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## Padre Pio Speaks About Angels



Padre Pio blesses a statue of St. Michael the Archangel for a pilgrim.

**Father Agostino** made a trip to Naples during the summer of 1912. On the return trip home, he reached the town of Benevento just after midnight. He continued on to Pietrelcina and arrived there about three o'clock in the morning. He decided to stop at Padre Pio's house. Upon arriving, he was surprised to find that the door was open. When he walked inside, he discovered that Padre Pio was in bed but he was not asleep. Father Agostino asked him why he had not locked the door for the night. "Aren't you afraid to leave the door unlocked?" he said. "No, not at all," Padre Pio replied. "I have the guardian angels of the house keeping watch through the night. There is no reason to fear."

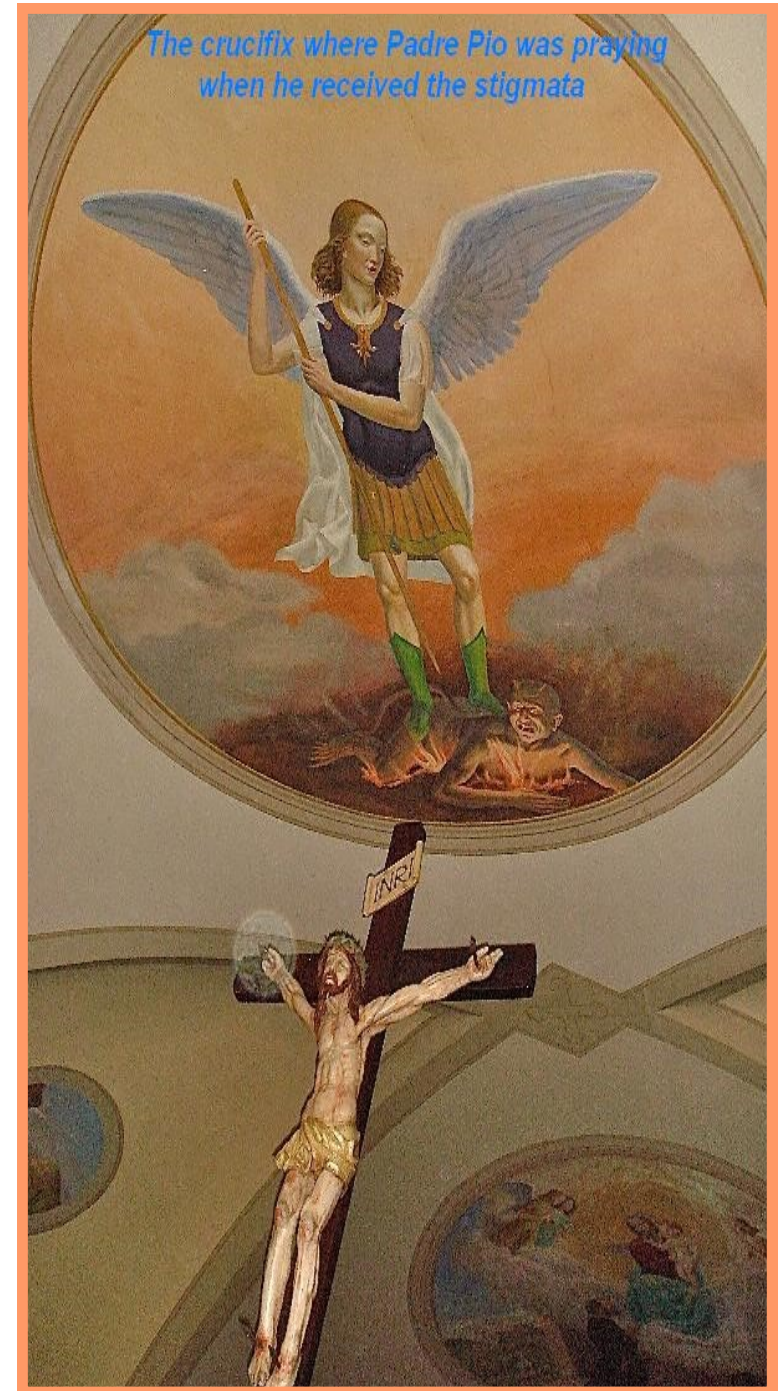
# Padre Pio Speaks About Angels

**The word angel** is derived from the ancient Greek word *aggelos* which means *messenger*. The angels are God's instruments or messengers whom he uses to communicate his will. References to the celestial or non-corporal beings better known as angels, are mentioned more than 100 times in the Old Testament and more than 150 times in the New Testament. From the first book of Genesis to the last book of Revelation, scriptures speak of the existence of angels.

In the book of Genesis, the three men who appear to Abraham are angels who have taken human form (Genesis 18:2). An angel of the Lord appeared to Moses (Exodus 3:2) in order to lead the Israelites from captivity in Egypt to the Promised Land. The birth of Jesus was foretold by angels (Luke 2:14). An angel ministered to Jesus when he was tempted in the desert (Matthew 4:11) and an angel comforted him in his Agony in the Garden (Luke 22:43). An angel rolled back the stone at the empty tomb of Jesus (Matthew 28:5) and the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead was announced by an angel. In the book of Acts, God sent an angel to free the Apostle Peter after he was jailed by King Herod (Acts 12:7).

Among the angels that are mentioned in Holy Scripture, St. Michael the Archangel is described as "one of the chief princes" and the leader of the heavenly hosts. His name means, "Who is like God?" St. Michael has been honored and invoked as patron and protector of the Church since the time of the Apostles. The Greek Fathers of the Church placed St. Michael over all the other angels as "prince of the Seraphim."

