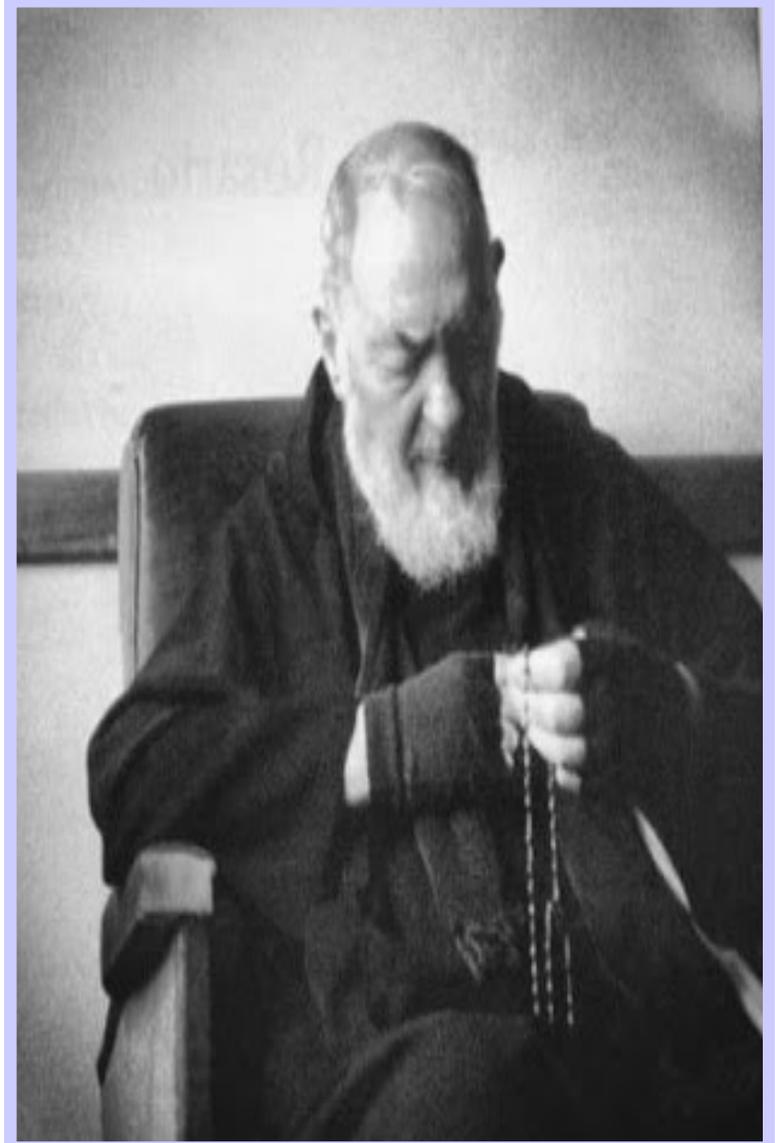




Padre Pio — the Blessed Mother and the Rosary



THE ROSARY IS THE WEAPON

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Padre Pio's devotion to the Virgin Mary was rooted in the truth that Jesus specifically wills such devotion. Jesus chose to come to earth through Mary. Similarly, Jesus chooses that we come to Him through her; for her soul magnifies the Lord. As Scripture teaches:

"And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord: And my spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior. Because He hath regarded the humility of His handmaid: for behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done great things to me." (Luke 1:46 – 49)

Scripture gives us a clear prophecy about the devotion which "all generations" of Christians (Catholics) will give to the Mother of God. It even uses the very word used in the Hail Mary, which Catholics pray: "Hail Mary, full of grace the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death."

Sacred Scripture also indicates that the Virgin Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. The Ark of the Old Covenant was a chest which contained the Tables of the Law which God gave to Moses at Mount Sinai. God's Divine Presence or glory cloud ("shekinah") would dwell above the Ark.

Hence, the Ark had mysterious powers over the enemies of God (1 Kings/1 Samuel chapters 5 – 6). In Exodus 40:34 – 35, the Old Testament uses the word "overshadow" ("episkiasei" in Greek) to describe how God's glory cloud or visible presence (the "Shekinah") overshadowed the Temple and the Ark of the Old Covenant. In Luke 1:35 we find the exact same word used to describe the Holy Ghost overshadowing Mary, since she is the Ark of the New Covenant, the living temple of the true Word of God (Jesus Christ).

Padre Pio on the Rosary as the Weapon

As Padre Pio was getting into bed (a few days before he died), he said to the friars who were in his room, "Give me my weapon!" And the friars, surprised and curious, asked him: "Where is the weapon? We cannot see anything!" Padre Pio replied: "It is my habit, which you have just hung up!" After having gone through the pockets of his religious habit, the friars said to him: "Padre, there is no weapon in your habit! ...we can only find your rosary beads there!" Padre Pio immediately said: "And is this not a weapon? ...the true weapon?!" Padre Pio wore the Rosary around his arm at night.

Padre Pio understood all of this. Padre Pio said many times: "I wish I had a voice loud enough to tell all the sinners of the world to love Mary. She is the ocean across which one must travel in order to reach Jesus." Above Padre Pio's door were the words: "Mary is the reason of all my hope."

Padre Pio instructed: "Recite the Rosary and recite it always and as much as you can."

One person said: "We always saw him with his Rosary in his hand – in the friary, in the halls, on the stairs, in the sacristy, in the Church, even in the brief interval when going to and coming from the confessional." Another person added, "When at the end he did not talk to us anymore, we told him our thoughts. We asked for help. And all he did was to show us the Rosary, always, always,."

