



Padre Pio - Beatification To Canonization



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Patience is a virtue and a virtue that was recognized as such by the devotees, prayer groups and spiritual children of Padre Pio. Even though the cause for canonization could have been initiated in 1973, ten more years elapsed before the complex process of beatification would begin with *anihil obstat* in 1982. In December 1997 the Decree of heroic virtue was promulgated in the presence of Pope John Paul II. The Servant of God was now Venerable. The medical board of the Congregation for the Causes of the Saints examined a miracle attributed to the intercession of Padre Pio and the Decree on the miracle was promulgated again in the presence of the Pope in December 1998. His beatification by the Pope followed on May 2nd.1999 in the presence of a huge crowd.

Pope John Paul met Padre Pio in 1947, confessed to him and attended his Mass. This made a lasting impression on Fr. Wojtyla who recalled that Padre Pio “physically suffered “during the Eucharistic celebration. Also, in 1962 Bishop Wojtyla wrote to Padre Pio asking for his prayers for a friend who had advanced cancer. The malignancy disappeared the day before scheduled surgery.

There was no shortage of miracles during the life of “the man of prayer and suffering”, as Pope Paul VI called him. However, only those miracles occurring after death are considered for beatification with another, following that, for canonization. Again, the canonical documents were sent from the diocese of Manfredonia-Vieste to the Congregation and the medical testimony from Matteo’s cure was examined. In December 2000 the Theological Consultors met, followed by the Session of Cardinals and Bishops. Finally, the Decree of miracle and subsequently the Decree of Canonization were promulgated in the presence of Pope John Paul II.

Piazza San Pietro was packed for Mass on Sunday, June 16th. 2002. A large tapestry with the image of Padre Pio hung over the main door of the Basilica. No doubt many of his followers and spiritual children were ecstatic. The introduction included prayers, hymns and readings from Padre Pio’s writings. The choir sang the “Canto d’ingresso” followed by Psalm 97. Then the Pope recited a beautiful prayer in Italian, beginning with: “My dear brothers and sisters, today the Church inscribes the name of Blessed Padre Pio of Pietrelcina in the Register of the Saints---“, followed by the Miserere nostri ---. The Litany of the Saints preceded the Rite of Canonization with the Formula solemnly read in Latin by the Pope “ --- Beatum Pium a Pietrelcina Sanctum esse decernimus et definimus, ac Sanctorum Catalogo adscribimus ----“. “In nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti”. Amen.

Padre Pio's feast day falls on September 23rd, the anniversary of his holy death.