In an address to American pilgrims on October 3, 1958, Pope Pius XII spoke eloquently of the holy angels and said, "The angels are glorious, pure and splendid. They have been given to us as companions along the way of life. They have the task of watching over you all, so that you do not stray away from Christ, your Lord."



Although Father Dominic was initially skeptical about guardian angels, little by little Padre Pio taught him about the reality of the angelic realm. On one occasion, Father Dominic noticed that Padre Pio looked extremely tired. Padre Pio had an explanation for his fatigue. He told Father Dominic that the guardian angels had kept him up almost all night. Through contact with Padre Pio, Father Dominic eventually grew to have a strong belief in angels.

When Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968, several pilgrims who were in San Giovanni Rotondo reported to the Capuchins that they saw angels in the night sky. At the time of the sun's rising, the angels disappeared just as mysteriously as they had come. Knowing Padre Pio's lifelong devotion to the angels, one can hardly be surprised.



Padre Pio with his Guardian Angel

Pope John Paul II emphasized the important role of angels when he gave six General Audiences in Rome from July 9 to August 20, 1986 entitled "Angels Participate in the History of Salvation." In his catechesis on the holy angels, Pope John Paul II expressed the hope that all people would come to the realization of the reality of angels. In January of 2009, Pope Benedict XVI stated, "In the face of the challenges of our times and the tribulations which every individual experiences in his life, it is salutary to recall the powerful help and solicitous guidance of the holy angels who work together for the benefit of us all."

Among the angelic beings, the role of the guardian angel is one of great importance. The Church teaches that the special work of the guardian angel is to guide an individual on his journey toward God and to protect him from harm during his earthly pilgrimage. The Church celebrates the feast of the Guardian Angels each year on October 2.

Padre Pio had an especially tender love and devotion for his guardian angel. From the time that he was five years old, he was able to see and converse with his guardian angel. In his childlike simplicity, he assumed that everyone had the same experience. Enjoying an intimate friendship with his angel, Padre Pio referred to him as the "companion of my childhood." The loving relationship continued throughout Padre Pio's life. For Padre Pio, his angel was his support, his protector, his teacher, his brother, and his friend. At times, Padre Pio's guardian angel acted as his secretary as well as his heavenly "postman" carrying messages to his spiritual children.

