

# Today's Saint: Padre Pio da Pietrelcina

*"In books we seek God, in prayer we find him.*

*Prayer is the key which opens God's heart."*

-Saint Padre Pio da Pietrelcina (1887-1968)



Padre Pio has been one of my favorite "saints" for years. I cannot remember exactly when I first heard of this much-loved Capuchin Franciscan friar, but it was probably in the 1970s, years before many Catholics were familiar with this humble spiritual giant from Italy.

Last week we were blessed to hear recent Mount St. Mary's University graduate Beth Puleo speak to our John Carroll students about her struggle with brain cancer and her deep faith in God to take care of her. Beth shared with our students about waking up one night when she was 8 years old to a man in Franciscan-like dark robes who was beckoning to her. The identity of this man she discovered later at a Pennsylvania shrine was Padre Pio. (Read more about Beth's story [here](#))

If you are familiar with Padre Pio, you know that this type of appearance was common for him even before his death. The Padre Pio that captured my attention years ago was able to be in two places at the same time - to comfort people who were sick or suffering in faraway places - all while kneeling in his chapel at San Giovanni Rotondo. This deeply-prayerful Capuchin friar was able to read hearts and console those who were deeply burdened. Padre Pio was able to relate to those who were suffering as he bore the stigmatic wounds of our Lord for decades. People from around the world stood in line for hours on end to have him hear their confessions. His daily Masses were always standing room only. His spirituality touched people's hearts and lives.

Over 300,000 pilgrims are estimated to have gathered in Saint Peter's Square in 2002 for his canonization by Blessed Pope John Paul II. The Holy Father spoke in his homily of Padre Pio's prayerfulness and spirituality: "In fact, the ultimate reason for the apostolic effectiveness of Padre Pio, the profound root of so much spiritual fruitfulness can be found in that intimate and constant union with God, attested to by his long hours spent in prayer and in the confessional. He loved to repeat, "I am a

poor Franciscan who prays” convinced that “prayer is the best weapon we have, a key that opens the heart of God.”

As we celebrate today the beautiful feast of this son of Francis and lover of our Blessed Mother, may we too be inspired to deepen the prayer of our hearts as we remember Padre Pio’s words: “Pray, hope, and don’t worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.”



*Canonization of Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina at Saint Peter’s Square, June 16, 2002.  
(Photo via [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va))*

**Prayer of Blessed Pope John Paul II to Saint Padre Pio:**

*Teach us, we pray humility of heart,  
so that we may be counted among the little ones of the Gospel  
to whom the Father promised to reveal the mysteries of His Kingdom.  
Help us to pray without ceasing,  
certain that God knows what we need even before we ask Him.  
Obtain for us the eyes of faith that will help us recognize  
in the poor and suffering, the very face of Jesus.  
Sustain us in the hour of trouble and trial and,  
if we fall, let us experience the joy of the sacrament of forgiveness.  
Grant us your tender devotion to Mary,  
mother of Jesus and our Mother.  
Accompany us on our earthly pilgrimage  
toward the blessed Homeland,  
where we hope to arrive to contemplate forever*

*the Glory of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*

*Amen.*

-Blessed Pope John Paul II on the occasion of the canonization of Padre Pio of  
Pietrelcina, June 16, 2002



*Crowds during the canonization of Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina at Saint Peter's  
Square, June 16, 2002. (Photo via [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va))*