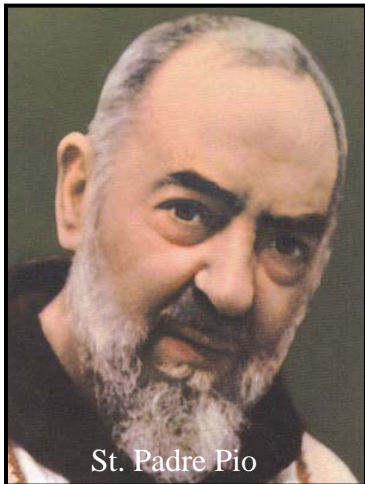


Armata Bianca

The White Army

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St. Padre Pio

The Priesthood and St. Padre Pio

This is the year of the Priest announced by Pope Benedict XVI, the holy Father who is the head of the Roman Catholic Church. Jesus gives the Pope this authority. The Priesthood of Jesus Christ is a sacrament. There are Seven Sacraments of the Catholic Church. The Latin word *sacramentum* means "a sign of the sacred." The seven sacraments are ceremonies that point to what is sacred, significant and important for Christians. They are special occasions for experiencing God's saving presence. That's what theologians mean when they say that sacraments are at the same time *signs* and *instruments* of God's grace. **The Seven Catholic Sacraments are: 1.) Baptism 2.) Eucharist 3.) Reconciliation 4.) Confirmation 5.) Marriage 6.) Holy Orders 7.) Anointing of the Sick.** Holy Orders, also called the Sacrament of Ordination, is for men to become priests.

This sacrament was given to us by Jesus at the Last Supper. The first men who received the power of priesthood were the apostles. The apostles passed on that gift to us. A man that wants to be a priest has to go to school for many years.

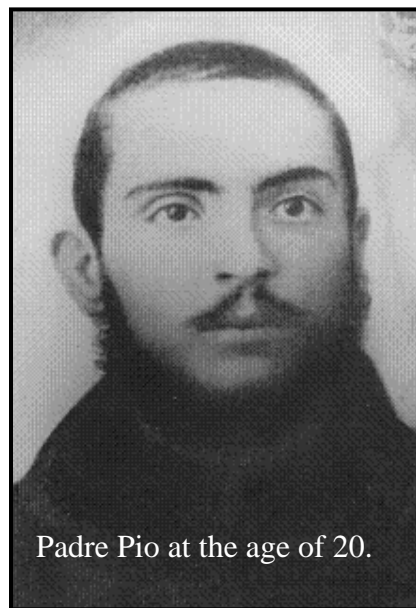
After that is done, he has a ceremony where he is ordained and he becomes a priest. A priest is given special powers through ordination. He then can give us all the sacraments. Priests are called in a special way to help us and to preach the Word of God. Jesus taught us many things. He taught us how to behave. He built our Church. He gave us a Pope to make sure that His Words were explained correctly. Jesus is so wonderful! We all want to follow Jesus and be just like Him. You must remember that Jesus is God and we aren't. We fail all the time. We are so sad when we fail. Jesus knew that we would fail and we would be sad. Jesus decided that to help us on our way, He would give us graces. All we have to do is ask for them and if it's His Will, He would give them to us. Sometimes we don't



Jesus at the Last Supper with the apostles.

know what to ask for. Sometimes we ask for the wrong things. Our church gave us the sacraments so we can get some of the graces Jesus has to give to help us get started. With those graces, we will be smarter and know what to ask for later on. We will still make mistakes but with the Grace of God, maybe they won't be as bad or so many of them. There are seven sacraments the Church offers us. Some of them we only get once but others we can get many times. The seven sacraments are the life of the Catholic Church. Each sacrament is an outward sign of an inward grace. When we participate in them worthily, each provides us with graces—with the life of God in our soul. In worship, we give to God that which we owe Him; in the sacraments, He gives us the graces necessary to live a truly human life. Some people are called to the sacrament of Marriage, some are called to single life—which is not a sacrament but it is a beautiful vocation, some young men and women are called to religious life. The priesthood is one of the sacraments of the Church. A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Jesus to bring his presence to his people. **Baptism**, the outward sign is water, original sin is washed away. **Eucharist**, the outward sign is the host, you receive Jesus' body, blood, soul and divinity. **Reconciliation**, the outward sign is the Priest in the confessional, he takes the place of Jesus and absolves you from your sins. **Confirmation**, the outward sign is the Bishop anointing with chrism oil, he blesses you with the sign of the cross marking you with the sign of the Holy Spirit. **Marriage**, the outward sign is when the spouses come together before Jesus Christ and they give themselves to each other, Jesus is the witness. **Holy Orders**, or Priesthood, outward sign is lying on the ground-prostrate before the altar, the bishop lays his hands on the head of the man, so that the Holy Spirit will descend on him and grant him one of the priestly ranks. **Anointing of the Sick**, the outward sign is oil, where the Priest blesses and anoints the dying person.

