

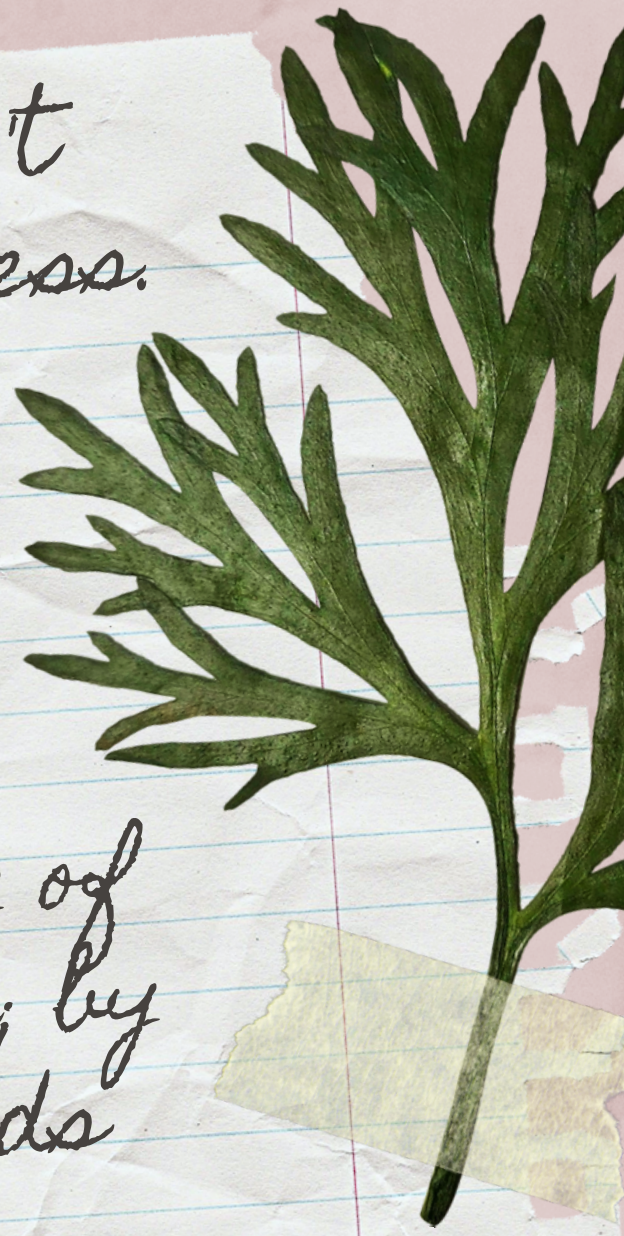
# Saint Padre Pio

- Feastday: September 23
- Patron Saint of: civil defense workers, adolescents, and Pietrelcina (his birthplace)
- Birth: May 25, 1887
- Death: September 23, 1968
- Canonized: by Pope John Paul II on June 16, 2002



*"Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer."*

*"Through the study of books one seeks God; by meditation one finds him."*



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Padre Pio in the small farming town of Pietrelcina, Italy on May 25, 1887. At the age of five, he dedicated his life to God. As a young boy, he was able to see and communicate with his guardian angel.

On August 10, 1910, at the age of twenty-three, Padre Pio was ordained to the priesthood. The celebration of the Holy Mass was for Padre Pio, the center of his spirituality. Due to the long pauses of contemplative silence into which he entered at various parts of the Holy Sacrifice, his Mass could sometimes last several hours. Everything about him spoke of how intensely he was living the Passion of Christ. The parish priest in Pietrelcina called Padre Pio's Mass, "an incomprehensible mystery." When asked to shorten his Mass, Padre Pio replied, "God knows that I want to say Mass just like any other priest, but I cannot do it." Shortly after his ordination, he wrote a letter to his spiritual director in which he asked permission to offer his life as a victim for sinners. The marks of the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, appeared on Padre Pio's body, on Friday, September 20, 1918, while he was praying before a crucifix after Mass. He was thirty-one years old and became the first stigmatized priest in the history of the Church. With resignation and serenity, he bore the painful wounds in his hands, feet, and side for fifty years.

As the years passed, pilgrims began to come to him by the thousands, drawn by the spiritual riches which flowed so freely from his extraordinary ministry. God endowed Padre Pio with many extraordinary spiritual gifts and charisms including the gift of healing, bilocation, prophecy, miracles, discernment of spirits, the ability to read hearts, the gift of tongues (the ability to speak and understand languages that he had never studied), the gift of conversions, the grace to see angelic beings in form, and the fragrance which emanated from his wounds and which frequently announced his invisible presence.

He passed away at the age of eighty-one. He died as he had lived, with his Rosary in his hands. His last words were "Jesus, Mary" which he repeated over and over until he breathed his last.