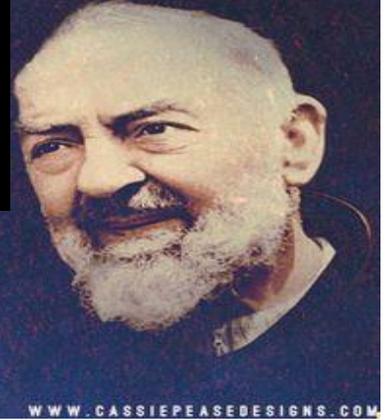


Padre Pio Prayer Group



FACING THE GIANT

Every Spiritual Child of Padre Pio has a favorite story of him, as I do. In my top three is the story of The Dragon.

After receiving Communion, Francesco Forgione, at the age of 15, received a vision in which he saw himself in a huge field. At opposite sides of the field were two groups of beings. "On one side he saw men of the most beautiful countenance, clad in snow-white garments. On the other... he saw men of hideous aspect... of dark shadows."¹ At his side was a "majestic man of rare beauty, like the sun."²

This Man told Francesco he must battle a formidable warrior. From amidst the dark shadows emerged a man so hideous and tall it seemed his head touched the sky. Francesco felt his life was over. About to fall, the Majestic Man supported him with one arm until Francesco recovered and begged Him to spare him from the fight. The Man told him the creature was so strong that the strength of all men combined would not be enough to defeat him. But, if Francesco entered the battle with confidence, and trusted the Man, He would never leave his side and would

help him defeat the creature. At the end, Francesco would receive a crown of rare beauty.

The battle was ferocious. In the end, with the help of the Majestic Man, Francesco defeated the creature and it fled. With the defeat of the creature, all the dark shadows fled cursing and shrieking. The snow-clad men applauded and praised the Majestic Man. True to His word, "a crown of rarest beauty... was placed on his head."⁷

Thus ended the vision. Francesco understood the Majestic Man was Christ and the creature was Satan (the Dragon of Revelation). Francesco would have to battle Satan and his kingdom the rest of his life. But the battle would always be won if he trusted Him and entered the battle with confidence.

Francisco Forgione - Padre Pio - continued to battle Satan into his elder years. Padre Alessio, his attendant at the age of 66, recalled, "He was afraid of devils... One night he called me so many times that I got mad. 'Why don't you let me sleep at least a half-hour?' He said, Stay with

PIO'S CORNER

Saint Pio's life was exceptional in the realm of the spirit. As a child, he was visited by our LORD and Mother Mary. His conversation with his guardian angel was so common, he thought everyone could see and talk with their guardian angel. My own life has its Godly encounters. As a child, our LORD made Himself known in my spirit. I have always been sensitive to His leading.

As an adult, I question, am I still sensitive to His leading? Do I know His Voice where I am and in what I am doing? Are the circumstances I am in so loud and distracting that I cannot hear or recognize His Voice?

Our LORD taught St. Faustina how to battle temptations and the "noise" of the world, and

¹ Ruffin, Bernard. *Padre Pio: The True Story* (Huntington: Our Sunday Visitor, 1991).

² Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.



me! The devils won't leave me alone for one minute!"³

These battles are both physical and spiritual. They are allowed and used by God to purify and sanctify us. The chief exorcist of the Vatican, Gabriel Amorth, writes, "The LORD has fixed a trial for everyone. The angels themselves were subjected to this test...Man is also subjected to the test of fidelity to God's laws. This happens...during a time of suffering... Offering oneself to the will of God in suffering is the only path one can take. We are given the opportunity to accept it through the trials of life."⁴

Saint Pio said, "Jesus permits the spiritual combat as a purification, not as a punishment."⁵

How are we then to live fighting this Dragon the rest of our lives? Jesus told Saint Catherine of Siena, "I have appointed the devil to tempt and to trouble My creatures in this life. I have done this, not so that My creatures will be overcome, but so that they may overcome...My love permits these temptations, for the devil is weak. He cannot do nothing by himself unless I allow it. So I let him tempt you because I love you, not because I hate you. I want you to conquer, not to be conquered, and to come to a perfect knowledge of yourself and Me."⁶

My response when tempted or battling against a suffering I cannot stand against? "Don't make an effort to overcome your temptations, because these efforts would

strengthen them. Do not dwell on them. Call Jesus in your imagination, and kissing His side say, 'This is my hope. I will hold You tightly, Jesus, and will not let You go until You have placed me in a safe place.'"⁸

The Battle is ongoing. It will never end. But it is already won.

"Our Lady has already crushed the serpent's head." Saint Lucy of Fatima.

MONTHLY INTENTIONS

"Remember that one does not win the battle without prayer. The choice is yours."

-Padre Pio

1. Family
2. Young Adults
3. Teens
4. Graduates
5. International Association of Prayer Groups – June 16, 2019
6. Pope: **The Mode and Life of Priests**
That priests, through the modesty and humility of their lives, commit themselves actively to a solidarity with those who are most poor.