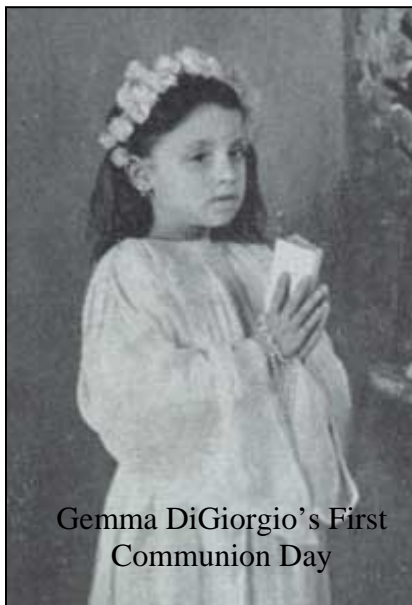
The Priesthood is a very special calling. How do you know if you are called to be a Priest? God tells you. Dr. Sheila had all the young boys stand up and the young girls stay sitting, and told the boys that in order to hear God calling you, you need to listen. The Priesthood of Jesus Christ, in a Roman Catholic Church, which is the true Church, will never have a woman ordained a Priest. It's not because God doesn't like women, it's ordained for the men. You need to listen for God if He is calling you. If you have headphones on listening to loud music all the time, if you don't pray from the heart and are not paying attention to the Mass when you come to Church, you are never going to hear God calling you. You need to listen and talk to God everyday and ask, "Jesus, if you want me to be a Priest, then please speak to me". Then Dr. Sheila had all the young girls stand up and the young boys stay sitting. She told the girls, that they will never become ordained Priests but you have a very special role. God created you to bring forth life, to bring more souls into the world. No other creature can do that but a woman. Also, God calls some women to become his spouse to religious life. So many young girls are called to religious life and some of the greatest Saints were women. When Jesus was there dying on the cross, there were mostly women there and St. John. The women stood by Jesus and did not run away. Women have strength because they are called to bring forth life into the world. Men cannot bring souls into the world only women, just like Mother Mary. Men can participate in that but they can't bring forth life from their bodies. When a man becomes a Priest he is united to Jesus. The heart of the Priest is the heart of Christ. Jesus was the first Priest. Jesus did not get married. When you get married you have to give all of your attention to your spouse and it is very hard to give your full attention outside of your family. Jesus remained single because that was God's way of showing that the Priesthood requires that you are the shepherd and the Father of many children to minister to.



Padre Pio at the age of 20.

St. Padre Pio, was born May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy located in southern Italy. Padre is an Italian word that means Father. He was one of the greatest mystics, he was a victim soul. He did things that you and I can't even imagine, because God chose him to. He is one of the greatest Priest examples you will ever find. **St. Padre Pio prophesized that "The children shall save the world" and was the person who initiated the start of the Armata Bianca.** When he was 5 years old, Jesus and Mary appeared to him and he would play with them. He would have conversations with them and his guardian angel. He knew his calling, he heard Christ calling him. He wanted to become a Friar. At age 15, he took the Habit of the Order of Friars Minor Capuchin on January 22, 1903. They look like St. Francis. Their spirituality is like St. Francis. On the day of his investiture, he took the name of Pio in honor of Saint Pius V, the patron saint of Pietrelcina, and was called Fra, for brother, until his priestly ordination.

