



## St. Padre Pio

Feast Day: September 23

Born: May 25, 1887

Died: September 23, 1968

Patron: Confessors, Adolescents, Civil Defense Volunteers

Canonized: June 16, 2002 by Pope John Paul II

Padre Pio was born Francesco Forgione in Italy. His parents, Grazio and Maria Forgione were peasant farmers. He had 3 younger sisters and one brother. Two other siblings passed away as infants. His family was very pious, believing God is everything. They attended Mass and said the Rosary every day, and fasted 3 times a week.

Francesco did not attend school regularly because he helped on the family farm. While still very young, he received visions of Jesus, Mary and angels. He thought this happened to everyone. At age 5, he dedicated his life to God. By the time he was 15, he knew he wanted to join the Capuchin Order. However, he lacked the education necessary and was often ill. He worked hard with a tutor and persevered through sickness and became a Capuchin Franciscan friar in 1904. He took the name Pio in honor of St. Pious V. He studied for six years, then became a priest in 1910. He was known for his deep love for Jesus in the Eucharist and his devotion to the Blessed Mother.

In 1918, mystical graces imparted on Padre Pio intensified. He received *transverberation* where the heart is full of great love so that it feels pierced by an arrow. He began receiving the Stigmata, the wounds of our crucified Christ. It was very painful and doctors could not help him. He was so absorbed in God, especially during the Consecration while celebrating Mass, that the congregation could see whether he was in ecstasy from heightened spirituality or in agony because of the Stigmata. Some even reported seeing the crown of thorns on his head. Many people sought his intercession. He would hear confessions for over 15 hours a day. He was able to read the consciences of those who would not confess *all* their sins. It is reported that he could bi-locate, levitate and heal by touch.

Some accused Padre Pio of being a fraud. Others falsely claimed he gave them prophetic messages. The Holy Office suspended him from public contact while investigating his case. He was about to be transferred, but the public outcry was so strong, that after several years, he was fully reinstated.

After a vision of Jesus, Padre Pio founded the Home for the Relief of Suffering in 1956. He always said, **“After my death I will do more. My real mission will begin after my death.”**



He died September 23, 1968 at age 81. St. Padre Pio's body remains incorrupt at San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy.

*“Love Jesus, love Him very much, but to do this, be ready to love sacrifice more.”*

*“Hold on to two virtues: kindness toward your neighbor and humility before God.” ~ St. Padre Pio*