Speaking of Our Lady, Padre Pio said: "Each grace passes through her hands."

Padre Pio instructed his spiritual children: "In all the free time you have, once you have finished your duties of state, you should kneel down and pray the Rosary. Pray the Rosary before the Blessed Sacrament or before a crucifix."

Concerning the Rosary, Our Lady herself said to Padre Pio as follows: "With this weapon you will win." Convinced of the power of the Rosary, Padre Pio always held the Rosary in his hands. When his death was approaching, he recommended the Rosary to his spiritual children by saying: "Love Our Lady and make her loved. Always recite the Rosary."

Luke 1:35: "And the Angel answering, said to her: The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the most High shall overshadow thee. And therefore also the Holy which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God."

In the Gospel of Luke the Virgin Mary is clearly identified as the new and perfect Ark of the Covenant, the living tabernacle of the Divine Presence, Jesus Christ. Consider the amazing parallel that Scripture gives us between what happened to the Ark of the Old Covenant in the first two books of Kings (or Samuel), and what happened to the Ark of the New Covenant, the Blessed Virgin Mary, in Luke's Gospel.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:9: "And David was afraid of the Lord that day, saying: How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?"

David says: "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" While Elizabeth asks how it is "that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" Elizabeth says the same thing to Mary that David said about the Ark because Mary is the Ark of the New Covenant. This is confirmed without any doubt as we carry the story of 2 Kings further. Shortly after David said: "How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?" We read that the Ark stayed with Obbedom, the Gethite, for three months.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:11: "And the ark of the Lord abode in the house of Obbedom, the Gethite, three months and the Lord blessed Obbedom, and all his household."

Likewise, in Luke chapter 1 we read that Mary (the Ark of the New Covenant) stayed with Elizabeth for three months.

Luke 1:56: "And Mary abode with her [Elizabeth] about three months, and she returned to her own house."

Also noticed that as the Ark stayed with Obbedom for three months the Lord blessed his household. Likewise, as Mary (the Ark) stayed with Elizabeth for three months, the Lord blessed her household by granting her a new child, as we read in Luke 1:57.

We then read that David leapt and danced before the Ark when he came into its presence.

2 Kings (or 2 Samuel) 6:16: "And when the ark of the Lord was come into the city of David, Michol, the daughter of Saul, looking out through a window, saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord: and she despised him in her heart."

In the same chapter of Luke (Chapter 1), we read that the infant in Elizabeth's womb leapt before Mary (the Ark).

Luke 1:41: "And it came to pass, that when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the infant leaped in her womb: and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost."

In the Apocalypse we also see that the Virgin Mary is identified with the Ark of the Covenant.

Apocalypse 11:19: "And the temple of God was opened in heaven: and the ark of His testament was seen in His temple, and there were lightning's, and voices, and an earthquake, and great hail."

Apocalypse 12:1: "And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and on her head, a crown of twelve stars."

When the Bible was written it was not written which chapters and verses indicated. The division of the Bible into chapters and verses came in the 12th century. So, the author of the Apocalypse, St. John the Apostle, wrote his book in one continuous stream. Thus, the words which end Chapter 11 flow immediately into the words which begin chapter 12, without any major division. This means that the appearance of the Ark at the very end of chapter 11 – "the ark of his testament was seen in his temple" (Apocalypse 11:9) – is immediately explained by the vision of "the woman" clothed with the sun which begins chapter 12, the very next verse (Apocalypse 12:1). This indicates, once again, that "the woman" clothed with the sun, who bore the Divine Person in her womb (the Virgin Mary), is the Ark of the New Testament.

As we have seen, God uses types and foreshadowing throughout Scripture. The Old Testament type – a true event in the history of God's people – foreshadows the New Testament fulfillment. The necessity of having God's chosen people pass through the water of the Red Sea is a type of the necessity of being saved through water baptism. The Passover Lamb is a type of Our Lord's death on the Cross. The miraculous manna in the wilderness, recounted in the book of Exodus, is a type of the Eucharist. The Ark of the Covenant in the Old Testament is clearly a type of Our Lady.

The New Testament fulfillment is always greater than the Old Testament type. Our Lady, as the living tabernacle of the Divine Presence is greater than the Old Testament Ark of the Covenant. The Ark of the Old Testament housed the words of God, but the Ark of the New Testament housed the Word of God Incarnate. Moses placed the manna from the desert inside the Ark of the Old Covenant, but Mary contained the true living bread that has come down from heaven (John 6), Jesus Christ. Moses also placed the rod of Aaron inside the Ark, which eventually budded to prove the true High Priest; whereas Mary contained the actual and eternal High Priest, Jesus Christ. The Ark of the Old Testament was inlaid with the purest gold (Exodus 25:11) with no stain of alloy, but the Ark of the New Covenant is the greatest human person to have ever lived with no stain of original or actual sin – filled with a superabundance of God's grace: "full of grace" (Luke 1:28). Oza was struck dead for touching the Ark of the Old Covenant (2 Kings/2 Samuel 6:6 – 8), and Mary is an ever-virgin who "knows not man," untouched and preserved by God for a special purpose (Luke 1:34).

Since the New Testament fulfillment is always greater than the Old Testament type, the Ark of the New Covenant's (Mary's) power over God's enemies is even greater than that of the Old Testament Ark.