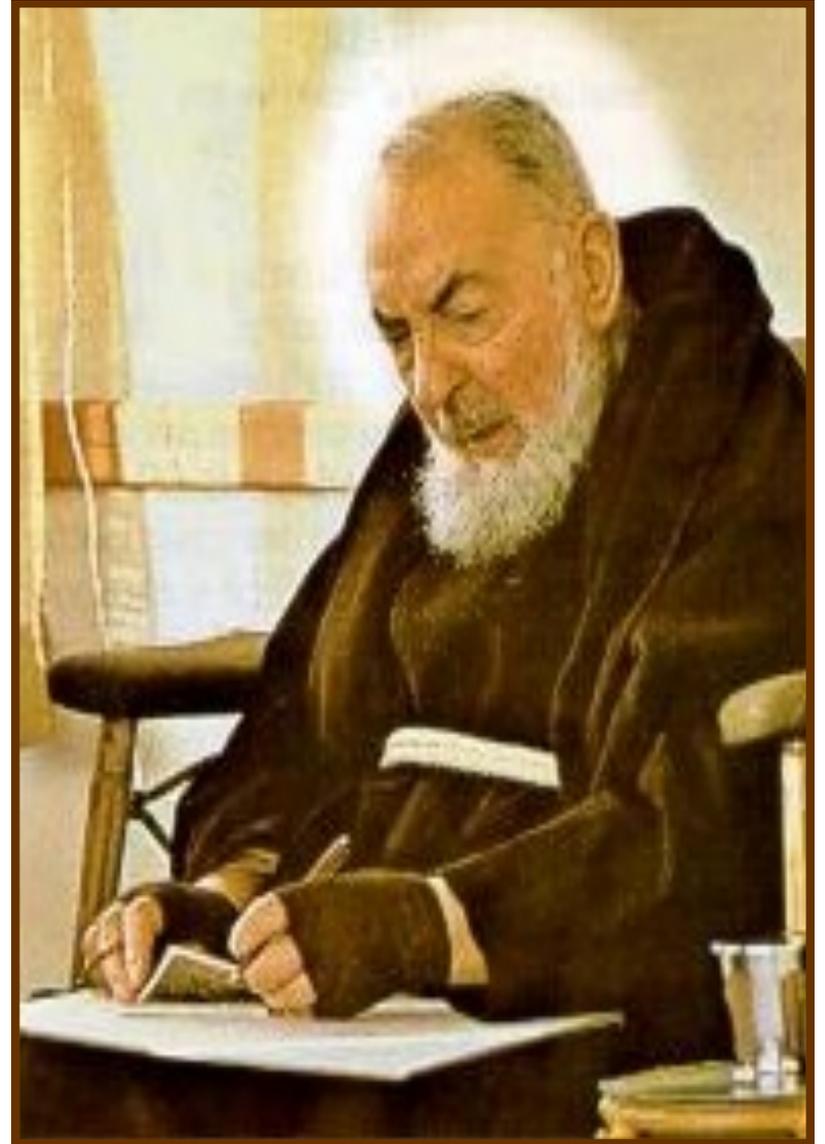


**ALWAYS LIVE UNDER THE EYES OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
AND YOU WILL WALK UNHARMED THROUGH EVIL PASTURES.**

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Letter of Padre Pio: TEMPTATION



Letter of Padre Pio: TEMPTATION

In Raffaolina Cerase's first letter written to Padre Pio on 24–April–1914, she outlines what she describes to be the present state of her soul. In her letter she states the following: she is a sinner concerned about the needs of her soul. For 50 days she had been ill and confined to her home unable to receive the Eucharist. She wanted to know from Padre Pio if this was some kind of punishment from God for past bad communions, distracted Masses, careless recitation of prayers and for personal sins committed.

Her state of mind was such that she felt tortured by her past and present state of her soul and wanted to know from Padre Pio what the future held for her. Raffaolina continues that she had led a life without merit which would have been pleasing to Jesus. She feels the deep night within her soul. She wants to learn the correct way to act. How to make a good confession, and how to advance in making progress along the spiritual path.

This inner torment that Raffaolina experiences causes her to have many doubts, anxieties, distress and torments. She has no peace of mind and wants to understand how she can repent for her past sinfulness and gain another opportunity from Jesus to reform her life. She wants to die to herself and to the world and embrace a more spiritual life consecrating entirely on loving and serving Jesus. Further complications are family problems that are preventing her from advancing in the spiritual life she desires.

The response Raffaolina receives from Padre Pio is a letter dated Passion Sunday, 29 March 1914 as follows:

Beloved sister in Jesus Christ,

May the peace of Jesus Christ be in your heart.

***Do not think your present state is a
Punishment from heaven because
You would be wrong***



***But be certain that your
Present state is willed by God
For the salvation of your soul.***

Padre Pio

It is also wrong to try to convince yourself that you have been cast off by Jesus. Oh! Trust in Him and do not be afraid, for you have no reason whatever to fear. Our most tender Savior has not forsaken you, but is showing His love for you and I have no adequate words by which to thank the Lord for His goodness in dealing with you and for protecting you so lovingly. The Evil One wants to persuade you that you are the victim of his attacks and are abandoned by God. Don't believe him, for he wants to deceive you. Despise him in the name of Jesus and His most holy Mother.

Never fall back on yourself alone, but place all your trust in God and don't be too eager to be set free from your present state. Let the Holy Spirit act within you. Give yourself up to all His transports and have no fear. He is so wise and gentle and discrete that He never brings about anything but good. How good this Holy Spirit, this Comforter, is to all, but how supremely good He is to those who seek Him!