Padre Pio's guardian angel awakened him in the morning, and together they would join in prayer and praise to God. Padre Pio wrote to Father Agostino:

“Again at night when I close my eyes, the veil is lifted and I see Paradise open up before me; and gladdened by this vision I sleep with a smile of sweet beatitude on my lips and a perfectly tranquil countenance, waiting for the little companion of my childhood to come to waken me, so that we may sing together the morning praises to the Beloved of our hearts.” (Letters 1)



A letter from Fr. Agostino to Padre Pio that arrived stained with ink.

When Padre Pio was a newly ordained priest, Father Agostino visited him periodically in Pietrelcina and also corresponded with him through letters. Padre Pio benefitted greatly from Father Agostino’s wise counsel. It became obvious that the demons, who often tormented Padre Pio, were not pleased with the spiritual help that he was receiving from Father Agostino. They made many efforts to interfere. Often, Padre Pio would develop a violent headache when he started to answer one of Father Agostino’s letters.

The headache would be accompanied by a severe pain in his right arm which would make it impossible for him to hold a pen in his hand and write. In addition, some of the letters exchanged between Father Agostino and Padre Pio were obviously tampered with. Some were mysteriously marred with ink stains.

Padre Pio told Father Agostino about the trouble the demons were causing. He also explained the situation to the parish priest of Pietrelcina, Father Salvatore Pannullo. Father Pannullo asked Padre Pio

Once, at the end of a very busy day, Padre Pio was assisted by Father Gabriel and Father Giambattista, who lent their arm to him and escorted him out of the chapel. Father Gabriel told Padre Pio that he should get more rest as he looked exhausted. “When you go to bed for the night, you should ask your guardian angel to minister to you,” Father Gabriel said. “But I cannot ask that of him,” Padre Pio replied. “As you may know, he has to travel.” Father Gabriel, thinking that he had a good suggestion, then said, “Since your guardian angel has to travel about so much, could Father Giambattista and I lend you our guardian angels?” “No, never!” Padre Pio replied. “It does not work that way. A person can only be assisted by his own angel, not another’s.”

Father Dominic Meyer was serving at St. Felix Friary in Indiana when he was summoned to San Giovanni Rotondo. He served at Our Lady of Grace monastery from 1947 to 1953. He translated for the German and English visitors when they were speaking to Padre Pio. He also helped with the large volume of mail that came into the monastery and answered many of the letters of the German and English pilgrims.

One day, Father Dominic opened a letter from a woman who lived in the United States. She wanted to know if Padre Pio was able to see her guardian angel when she sent him with a message or was he only able to hear his voice. Father Dominic thought the woman’s question was ridiculous. His voice was dripping with sarcasm when he read the letter regarding the guardian angel to Padre Pio. Padre Pio made Father Dominic understand in no uncertain terms that he was not pleased with his attitude. “Father Domenico,” Padre Pio said firmly, “When that woman sends her guardian angel to me, I see the angel just like I see you!”

Every day, when it was time for Padre Pio to hear confessions, Father Alessio would take Padre Pio's arm and walk with him to the confessional. Once Padre Pio was situated in the confessional, Father Alessio would rush back to his cell to take a quick nap. Each time his alarm clock failed to wake him up, he would have a most unusual experience. He would hear a distinct voice saying to him, "Alessio, it is time to go to the church!" He would instantly wake up and hurry down to help Padre Pio out of the confessional. Sometimes he was a little late, but Padre Pio would always be there waiting for him. He would never attempt to walk through the crowded corridors by himself. Father Alessio was always there to protect him and to fend off the overly zealous devotees. Some carried scissors with them, and would like nothing more than to cut off a piece of Padre Pio's habit or cut a bit of his hair for a relic.

One day, Father Alessio was sitting by Padre Pio's side, thinking about his problem with oversleeping. He felt ashamed of himself for being so unreliable. He told Padre Pio that he could not understand why his alarm clock failed to wake him up. "You must buy yourself another alarm clock," Padre Pio said. "I am not going to continue to send my guardian angel to you each day to wake you up!" It was then that Father Alessio realized for the first time who had been knocking on his door and calling to him in his sleep.

