



Raffaelina Cerase, now Servant of God

Raffaelina Cerase from Foggia, in 1914 started an exchange of numerous letters with Padre Pio for spiritual direction.

In 1915 she became gravely ill and asked if Padre Pio could come to Foggia to confess her.

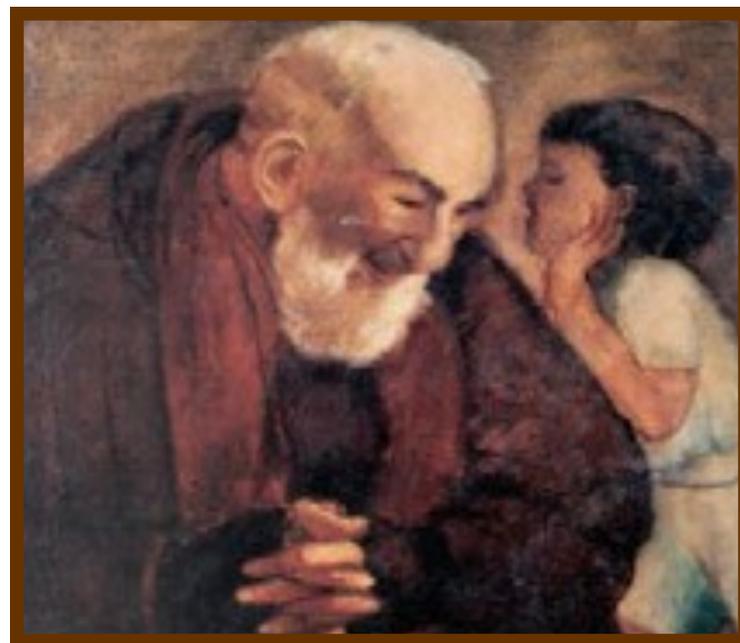
At that time Padre Pio was at home in Pietrelcina on convalescent leave. He was solicited to come to Foggia by father Agostino and father Benedetto.

He was in Foggia on February 17, 1916 and stayed at the capuchin convent of St. Ann.

Raffaelina Cerase was visited daily by Padre Pio from February 17, 1916, until the day of her death on March 25, 1916.

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Padre Pio and the Guardian Angel



"Your Guardian Angel prays for you; offers to God all the good works you accomplish; your holy and pure desires."

" Oh if all men could understand this great gift that God assigned to us; this celestial spirit. "

"May the desire to see this inseparable companion incite you to leave this body quickly."

"When you seem to be alone here is a friendly soul to whom you can unburden yourself and in whom you can confide your sorrows."

"Do not forget this invisible companion, always present to listen to you; always ready to console you."

"Invoke often this Guardian Angel, and repeat the beautiful prayer: 'Oh Angel of God...!'"

Padre Pio and the Guardian Angel

(The following is extracted from a spiritual letter written by Padre Pio to his spiritual daughter Raffaelina in 1914.)

"Beloved daughter of the heavenly Father,

May the Grace of the Divine Spirit completely possess your heart and that of all those who wish to belong to Jesus! May Jesus also reveal to you the mystery and power of His Cross, completely inebriating you. May His Virgin Mother be the very one who obtains for you the strength and courage to fight the good fight; may your good angel be for you a breastplate to shield you from the blows which the enemies of our salvation fire against you.

O Raffaelina, how consoling it is to know that we are always under the protection of a heavenly spirit, who never abandons us, not even (most admirable fact!) in the very act by which we displease God! How sweet this great truth is for the believing soul! What can the devout soul fear that is diligent in loving Jesus, and that always has such a distinguished fighter present by its side? Oh, was he not perchance among those many who, together with St. Michael the Angel there in the empyreal heights defended the honor of God against Satan and all the other rebellious spirits, finally reducing them to perdition and casting them into hell (Cf. Dan. 10,13; 12, 1; Apoc. 12,7)?

Well then, know that he is still powerful against Satan and his satellites. His charity has not grown less, nor will it ever fail to protect us. Form the beautiful habit of thinking about him always. How close to us stands one of the celestial spirits, who from the cradle to the grave never leaves us for an instant. He guides us, he protects us like a friend, like a brother. This ought to be, moreover, a constant consolation for us, especially in our saddest hours.

Know, O Raffaelina, that this good angel prays for you: he offers to God all your good works that you accomplish, as well as your holy and pure desires. In the hours in which you seem to be alone and abandoned, do not complain about not having a soul-mate to whom you can open (your heart) and to whom you can confide your sorrows: - for the love of God, do not forget this invisible companion who is always present to listen to you and always ready to console you.

O delightful intimacy, O blessed companionship! Oh, if only all men knew how to understand and appreciate this very great gift that God, in the excess of His love for men, has assigned to us this celestial spirit! Recall frequently his presence: you ought to fix your mind's eye upon him. Thank him, pray to him. He is so finely mannered, so discreet: respect him. Have continual fear lest you offend the purity of his gaze.

Invoke frequently this (your) Guardian Angel, this benefactor angel. Repeat often the beautiful prayer: "Angel of God, my Guardian dear, to whom the heavenly Father's bounty entrusts me here; enlighten me, guard me, guide me now and forever." How great, my dear Raffaelina, will be the consolation, when, at the hour of death, your soul will see this angel, who is so good, who has accompanied you throughout your life, who was so ample in his maternal care! Oh that this sweet thought may make you, may render you continually more fond of the Cross of Jesus! This is namely what your good angel desires! ? May the desire to see this inseparable companion of your entire life enkindle in you that charity which moves you to desire soon to leave the body.

Oh, what a holy and salutary thought it is to see this our good angel! It is this aspiration, namely, that should make us escape ahead of time from this dark prison in which we are detained. O Raffaelina, where are my thoughts flying to now? How many times, alas, have I made this good angel weep! How many times have I lived without the least fear of offending the purity of his regard! Oh, he is so finely mannered, so discreet. My God, how many times did I respond to the ample, more than the maternal, care of this good angel, without any sign of respect, affection or acknowledgment! It is this thought that rather presently fills me with confusion: alas -- hear this and be horrified -- such is my blindness that I feel no remorse at this. And what is worse still, I treat this dear little angel, I do not say as a friend, but as a member of my family. And to tell the truth, this dear angel is not the least offended at being treated like this by me. How precious he is, how good!"

(Padre Pio da Pietrelcina. [EPISTOLARIO, II: Corrispondenza con la Nobildonna Raffaelina Cerase](#)1914-1915, Lett. 64, p. 403f. National Centre for Padre Pio. Rd. 1, Box 134 Barto, PA 19504)