St. Padre Pio knew that he wanted to be a Capuchin Franciscan Friar. He was ordained to be a priest at 23 years old. Within a month of his ordination, September 7, 1910, as Padre Pio was praying in the Piana Romana (the site used to be a small straw hut where Padre Pio would seek shelter from the sun and collect his thoughts in prayer.), Jesus and Mary appeared to him and gave him the wounds of Christ, the Stigmata. Padre Pio felt pain in his body but the wounds were invisible. He saw an image of an Angel coming at him throwing this fiery sword and piercing the inside of his heart. He felt pain throughout his entire body and he went into a mystical crucifixion. Three years later, he was visited by Jesus himself on the cross. The cross became alive to him. Jesus' hands and feet were dripping blood from the cross. When Padre Pio looked up at Jesus' suffering on the cross, another fiery arrow hit Padre. The wounds of Christ appeared on Padre's hands, feet and his side. Some of the pictures of Padre Pio show him wearing dark gloves because he always wanted to hide this gift. He was embarrassed, not because he didn't want to accept the suffering, but the wounds were large and he wanted to suffer silently and in secret. He would lose almost 1/3 of all his blood. Every time he would celebrate Mass he would bleed, yet he would survive and not need a blood transfusion. Jesus would restore his body each time, but Padre would suffer the Passion of Jesus every time he said the Mass and at times when God would ask him to suffer. The famous monk, St. Francis of Assisi, suffered the stigmata too before Padre Pio's time. Stigmata means, the wounds of Christ. St. Padre Pio received the stigmata on the same day as St. Francis of Assisi did. God chooses special people to suffer more than others. Who wants to spend 50 years of their life in pain with the wounds of Christ? Souls that pray to be united with Christ want to do that. Padre Pio was a victim soul. A victim is someone who suffers. A victim soul is a soul chosen by God to take on more suffering than any of us can imagine. St. Padre Pio bled with his visible wounds for 50 years. St. Padre Pio could also bilocate. During World War II there were pilots and jets flying over Germany and over San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy where Padre Pio lived. The Germans were trying to bomb Italy and every time they would fly over San Giovanni Rotondo, they would see a huge magnificent monk in the sky with the wounds of Christ. This caused no plane to get through. Jesus gave Padre special powers to bilocate, be in two different places at the same time. He would appear at the bedside of sick people because God sent him to suffer and to heal. So Padre Pio had a ministry of healing. Millions of people would come to Padre Pio when he was alive, asking him to heal them, including this little girl who was born blind with no pupils in her eyes. Of all of Padre Pio's healings, one of the most remarkable may have been this blind girl from the Palermo area named Gemma DiGiorgio. **"I had no pupils in my eyes,"** said Gemma in 1971, several years after Padre Pio's death. "I had no sight at all. When I was three months old, my mother took me to a very famous eye doctor in Palermo. He told her that, without pupils, I would never be able to see." In 1946, when the girl was seven, a nun took it upon herself to write Padre Pio on her behalf, and received a note saying that the girl should be brought to Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo. That's exactly what Gemma's grandmother did: brought the girl to see the famous monk, who heard the child's First Confession and gave her First Communion — then made the Sign of the Cross on her eyes. After the blessing, Gemma was able to see.



Gemma DiGiorgio's First Communion Day



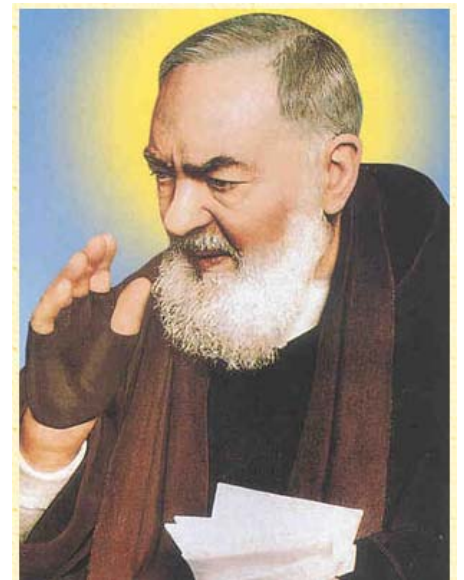
Gemma DiGiorgio's eyes without any pupils.

There is another story of a man who during the war, was a construction worker who fell and his whole face was smashed. One of his eyeballs was missing. He had a devotion to Padre Pio and while in his hospital bed this man prayed to Padre Pio and Padre appeared to him. The man noticed a beautiful scent when Padre Pio

appeared to him. When the doctors and nurses came in later they noticed this man had a brand new eye and all the lacerations on his face were healed. This man shared the story of a monk that appeared to him, Padre Pio. Padre Pio could also read your soul. Another man went to see Padre Pio for confession. This man was planning to kill his wife and steal all her money. He was a man full of anger and had lost all his patience with his wife. One day he was walking by Padre Pio who

was talking to someone and Padre Pio yelled out to this man, Hey You! You are stained with the blood of your wife. Do not kill her. Shocked, the man repented and the next day he visited Padre Pio for confession. This man became a beautiful Catholic and his whole life changed. One day a lady came into the confessional to confess her sins, but she