On one occasion, Father Alessio heard heavenly music in the monastery of Our Lady of Grace. It sounded like a choir of beautiful voices singing together in perfect harmony. Some of the other Capuchins also heard it. They couldn't understand where the music was coming from and when they asked Padre Pio for an explanation, he told them that it was the voices of angels, taking souls from purgatory to Paradise. Evidently the Capuchins must have looked incredulous when they heard Padre Pio's explanation, for he then added, "Why should the music of angels surprise you?" When asked on another occasion if angels were present at the Mass, Padre Pio answered that the whole celestial court was present at every Mass.

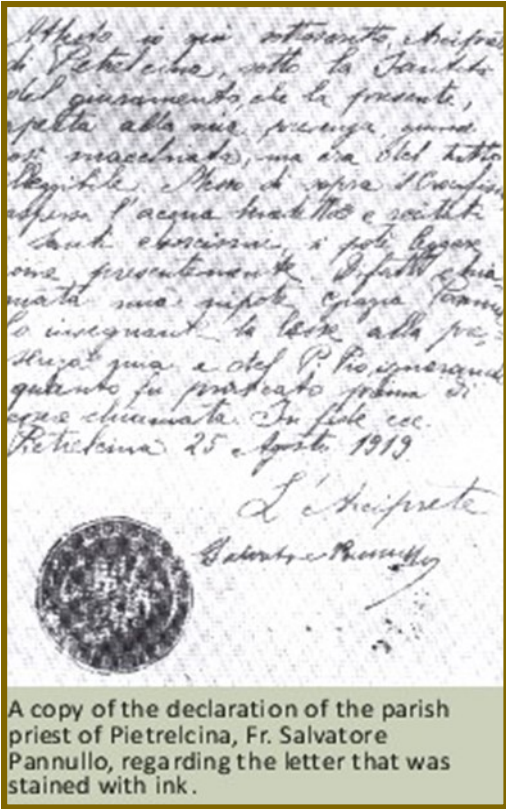
to summon him the next time he received a letter from Father Agostino as he wanted to be present when the letter was opened. Padre Pio did as instructed.

The next time Padre Pio received a letter from Father Agostino, Father Pannullo was standing right beside him. Upon opening the letter, Padre Pio and Father Pannullo discovered that it was completely covered with ink. Father Pannullo then placed a crucifix on the letter which made it a little easier to read. Father Pannullo left a written testimony regarding the letter and said:

"I, the undersigned, archpriest of Pietrelina, under holy oath, attest that the present letter, opened in my presence, arrived blotted out as it is, and was completely illegible. I put a crucifix on it, blessed it with holy water and recited holy exorcisms; I was able to read it as it is now. In fact, I called my niece, Grace Pannullo, a teacher. She read it in the presence of Padre Pio and myself, ignorant of what had happened before I called her."

On another occasion, a letter arrived for Padre Pio from Father Agostino which consisted of nothing more than a blank sheet of paper. Padre Pio did not need to ask Father Agostino if he had forgotten to compose a letter. He was perfectly aware that the devil had tampered with it.

In order to confound the devil, Father Agostino got in the habit of writing to Padre Pio in French. Padre Pio had never studied French but he was able to read the letters with ease. From time to time he would reply to Father Agostino in French. Father Agostino also wrote to him in Greek and once again, he had no difficulty understanding.



A copy of the declaration of the parish priest of Pietrelcina, Fr. Salvatore Pannullo, regarding the letter that was stained with ink.

Father Pannullo was perplexed about the letters that Padre Pio was receiving from Father Agostino. He knew that Padre Pio had studied neither Greek nor French and asked him how it was possible for him to read the letters. "You know, my guardian angel explains everything to me," Padre Pio replied. On rare occasions, Padre Pio was also heard conversing in languages he had never studied.

