Padre Pio



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Printed in China ISBN 978-0-89942-531-3 CPSIA August 2016 10987654321 LP

Padre Pio Receives the Stigmata

ON August 5, 1918, Padre Pio received the gift of the stigmata. He was to carry these wounds for the next fifty years.

Many Church officials and doctors examined his wounds. Some of them thought that he might be faking his wounds, but, after examining him, almost all were convinced that his stigmata was truly from God.

Padre Pio would especially suffer while he was celebrating the Holy Mass each day. It was as if he were experiencing just what Jesus did on the Cross. Like Jesus, he would lose much blood from his wounds. He always offered up these sufferings for the salvation of the world.

Word of Padre Pio's stigmata spread throughout the town and the region. Many people had become terribly discouraged by the war, and they needed the consolation of knowing that God was still working in their midst. Many people confessed their sins to him, firmly believing that this was an encounter with God's mercy.

Every once in a while there was a rumor that Padre Pio was going to be transferred from San Giovanni. The people of that village would hold meetings and march to his convent to make sure that no one would take their beloved friar from them.



Padre Pio's Fame Grows

AS word of Padre Pio's stigmata and holiness spread throughout the region and all Italy, and then eventually over the whole world, he received more and more requests for prayers. It took a number of friars to answer these letters and to promise those requesting prayers that Padre Pio would remember them in his own prayers.

In those days, there was a young American woman from New Jersey named Mary Pyle who became a disciple of Padre Pio. She was quite rich, and she built a large house in San Giovanni. There she could host visitors to Padre Pio. She helped his ministry in whatever way she could until the day she died.

Padre Pio heard the confessions of many people. Those who were sincere found him to be understanding and gentle. But Padre Pio was harsh with those who just wanted to go to confession to a famous priest. He often sent them away until they were truly sorry for their sins. Then he would welcome them warmly, for he knew that they were ready to change their lives.

There were even a number of people who either belonged to other religions or did not believe in God at all who became Catholics as a result of meeting Padre Pio. They could sense that God was working through him.