

Dear Mother,

I really had a privilege last Sunday. I saw a miracle! Really, I did. I had heard of Padre Pio and so I took a group with me. It was a very rough and dusty trip, but well worth it.

We went to Father Pio's Mass and I was directly on the altar steps, as close as though serving Mass. Father Pio is the most devout priest I have ever seen at the altar. It took one hour and 45 minutes for the low Mass. You could see that he was close to God, talking to God. His eyes were half closed, his face twitched in agony, sweat gathered on his brow and tears flowed from his eyes at the consecration. I noticed then that the wounds of his hands were moist, that fresh blood was staining his fingers and the sides of his hands.

Believe me, Mom, it was all there! The saintly Father Pio, in his agonized face and his torn hands, brought you to that original sacrifice at Calvary. Everyone's eyes were on him and the Sacred Host as it was elevated.

After the Mass was over, I, and several other soldiers, went into the sacristy. I knelt and kissed Father Pio's wounded hand. Father Pio rested his hand on my head and blessed me. I was overcome with emotion.

I went out of the church a much shaken young officer, but very much stronger in my faith. I later returned and spoke to Father Pio. He had taken off his vestments and was clothed in the brown robe of a Capuchin monk. On his feet he wore soft slippers instead of the sandals of the Order. He limps from the pain of the wounds in his feet. I asked him if he would say a Mass for my family. He said he would be very glad to do so. He patted me on the shoulder and told me I was a good boy and would be home with my family soon. I have never met a more holy, devout man.

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed to us.*

– Romans 8:18

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## Padre Pio and World War II



**Padre Pio talking with American soldiers during World War II**

“The war is a solemn moment for us all, but if we know how to live this moment with the pain and suffering that it necessarily brings, it will give life to great virtues and to new, healthy strength. The grain of wheat does not bear fruit if it does not suffer and decompose. Similarly, souls and nations need trials and suffering in order to emerge purified and renewed. So let us not fall short of the designs of providence which mingle joy with sorrow in the life of the individual and nations, enabling us to attain our last end.”

– St. Pio of Pietrelcina

# St. Padre Pio and World War II

Padre Pio's gift of prophecy reached to individuals, nations and the world. Carmelo Durante experienced it first hand as the following story shows:

**“During the last world war**, I attended the Gregorian Pontifical University of Rome. I used to spend my summer holidays in San Giovanni Rotondo, close to my spiritual director, Padre Pio.

It was the summer of 1942. Naturally we spoke about the war everyday, particularly of the military victories of Germany on all the battlefronts.

I remember that one morning at the friary, I read in the newspaper that the German troops were approaching Moscow. I saw in that news flash, the end of the war, with Germany's final victory.

I met Padre Pio in the hallway and said to him, Padre, the war is over, Germany has won! Who said so? Padre Pio asked. Padre, the newspaper! I answered. Padre Pio said, Listen to me, Germany, this time, will lose the war and worse than last time! Just remember that!

But Padre, I said, The Germans are already approaching Moscow! Just remember what I told you, he repeated. I insisted, But if Germany loses the war, it means that Italy will lose too!

He answered firmly, Well, we will have to see if we finish the war together! These words of his were totally obscure to me at the time, given that Italy and Germany were allies. The following year, Padre Pio's words became clear after the armistice with England and America on September 8, 1943 and with Italy declaring war on Germany.

Another day, in the friary hallway, Padre Pio said to me, Italy will lose the war out of the mercy of God, not because of His justice.

But Padre, how can one lose a war out of mercy and not out of justice? He responded, It is as I say because if Italy won the war with Germany, when the war was over, Germany would crush Italy under its feet! Later it became clear to me how losing the war for Italy was really a victory and not a disgrace at all, but a grace.” – Carmelo Durante

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**During World War II, hundreds of American soldiers** who were stationed at military bases in Italy discovered Padre Pio, and San Giovanni Rotondo became a popular place of pilgrimage.

Padre Pio was always delighted to greet the American soldiers. His presence had a profound impact on the military personnel and many rediscovered their faith through their contact with him.

It seemed that Padre Pio knew only one English word, Okay. One visitor observed that although Padre Pio did not speak English, he nonetheless seemed to understand the Americans when they spoke to him.

In 1945, when World War II was finally over and American and British soldiers returned to their homes, they told their friends and family about Padre Pio and a growing flood of pilgrims from all over the world poured into San Giovanni Rotondo.

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U.S. Lieutenant Doyle Stickel wrote the following letter to his mother describing his visit to San Giovanni Rotondo during World War II.