On September 20, 1912, Padre Pio wrote to Father Agostino and said:

"The heavenly beings continue to visit me and to give me a

foretaste of the rapture of the blessed. And while the mission of our guardian angels is a great one, my own angel's mission is certainly greater, since he has the additional task of teaching me other languages." (Letters I)

On one occasion, Father Agostino asked Padre Pio if Jesus often appeared to him. Padre Pio replied that Jesus frequently appeared to him and spoke to him. Sometimes he appeared with the visible marks of the crucifixion on his body. Padre Pio told Father Agostino that the Blessed Virgin Mary as well as his guardian angel also appeared to him.

In 1911, Padre Pio was sent to the Capuchin monastery of Venafro in the province of Isernia. Father Agostino was present in Venafro when Padre Pio went into a state of ecstasy. It was the first time that Father Agostino had ever seen him in a state of ecstatic prayer. He listened closely to the words Padre Pio spoke and realized that he was

Each morning, Father Alessio helped Padre Pio get ready for Mass. He would also help him up the altar steps and then remove his gloves before the Mass began. Afterward, he would rush to his room in order to catch a short nap. He was always so tired that he would usually fall asleep instantly. He had his alarm set so that he would be back in the church by the end of the Mass in order to help Padre Pio down the stairs of the altar. He would lead Padre Pio through the sacristy and then take him back to his cell.



Many times, Father Alessio was sleeping so deeply that he would not hear his alarm go off. At that point, he would hear someone knocking loudly at his door. When he answered the door, there was no one there.

Mysteriously, the entire corridor would be empty. He would then realize that he had overslept and rush down to the church. Padre Pio would be invariably giving the final blessing. Father

Alessio would be just in time to assist Padre Pio down the altar steps. This same scenario happened every time that Father Alessio's alarm clock failed to wake him up.

Rosary by saying such things as, “Tell her that I will ask Jesus.” “Tell her that I will pray deeply about it.” “Tell him that I will remember him at my Mass.” It was only later that Father Alessio realized that Padre Pio was carrying on a conversation with the guardian angels of some of his spiritual children.

One afternoon, Padre Pio was sitting alone on the veranda, just outside his cell. He was praying the Rosary. Father Alessio felt it would be a good opportunity to go over some of the mail with Padre Pio. Many people wrote to Father Alessio and asked him to relay their individual messages to Padre Pio, seeking his counsel and advice. Father Alessio would always discuss the items with Padre Pio and then write back with Padre Pio’s recommendations.

Father Alessio told Padre Pio about a woman who had just written with a question about her job. She had an opportunity to make a job change and she was hoping that Padre Pio might be able to advise her about it. When Father Alessio put the question to Padre Pio, he was surprised at his response. “I am very busy right now,” Padre Pio replied. “I cannot answer your question at this time.”

Father Alessio was confused. It was obvious to him that Padre Pio was not busy. He was sitting alone with his Rosary in his hand. He always had his Rosary in hand. Father Alessio remained silent but he continued to think about the irony of Padre Pio’s remark. “There have been many guardian angels here today,” Padre Pio explained to Father Alessio. “They were bringing me messages from my spiritual children. Did you see them?” Father Alessio told Padre Pio that he had never seen a guardian angel in his life. He finally understood why Padre Pio had said that he was busy. He was busy communicating with that celestial world which very few mortals were privileged to glimpse.

Father Alessio knew that he was truly blessed to be able to assist Padre Pio on a daily basis. He was also on call through the night, because Padre Pio was often sick and needed help in the night hours. Father Alessio was not able to get sufficient sleep and frequently felt the physical and mental strain of the exhausting schedule.

conversing with his guardian angel. While Father Agostino could see nothing, it was obvious to him that Padre Pio was able to see and communicate with angelic beings.

Padre Pio encouraged his spiritual daughter, Annita Rodote of Foggia, to have great devotion to her guardian angel. He wrote to her from Pietrelcina on July 15, 1915 and said:

“May your good guardian angel always watch over you; may he be your guide on the rugged path of life. May he always keep you in the grace of Jesus and sustain you with his hands so that you may not stumble on a stone. May he protect you under his wings from all the snares of the world, the devil and the flesh.

