

you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks, receives; and the one who seeks, finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. As noted in Luke 18: 9 – 14, all those who approach God in humility and ask for mercy as the tax collector did in the parable, will be justified, while the Pharisee was not justified because of his pride. Also, as noted in Psalm 51, God is looking for contrite hearts for the remission of sins. Another example of childlike trust in God is the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, where we say, Jesus I trust in you.

A model of religious life, and, a perfect Capuchin. This is how Padre Pio should be considered. The relative message to be considered from Padre Pio is: through baptism, in fact, everyone has been consecrated in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Early in the morning of 23 September, 1968, Padre Pio made his last confession and renewed his Franciscan vows. As was customary, he had his rosary in his hands, though he did not have the strength to say the Hail Mary's aloud. Until the end, he repeated the words "Gesú, Maria," (Jesus, Mary). At around 2:30 AM, he said "I see two mothers" (taken to mean his mother and Mary). At 2:30 AM he breathed his last in his cell at San Giovanni Rotondo with his last breath whispering " Maria."

In summarizing how Padre Pio described his life, we can quote the words that he used:

***"I want to be only a poor friar who prays..."***

***Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry...***

***Worry is useless...***

***God is merciful and will hear your prayer...***

***Prayer is the best weapon we have; it is the key to God's heart...***

***You must speak to Jesus not only with your lips, but with your heart...***

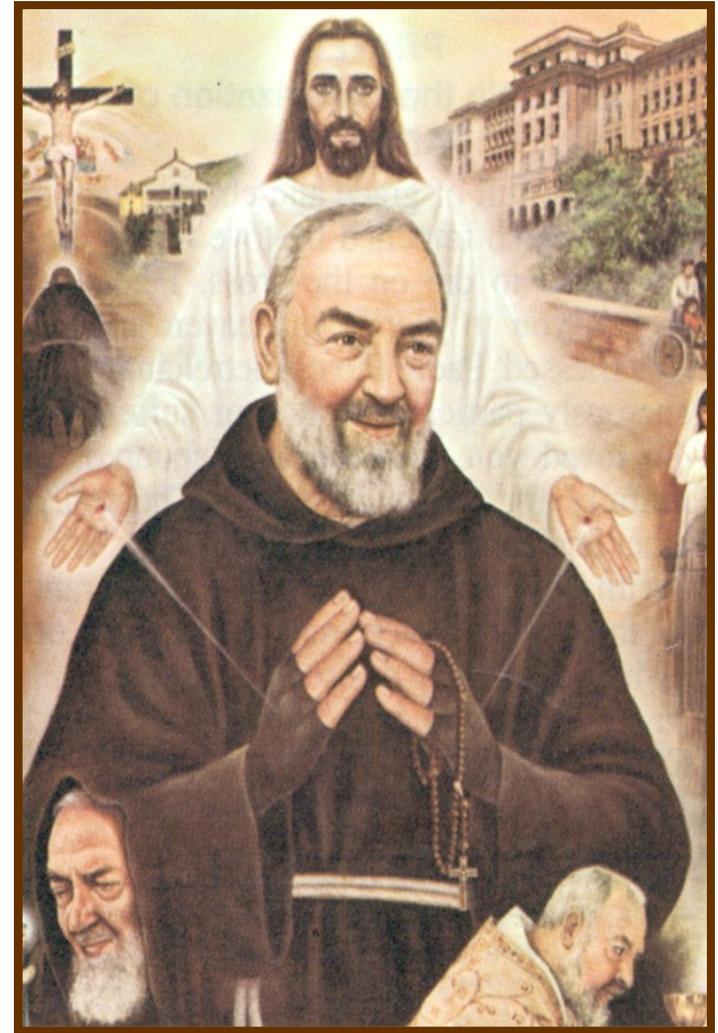
***In fact, on certain occasions you should speak to Him only when your heart..."***



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## Padre Pio

# The Perfect Capuchin



**LIKE JESUS, PADRE PIO WAS OBEDIENT UNTO DEATH.**

## Padre Pio - The Perfect Capuchin

Today we will explore the life of St. Padre Pio, as the perfect Franciscan Capuchin. The Franciscan Order of Friars Minors, serve the needs of the community while their brother (ofm) Capuchins, spend their day in prayer and contemplation. Several excerpts have been taken from an article by Gerardo Di Flumeri on the occasion of the celebration of the 28th anniversary of Padre Pio's blessed transit into eternal life from a homily given by Cardinal Giovanni Canestri, entitled "Padre Pio, Model of Religious Life."

