

perfume of flowers – the sign of Padre Pio’s spiritual presence – and he heard a voice saying "Cosi ho sofferto io!" – "This is what I had to suffer!" Modestino remarked that he had a strange sensation after the pain subsided: that being deprived of this pain was also a suffering. His body had suffered from it, but his soul had desired it. He said, "It was painful and sweet at the same time."

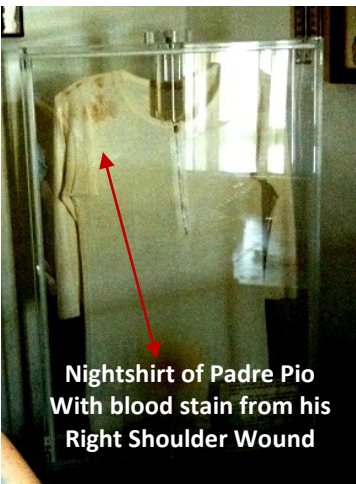
What is the mystical and spiritual significance of the shoulder wound of St. Padre Pio? The book by journalist Saverio Gaeta, *Sulla Soglia del Paradiso* (2), reports that Padre Pio said this of his spiritual children: "When the Lord entrusts a soul to me, I place it on my shoulder and never let it go." From this statement, it can reasonably be inferred that the saint offered up the suffering and the extreme pain of his shoulder wound for his spiritual children.

Cleonice Morcaldi once said in the presence of Gaeta, "On the shoulders of Padre Pio rests the whole world and the Church." This expression seemed an exaggeration to the writer. But on the very same day that Gaeta had heard this, he later joined Padre Pio and some others in conversation. Padre Pio was telling the story of St. Christopher, and how he had carried the child Jesus on his shoulders across a river.



Then, turning his gaze to look directly at Saverio Gaeta, Padre Pio pointedly said to the writer, "On my shoulders is the whole world."

As we honor the Most Precious Blood shed by Jesus, we also should Remember the blood that was shed by Saint Padre Pio for 50 years.



Nightshirt of Padre Pio  
With blood stain from his  
Right Shoulder Wound

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## ***Padre Pio's Secret: His Shoulder Wound***

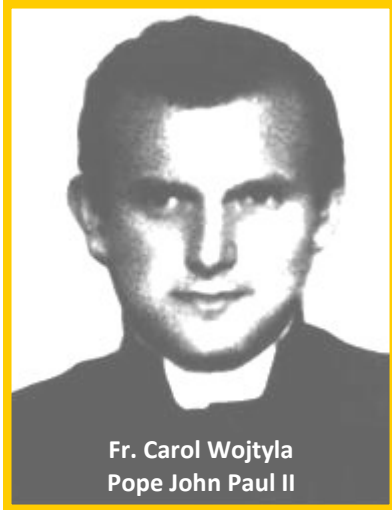


**Padre Pio accompanied by Fra Giovanni and Fra Eusebio Notte puts on, with difficulty, the right sleeve of his surplice.**

**Now we know that he had the wound of carrying the Cross on his right shoulder.**

## ***Padre Pio's Secret: His Shoulder Wound***

by Frank M. Rega



Fr. Carol Wojtyla  
Pope John Paul II

Shortly after World War II was over, a young Polish priest who was studying in Rome, Fr. Karol Wojtyla, visited Padre Pio in San Giovanni Rotondo. This encounter took place around 1947 or 1948. At that time in post-war Italy, it was possible to have access to Padre Pio, since travel was difficult and great crowds were not besieging the Friary. The young priest spent almost a week in San Giovanni Rotondo during his visit, and was able to attend Padre Pio's Mass and make his confession to

the saint. Apparently, this was not just a casual encounter, and the two spoke together at length during Fr. Wojtyla's stay. Their conversations gave rise to rumors in later years, after the Polish prelate had been elevated to the Papacy, that Padre Pio had told him he would become Pope. The story persists to the present day, even though on two or three occasions "Papa Wojtyla" denied it.

Recently, new information about this visit has come to light, according to a new book in Italian published by Padre Pio's Friary, *Il Papa e Il Frate*, written by Stefano Campanella (1). As reported in this book, the future Pope and future Saint had a very interesting conversation. During this exchange, Fr. Wojtyla asked Padre Pio which of his wounds caused the greatest suffering. From this kind of personal question, we can see that they must have already talked together for some time and had become at ease with each other. The priest expected Padre Pio to say it was his chest wound, but instead the Padre replied, "It is my shoulder wound, which no one knows about and it has never been cured or treated." This is extremely significant, not only because it reveals that Padre Pio bore this wound, but because, as far as is known, the future pope is the *only one* to whom Padre Pio ever revealed existence of this secret wound.

Centuries earlier, Our Lord himself had revealed to St. Bernard of Clairvaux in a vision, that his shoulder wound from carrying the heavy wooden cross caused him his greatest suffering, and that the cross tore into his flesh right up to the shoulder bone.

At one time, Padre had confided to his *paisano* from Pietrelcina, Brother Modestino Fucci, that his greatest pains occurred when he changed his undershirt. (Brother Modestino is currently the doorkeeper at Padre Pio's friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, Italy.) Modestino, like Fr. Wojtyla, thought Padre Pio was referring to pains from the chest wound. Then, on February 4, 1971 Modestino was assigned the task of taking an inventory of all the items in the deceased Padre's cell in the friary, and also his belongings in the archives. That day he discovered that one of Padre Pio's undershirts bore a circle of bloodstains in the area of the right shoulder.

This reminded Brother Modestino that he had once read about a devotion to the shoulder wound of Jesus, caused by his bearing of the heavy cross beam, the *patibulum*, to Calvary. The beam could weigh up to 100 pounds. Part of this devotion to the shoulder wound of Christ is to pray daily three Our Father's, Hail Mary's and Glory Be's, to honor the severe pains and lacerations Our Lord suffered from the weight of the *patibulum*.

On that very evening of February 4, 1971, Brother Modestino asked Padre Pio in prayer to enlighten him about the meaning of the bloodstained undershirt. He asked Padre to give him a sign if he truly bore Christ's shoulder wound. Then he went to sleep, awakening at 1:00 AM with a terrible, excruciating pain in his shoulder, as if he had been sliced with a knife up to the shoulder bone. He felt that he would die from the pain if it continued, but it lasted only a short time. Then the room became filled with the aroma of a heavenly