

reply soon came back to her which said, "Let us thank God and Our Lady that you are well now. You must go on with your work." Maria took up her research and writing again regarding the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and on January 31, 1941, her work was finally completed and put on the desk of Pope Pius XII.

During the summer of 1941, Maria traveled with her sisters to San Giovanni Rotondo. While there, Maria made her confession to Padre Pio. In the confessional, Padre Pio smiled at Maria and to her great surprise, he tapped her on her head three times, exactly like he had done in her dream. "Am I still your spiritual daughter?" Maria asked. "Yes, you are," Padre Pio answered. "Remember that a father is always a father. Children can stray, but you will never stray. Let us thank the Blessed Virgin who has protected you. You have been working for her for a long time. Don't be discouraged if your work does not have immediate results. Satan has always tried to attack Our Lady but he will never succeed. She will always be able to overcome him."



Our Lady of Purity
Image in Padre Pio's cell

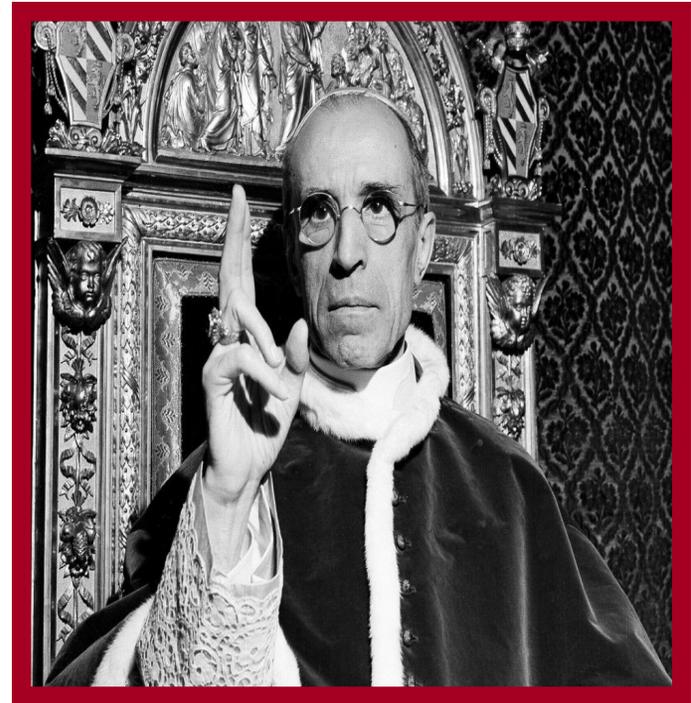
On November 1, 1950, in the Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, Pope Pius XII proclaimed the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic Church.

Pope Pius XII passed away on October 9, 1958. Just as in his life, after his death, signs of his love for the Virgin Mary were still evident. He was buried in Rome in the crypt of

St. Peter's Basilica on the feast day of Our Lady of Fatima, October 13, 1958. The Congregation for the Cause of Saints at the Vatican issued a decree which was approved by Pope Benedict XVI in 2009. The decree gave its stamp of approval to the heroic virtues in the life of Pope Pius XII and the title of "Venerable" was then added to his name.

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Padre Pio and Pope Pius XII



Grant me your grace, O most merciful Jesus that your grace may be with me, and work with me, and remain with me to the very end. Grant that I may always desire and will that which is most acceptable and pleasing to you. Let your will be mine. . . Grant that I may die to all things in the world, and for your sake, love to be despised and unknown in this life. Give me above all desires, the desire to rest in you and in you let my heart have peace. You are true peace of heart. You alone are its rest. Without you all things are difficult and troubled. In this *peace, the selfsame that is in you, the Most High, the everlasting Good, I will sleep and take my rest. Amen.*

– Thomas à Kempis

Padre Pio and Pope Pius XII

Pope Pius XII (Eugenio Pacelli) was admired by many for his profound and lifelong devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. He was ordained as a bishop on May 13, 1917, the day of the first appearance of Our Lady of Fatima to Jacinta, Francisco, and Lucia, the three shepherd children of Fatima, Portugal. When Eugenio was elected pope in 1939, and took the name Pope Pius XII, he placed his pontificate under the special protection of the Virgin Mary.

Pope Pius XII has often been spoken of as the most Marian pope in all of Church history. He consecrated the world to the Immaculate Heart of Mary in 1942. In 1954, he introduced a new Marian feast to the Church, the Queenship of Mary. He was the first pope to call for a Marian year, a practice which was continued by Pope John Paul II in 1998. Many of the saints canonized by Pius XII had great devotion to the Virgin Mary – such as Louis de Montfort, Pope Pius X, Catherine Labouré, Anthony Mary Claret, and Gemma Galgani.

Maria Guerriero of Rome, among others, was involved in a very extensive writing and research project which, when finished, would be given over to Pope Pius XII. The information that was being compiled was in reference to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In August 1940, Maria's two sisters, Laura and Antonietta, were preparing to make a trip to San Giovanni Rotondo. Maria asked her sisters to tell Padre Pio about the material on the Assumption which she was preparing for Pope Pius XII. When Maria's sisters relayed the message to Padre Pio, he was very pleased. He told Laura and Antonietta that if the Blessed Virgin had chosen Maria for such an important task, she must persevere in it, even if it was tedious at times and even if the results were not immediate. He assured them that he would keep Maria in his prayers.

Maria devoted herself to the project in all of her free time. She often worked late into the night, after her daily duties were done. She had never been strong physically and after a time she began to suffer from exhaustion. Finally, her health broke. She was tormented by severe and prolonged headaches. The headaches were so painful that they proved to be debilitating. Eventually, she had to spend her days in a darkened room with her eyes closed. Maria's family was very worried about her health. They wrote to Padre Pio and asked him for his continued prayers.

One night, during the time of her illness, Maria had a dream. She dreamed that she was knocking at the door of the monastery of Our Lady of Grace. In her dream, Brother Gerardo, who, in reality, was the doorkeeper of the monastery, answered the door. She told Brother Gerardo that she was in great need and that it was urgent that she speak to Padre Pio. "It is impossible," Father Gerardo said. "Women cannot enter the monastic enclosure. You can only speak to Padre Pio if you make your confession to him." With tears in her eyes, Maria asked Brother Gerardo to tell Padre Pio that she was ill. Brother Gerardo did what Maria asked him to do. After a short time, Brother Gerardo returned. He led Maria into a small room in the monastery. In the dream, Padre Pio then came into the room. Two trickles of blood were flowing from his left temple down his cheek. "How selfish I am," Maria thought to herself. "Here I am complaining about my headaches and now before my very eyes, I see what Padre Pio suffers day in and day out." Maria felt like apologizing to Padre Pio. He tapped her on the head three times and then said to her, "Maria, you are cured now."

When Maria woke up, she was completely free of pain. She felt strong enough to get out of bed and she was able to set about her work as though she had never been ill. That very day she wrote Padre Pio a letter, thanking him for her healing. A