withheld the worse sin she ever committed, she was too embarrassed to tell Padre Pio. Padre Pio asked her if there was anything else she wanted to tell him? She said no. He told her to get out that he could not absolve her of her sins. Do you remember when you aborted your baby? She asked him how did he know this? So she left and thought about it and later came back to confess and be absolved. Padre Pio could read souls, bilocate and heal others, those were gifts of the Holy Spirit. Dr. Sheila was 8 years old when Padre Pio died and she had a great aunt that met Padre Pio. When Padre Pio said Mass, it took 3 hours. The same amount of time that Christ died on Calvary. When Padre said Mass, his whole face changed into the suffering Jesus. People would watch his whole face change, which would get all contorted. He would cry and his hands would shake like his arm being crucified. His arm would go up and everyone at the Mass would watch this man suffer and cry. He would lose so much blood during the Mass. He was united to the sufferings of Christ and he helped Jesus save souls. Not everyone is called to suffer that way, but Padre said yes to Jesus and was called the victim soul. He was especially chosen to suffer for the souls of sinners. He also had built a hospital for the suffering. He had a love for the suffering and the sick and he had a love for the Blessed Mother. When Padre Pio was very, very sick, the Pope gave permission for the statue of Our Lady of Fatima to be flown to San Giovanni Rotondo to visit him on August 5 in the 1960's. When the helicopter carrying the statue landed, outside of Padre Pio's hospital window, he felt pain go through all of his body. The next day he realized that through the Blessed Mother, he was healed. Our Lady came to him. He would tell people to pray the Rosary every day. **Padre Pio's favorite line is "Pray, hope and don't worry"**. One day one of his penitents said to him: "Padre, today they say the Rosary is out of date, that it is no longer in fashion. It is no longer said in many churches." He replied: "Let us do what our fathers did and all will be well with us." "But Satan rules the world." Padre Pio replied: "Because they make him rule; can a spirit rule by itself if it is not united to the human will? We could not have been born in a more depraved world. **The one who prays a lot saves himself. The one who prays little is in danger. The one who does not pray loses his soul.**" "Love our Lady, make others love her. Always say your Rosary and say it well. Satan always tries to destroy this prayer, but he will never succeed. It is the prayer of her who triumphs over everything and everyone." The Devil hated Padre Pio. Many nights he would get physically attacked by the Devil, it was a battle one-on-one. And two days before he died, he repeated: "Love our Lady and make her loved. Recite the Rosary and recite it always. And recite it as much as you can." Padre Pio passed away on September 23, 1968. About 6 years ago, Dr. Sheila visited Padre Pio's tomb at San Giovanni when he was buried underneath. Since then his body was taken up and it was noticed that his body was incorrupt.



Padre Pio's Prayer After Holy Communion

Stay with me, Lord, for it is necessary to have You present so that I do not forget You. You know how easily I abandon You.

Stay with me Lord, because I am weak, and I need Your strength, so that I may not fall so often.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my life, and without You, I am without fervor.

Stay with me Lord, for You are my light, and without you, I am in darkness.

Stay with me Lord, to show me Your will.

Stay with me Lord, so that I hear Your voice and follow You.

Stay with me Lord, for I desire to love you very much, and always be in Your Company.

Stay with me Lord, if You wish me to be faithful to You.

Stay with me Lord, for as poor as my soul is, I want it to be a place of consolation for You, a nest of Love.

Stay with me, Jesus, for it is getting late, and the day is coming to a close, and life passes, death, judgment, eternity approach. It is necessary to renew my strength, so that I will not stop along the way and for that, I need You. It is getting late and death approaches. I fear the darkness, the temptations, the dryness, the cross, the sorrows. O how I need You, my Jesus, in this night of exile.

Stay with me tonight, Jesus, in life with all its dangers, I need You.

Let me recognize You as Your disciples did at the breaking of bread, so that the Eucharistic Communion be the light which disperses the darkness, the force which sustains me, the unique joy of my heart.

Stay with me Lord, because at the hour of my death, I want to remain united to you, if not by Communion, at least by grace and love.

Stay with me Jesus, I do not ask for divine consolation because I do not merit it, but the gift of Your presence, oh yes, I ask this of You.

Stay with me Lord, for it is You alone I look for, Your Love, Your Grace, Your Will, Your Heart, Your Spirit, because I love You and ask no other reward but to love You more and more.

With a firm love, I will love You with all my heart while on earth and continue to love You perfectly during all eternity. Amen.

"Families that pray together, stay together."