Forgive me for being unable to continue, for my strength is running out.... Never stop praying to our merciful Jesus for this rebellious, stiff necked soul, so that he may not be unfaithful to God.

In my own small way I too never fail to present you to Jesus in my continual but very lukewarm prayers. Needless to say you may make use of my poor capacity when and in whatever manner suits you. Write to me every time you need to and you will always give me pleasure....

May Jesus bless you and comfort you and may He one day introduce you, along with your beloved sister (Giovina), into the splendor of His immortal youth.

Your poor Fra Pio.

Reminder: The contents of this letter is specific between Raffaelina Cerase and Padre Pio. Someone else having similar problems may receive different answers from Padre Pio.

I feel all your troubles as if they were my own. Knowing how upset you are, I am moved spontaneously to ask the Lord to command the enemy to desist somewhat from his fierce attack, or else to redouble your strength and enable you to endure the struggle with gracious resignation to His most holy will.

But while I am thus grieved and pray, I also feel a spiritual joy on account of Jesus' very particular love for you. The storm that rages around you and perturbs you is certainly a proof of this love. Don't think this is just my own personal conviction; it is God himself who tells us that temptation is a proof of the soul's union with Him: *My son, if you come forward to serve the Lord, prepare yourself for temptation.* (Sir 2:1).

The fact of being harassed, therefore, means that you are in the Lord's service and the more fully you become the friend and intimate of God, the more you will have to endure temptation. Temptation is a most convincing proof that God is united with a soul: I will be with him in trouble (Ps 91:15). All the disheartening thoughts that are running around in your mind, such as the idea that God may be punishing you for Communions and Confessions badly made, and for all the other devotional practices carelessly performed, believe me, are nothing but temptations which you must drive far from you, for it is by no means true that in all these things you have offended God, since Jesus by His watchful grace has guarded you very well against all such offenses.

When the soul grieves and is afraid of offending God, it does not offend Him and is very far from committing sin. Divine grace is with you continually and you are very dear to the Lord. Shadows and fears and convictions to the contrary are diabolical stratagems which you should despise in the name of Jesus. Do not listen to these temptations. The spirit of evil is busily engaged in trying to make you believe that your past life has been all strewn with sins.

Listen, rather, to me when I tell you, just as we are told by the Spouse of our souls, that your present state is an effect of your love for God and a proof of His incomparable love for you. Cast away those fears, dispel those shadows which the devil is increasing in your soul in order to torment you and drive you away, if possible, even from daily Communion.

Be consoled and rejoice in the knowledge that the heavenly Father permits these attacks of the devil, because His mercy makes you dear to Him and He wants to make you similar to His Only Begotten Son, who took upon Himself all the iniquities of men and was subjected to terrible and unspeakable torment. May He therefore be thanked for treating you as one chosen to follow closely in the steps of Jesus up the Hill of Calvary. I myself observe with joy and deepest emotion this action of grace within you, O beloved sister of my heart.

I should be less happy if I did not see you so downcast, because I should then see the Lord bestowing less jewels upon you. Hence, in the holy charity of Jesus, while earnestly desiring your spiritual profit and your progress towards perfection, I rejoice more and more to see you in your present state. My joy is by no means foolish, for in the combat there is a crown to be won and the better the fight put up by the soul the more numerous the palms of victory. Don't you know how the apostle St. James exhorted his brethren to rejoice when they were harassed by various storms and numerous reverses? *Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials* (Jas 1:2).

Moreover, how can we fail to rejoice when we find ourselves involved in many combats, knowing as we do that every victory achieved has a corresponding degree of glory? May this thought of eternal bliss with Jesus and of being made similar to the Son of God encourage you and prevent you from yielding to the enemies temptations. May you be urged onwards in this direction by the example of Jesus Christ of whom it is written: *One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sinning* (Heb 4:15), tempted to the point at which He could bear no more and cried out: *My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?* (Mt 27:46; Mk 15:34).

You say you are anxious about the future, but don't you know that the Lord is with you always and that our enemy has no power over one who has resolved to belong entirely to Jesus? Moreover, isn't God good and faithful to the point of not permitting you to be tempted beyond your strength? (Cf 1 Cor 10:13).

Oh, beloved daughter of Jesus! If we were left to ourselves we should always be falling and never remain on our feet. Humble yourself, then, at the delightful thought that you are in the divine arms of Jesus, the best of fathers, like a little infant in its mother's arms, and sleep peacefully with the certainty that you are being guided towards the destination which will be to your greatest advantage. How can we be afraid to remain in such loving arms when our entire being is consecrated to God?

The fear which you say you have with regard to sins committed is illusionary and a real torment brought about by the devil. Have you not, perhaps, confessed these sins? Of what, then, are you afraid? Once and for all, leave that miserable wretch to himself and open up your heart to a holy and unbounded trust in Jesus. Believe that He is not the cruel taskmaster depicted for you by that perpetrator of iniquity, but the Lamb who takes away the sins of the world (Cf Jn 1:29), interceding for our salvation with ineffable groaning's (Cf Heb 7:25).

You complain that your poor health does not permit you to go to church and nourish yourself to the full on the Immaculate Flesh of the Son of God. You consider this to be a just punishment from the Most High for many Communion perhaps badly made. No, no, this too is a gesture of the ineffable charity of Jesus. He intends to take complete possession of your heart and desires it to be pierced with sorrow and love like His own.