

St. Pius of Pietrelcina
September 23



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1887–1968 • Italy

Pius of Pietrelcina, better known as Padre Pio, wanted to be a priest ever since he was five years old. His father was a poor farmer, but he worked extra hard so that his son could enter the seminary and become a priest.

As a young priest, Padre Pio struggled with his health. He was weak and often sick, but that never kept him from his prayers. The Friday after the Feast of the Stigmata of St. Francis of Assisi, Padre Pio was saying his usual prayers when a sharp pain stabbed through his hands and feet. The pain was so great that he fainted. When he woke up, he found that he, too, had been given the gift of the stigmata. That means that his hands and feet bore the same wounds that Jesus had suffered when He was nailed to the Cross.

Padre Pio's wounds never stopped bleeding, which is why he always wore fingerless gloves. When people saw Padre Pio's wounds, they remembered Jesus' suffering. Padre Pio was happy to suffer, since his pain made other people think of Jesus.

God also worked many miracles through Padre Pio. When people came to him for confession, he would remind them of sins they had forgotten. Once, a little blind girl came to him for her First Confession and First Holy Communion. Afterward, he rubbed her eyes, and she could see!

Padre Pio could also be in two places at the same time. Once, there was a concert at the monastery. A fellow monk noticed that during the intermission, Padre Pio remained seated in his chair and closed his eyes.

The next day, the monk visited a sick villager and discovered that the villager had been healed. The happy villager explained that Padre Pio had visited him the night before. The monk shook his head. That was impossible, the monk explained. Padre Pio had been at the concert. But when he asked the villager more questions, he discovered that Padre Pio had visited the sick man during the intermission. Padre Pio had miraculously visited the villager while remaining in his chair!

Fifty years after Padre Pio received the stigmata, the people in the church noticed something different about him as he said Mass. The wounds on his hands and feet had disappeared. The next day, Padre Pio died a holy death.

St. Padre Pio, help my suffering remind others of Jesus!