<http://popesprayerusa.net/2019/06/06/june-pope-video-mode-life-priests/>

to hear His Voice. He gave her five things to do: First, do not fight against the temptation, but recognize it and offer it to God as He has allowed it. Second, do not lose your peace. Ask Mother Mary and the saints for help. Third, know that Christ is looking at you and supporting you. Fourth, do not fear the temptation, for Satan can only do what He allows. If you are willing to fight (as Pio did against the Dragon), victory is always on your side. Last, by withstanding Satan and the circumstance, you give God glory and you strengthen yourself with graces and merits. "Temptation gives you a chance to show Me your fidelity."⁹

As we follow these steps, we are learning to listen to His Voice without hearing It or relying on the emotions for direction. As Saint Pio writes, "When He sees that a person has acquired sufficient virtue to persevere in His holy service *without the attractions and sweetness which arrive through the senses*, He then offers that person greater holiness by removing delightful feelings experienced in meditations, prayers and other devotions."¹⁰

In other words, we are taken off milk and put on

³ Ibid.

⁴ Fr. Amorth, Gabriel. *An Exorcist Explains the Demonic*. (Manchester: Sophia Institute Press, 2016).

⁵ Scaramuzzi, Bro. Francesco. *Have A Good Day*. (Matera: Antezza Tipografi, 2018).

⁶ Thigpen, Paul. *Manual for Spiritual Warfare*. (Charlotte: Tan Books, 2014).

⁸ Scaramuzzi. *Have A Good Day*.

⁹ Michalenko, Sr. Sophia. *The Life of Faustina Kowalska*. (Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 1987).

¹⁰ Treece, Patricia (e.d.). *Quiet Moments with Padre Pio*. (Cincinnati: Servant Books, 1999).

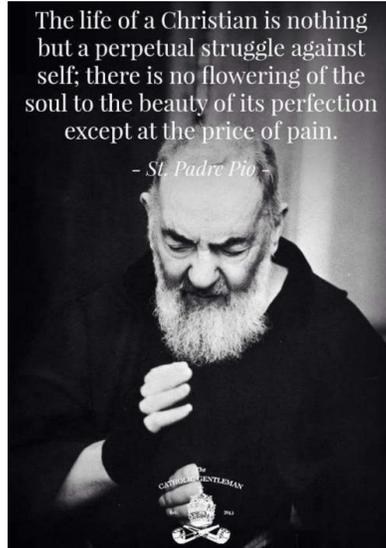


CHARITABLE WORKS

“Grow always in Christian charity. Never tire of advancing in this queen of all virtues. Consider that you cannot grow too much in this. Love it very much.”

-Padre Pio

1. Continue to serve as needed in the parish, community, and at work



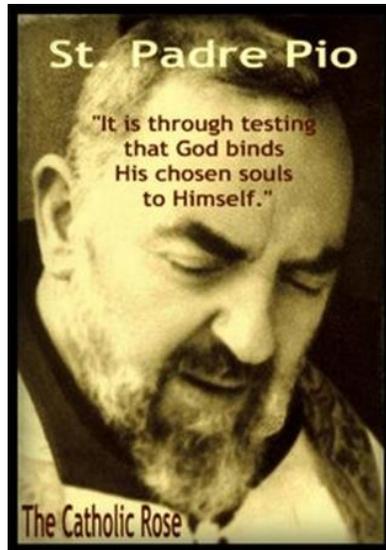
REPARATIONS

“Suffering, no matter how difficult it may be, when compared to the good that is accomplished, makes every pain a joy for the soul.”

-Padre Pio

Offered by the group:

- o Attend Mass weekly
- o Attend one daily Mass
- o Attend Reconciliation on the first Saturday of each month
- o Complete one Rosary per day
- o Attend Adoration for one hour on the first Friday of each month
- o Works of charity



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meat. We are no longer to focus on the distractions and sufferings that overwhelm us, or rely on emotions, but on Him without seeing or hearing Him. Jesus is there; His presence is hidden - our sight dimmed as Mary Madeline’s when Jesus stood in front of her Easter morning, but did not recognize Him. Saint Catherine of Genoa calls it, “The Dance of Love between God and the Soul.”¹¹

We must become adults in the world of spiritual children, and learn to listen without seeing or hearing, without relying on feelings.

As Oswald Chambers writes,

“The Way lies through Gethsemane, through the city gate, outside the camp; the Way lies alone, and the Way lies until there is no trace of a footstep left, only the Voice,

“Follow Me.”¹²

“Jesus permits the spiritual combat as a purification, not as a punishment.”
-Padre Pio

¹¹ Hughes, Serge (trans.). *Purgation and Purgatory, The Spiritual Dialog: Catherine of Genoa.* (New York: Pauline Press, 1979).

¹² Chambers, Oswald. *My Utmost For His Highest.* (Uhrichsville: Barbor and Company, 1963).