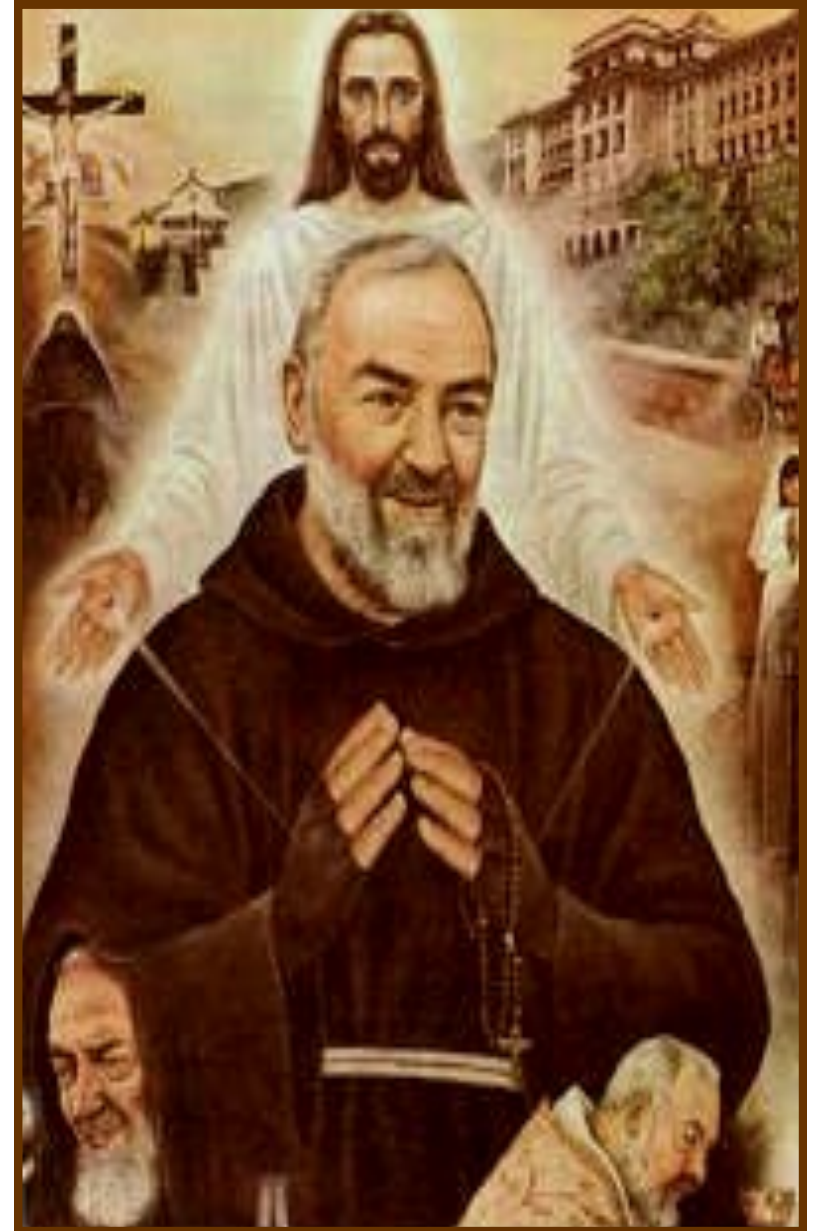


Everyone could see the "sanctity" of Padre Pio, the splendor of the Word and the love of the Holy Spirit in this humble Capuchin friar, Padre Pio, who for many, like myself, he continues to be:

- a glimpse of Heaven;
- an angel on earth;
- a foretaste of the infinite;
- a prelude to beatitude;
- and hope for the eternal.



The Social Personality of Padre Pio



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The Social Personality of Padre Pio

by Gennaro Prezioso

Padre Pio had an extraordinarily rich personality and many pages would be necessary to give justice to its diversity and exceptionality. Because of limits imposed I must restrict my consideration to only three aspects: the human, the spiritual and the social.

Social Aspect of Padre Pio

The object of Padre Pio's preoccupation was man as a whole, man made of body and soul.

This vigorous realism, this concern for the concrete, this attachment to the commonplace of man, his moral misery, debility, fragility and somatic illnesses is most beautiful and laudable.

It is the logic of the incarnation, that is the logic of love. I think of the forsaken poor of the Gargano and how they lived in economical, social and medical privation.

Today San Giovanni Rotondo, thanks to Padre Pio, presents itself to the world as a kind of miracle. It is the miracle of love!

Padre Pio gave his adopted town a higher incentive and superior motivation to the work of renewal and social progress: love or rather evangelical charity towards our neighbor, the image of God, redeemed and ennobled by our Savior.

Padre Pio realized in an exemplary way what today is known as the "social obligation of the Christian."

Padre Pio established a "style" of obligation: serious, upright, disinterested, supernaturally motivated and evangelically justified.

He saw man smitten by disease, man in need of an external aid like the Eucharist of Jesus.

This explained the initiation of his apostolic works, their purpose and particular traits.

Padre Pio became the precursor of psycho-somatic medicine: he favored a medical approach that did not overlook the spiritual interests of the patient.

For Padre Pio there did not exist the ailment without the patient: the patient is a man made up of a psychological and physical aspect.

He brought God to the patient as well as his health and he brought the patient to God in the joy of a re-found spiritual well-being.

Who cannot remember the advice that Padre Pio gave to the medical employees in the Home for the Relief of Suffering. Advice that arose from his total and comprehensive vision of the patient.

Conclusion

Padre Pio knew God with all his attributes, and he knew man with all his shortcomings, his frailty, his misery and his sin.

He loved God and he loved man. He wrote with regards to this, "I am devoured by love for God and by love for my neighbour."

Between these two great loves he felt himself like a prisoner.

He ascertained in himself the hunger, the anticipation and the hope of God and he ascertained the necessities and needs of man.

He sought the encounter, the union, the synthesis, the symbiosis between these two loves. He reconciled the Creator and the creature and he sacrificed himself to the weak party, to man.

He had within himself something of both parties. He realized in his person the annihilation and humanization of God and he realized in himself the doxa, that is to say the glorification, exaltation and divinization of man.

In Padre Pio there was a kind of incarnation of Jesus Christ, as in Jesus Christ there was the incarnation of God. And all this not just because of his virtues and charisms, but also because he was a priest.

He brought to God the prayers, the petitions and the offerings of the faithful and he brought to the faithful the answers and graces from God.

He did not just consecrate the Eucharist in the name of the Church and in the person of Christ but he became the Eucharist. He repeated with Jesus in every moment of his life, "Take and eat for this is My Body offered up for you!"