Capuchin spirituality is based on the passion of Christ. Their crosses do not bear a corpus, because it is the friar himself who is to take Christ's place. In a quote from a prayer from Padre Pio to a spiritual daughter in the month of November, 1922, he stated: "therefore, speak to Him (i.e., to Christ) for me, that he might grant me the grace of making me a less unworthy son of St. Francis, so that I can be an example to my conferees, in order that fervor may continue to grow more more within me, making me a perfect Capuchin.

The Regola Bollata (that of 1223) of St. Francis begins with the following words, "the rule and life of the Friars minor is this, to follow the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, living in obedience, with no possessions of their own and in chastity." Padre Pio lived continuously and heroically all of these things, from the morning of his profession (22 January, 1904) to the night of his death (23 September, 1968).

Padre Pio followed the holy Gospel, in the footsteps of our Lady who, as he was saying in his letters one: "the first to practice the Gospel in all its perfection and in all its severity, before it was even written." The Gospel identifies with the Cross. No one practiced it like Mary, who as Our Lady of Sorrows stood at the foot of the cross. No one practiced it like St. Francis of Assisi, who for two years bore the stigmata of Jesus. No one practiced it like Padre Pio who for fifty years was pierced with the wounds of the Cross.

Padre Pio lived in obedience. Like Jesus, he was obedient unto death. St. Francis was a saint of poverty; Padre Pio was the "saint" of obedience. The documents of his life are a testimony to this fact. Samuel 1: 15 – 22, states that the Lord delights in obedience and submission to His command for it is better than sacrifice.

Padre Pio lived in poverty. Like St. Francis his Seraphic Father, the Poor One of Assisi, he loved and lived this evangelical virtue. Here are two concrete and irrefutable facts: the poverty of his cell and his detachment from money.

From 1916 to 1945, Padre Pio lived in cell number five. In it reigns the most absolute poverty. One always marvels at the thought that in that very cell, at that small, dark, simple writing table, Padre Pio wrote his sublime letters from September, 1916 on.

After 1945, the Padre lived in cell number one, today open to the public. The signs of

his Franciscan poverty are easily visible and verifiable. One would not think that that cell was the abode of a man through whose hands flowed huge sums of money. And with this we are at the second concrete and irrefutable fact. Through Padre Pio's hands there past millions and billions of lires. But he did not keep one penny. Detached from money, he collected huge sums, solely for the glory of God and the relief of the suffering of his neighbor.

Padre Pio lived a life in chastity. He was an angel in human flesh and in this fashion passed in the midst of the crowds of men and women, who each day surrounded him from morning until evening. Rarely did Padre Pio mention the virtue of chastity in his hundreds of letters. Why? Because purity is a beautiful virtue, but a virtue that is easily sullied. It is necessary to possess it in one's soul and in one's heart.

In his diary, Padre Agostino of San Marco in Lamis, the confessor and spiritual director of Padre Pio has left us the following testimony of his disciple, for as he is quoted as saying: "I could swear that Padre Pio has preserved until now his virginity, he has never sinned venially against this angelic virtue."

Padre Pio is also associated with Jesus in a most profound manner. He is the first priest in the history of the Roman Catholic Church to receive the stigmata (the visible wounds of Christ Crucified). As Jesus' heart was pierced on the cross, Padre Pio's heart was pierced when he received the stigmata. Out of Jesus' heart flowed blood and water for the salvation of humanity and to be a mediator to God the Father, out of Padre Pio's wounded heart flowed humility and to be an intercessor for humanity to Jesus through Mary. In Psalm 130, we ask God the Father for forgiveness of our sins so that we may serve Him. In Padre Pio that request was answered in the confessional, where Padre Pio spent many long hours every day reconciling souls to God. He truly was a servant of God, for as Jesus states in John 12: 24-26, whoever serves me must follow me and where I am, there also will my servant be. The Father will honor whoever serves me.

Another important aspect of Padre Pio's heart is his humility. As Jesus humbled Himself to become incarnate for the redemption of mankind and obediently accepting death, even death on the cross, Padre Pio humbled himself to have a childlike trust in God. In my opinion, it was his humility and this childlike trust in God, that was the reason why many physical and spiritual healings are attributable to Padre Pio, for as God as highly exalted Jesus, Padre Pio has become a powerful intercessor for mankind.

The prayer that Padre Pio said to gain graces and favors for those who asked for his intercession, is that Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. In Luke 11:5 – 13, Jesus says to his disciples, ask and you will receive; seek and