Have great devotion, Annita, to this good angel; how consoling it is to know that near us is a spirit who, from the cradle to the tomb, does not leave us even for an instant, not even when we dare to sin. And this heavenly spirit guides and protects us like a friend, a brother.” (Letters III)

On one occasion, when a man was making his confession to Padre Pio, it became apparent to him that Padre Pio was aware of his needs, even before he had a chance to verbalize them. “The angel told me about your problems,” Padre Pio explained. “I suffered greatly to hear of them. I understand your moments of sadness and moral suffering. Always remember that you are in my heart just as I am in yours.”

Padre Pio had a lifelong devotion to St. Michael the Archangel. He prayed to the Archangel daily. He had experienced the protection of St. Michael many times throughout his life. Every year, he would fast in order to prepare himself for Saint Michael’s feast day on September 29. When hearing confessions, Padre Pio frequently asked individuals to recite prayers in honor of St. Michael as their penance. He often urged people to visit Monte Sant’ Angelo, the ancient shrine



dedicated to St. Michael. It is one of the few sanctuaries in the world that is dedicated to an angel

Among the many pilgrims that have traveled to the shrine of St. Michael the Archangel, there have been eight popes as well as many canonized saints including St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bernard of Clairvaux, St. Gerard Majella, St. Bridget of Sweden, St. Thomas Aquinas and more. Emperors, kings, and princes through the centuries have also knelt in prayer at the holy grotto. It is indeed providential that the shrine of St. Michael is located on Mount Gargano, just a

short distance from San Giovanni Rotondo.

In the summer of 1917, as a young priest, Padre Pio went on pilgrimage to St. Michael's shrine accompanied by a number of Capuchin students. A cart and horse were provided by the father of one of the students. Padre Pio walked for part of the journey and also rode in the cart. The Capuchins prayed the Rosary and sang hymns to the Blessed Mother on the way. Upon arriving at the shrine, Padre Pio remained for a long time in prayer, kneeling at the foot of St. Michael's altar.

Raffaelina Cerase, a spiritual daughter of Padre Pio, once learned an important lesson regarding Padre Pio's trust in the holy angels. Raffaelina was a Third Order Franciscan who lived in the town of Foggia. When she wrote to Padre Pio, she sometimes included Mass offerings. Because she wanted to make sure that the letters arrived safely, she sent them by registered mail. Padre Pio felt that sending the

letters in such a fashion showed a lack of trust and a lack of faith. He said to Raffaelina, "I think it best that you do not send your letters by registered mail. They have been put in very good hands." The "hands" he was speaking of were the hands of his guardian angel.

Father Alessio Parente was assigned to be the sacristan at Our Lady of Grace monastery from 1959 -1961. From 1965 -1968, he served as Padre Pio's personal assistant. Padre Pio was very appreciative of all that Father Alessio did to help him. He told one of his spiritual children that Father Alessio took care of him with great solicitude, like a "faithful puppy dog." Father Alessio was filled with joy when he learned what Padre Pio had said about him and treasured the words for the rest of his life.

One morning at the conclusion of the Mass, Father Alessio had a very unusual experience. He had just distributed Holy Communion at the altar rail and had taken the empty ciborium back to the altar to purify it. Father Alessio poured water in the ciborium to wash it and then dried it with a purificator. He was just about to put the lid on the ciborium when, out of the corner of his eye, he became aware of something moving. From his right side, he saw a host float down from mid-air into the ciborium. He instinctively looked around to see if someone was there beside him, but no one was. He was shocked by what he had witnessed and told Padre Pio about the incident. Padre Pio advised him to be more attentive and not to rush when he was distributing Holy Communion. Padre Pio added that an angel had put the consecrated host in Father Alessio's ciborium so as to keep it from falling on the floor.

Father Alessio used to assist Padre Pio when it was time for him to get into bed for the night. Afterward, he would wait in Padre Pio's cell for Father Pellegrino to come in for the night duty. Lying in bed, Padre Pio would always recite the Rosary. Frequently, Father Alessio heard Padre Pio interrupt the