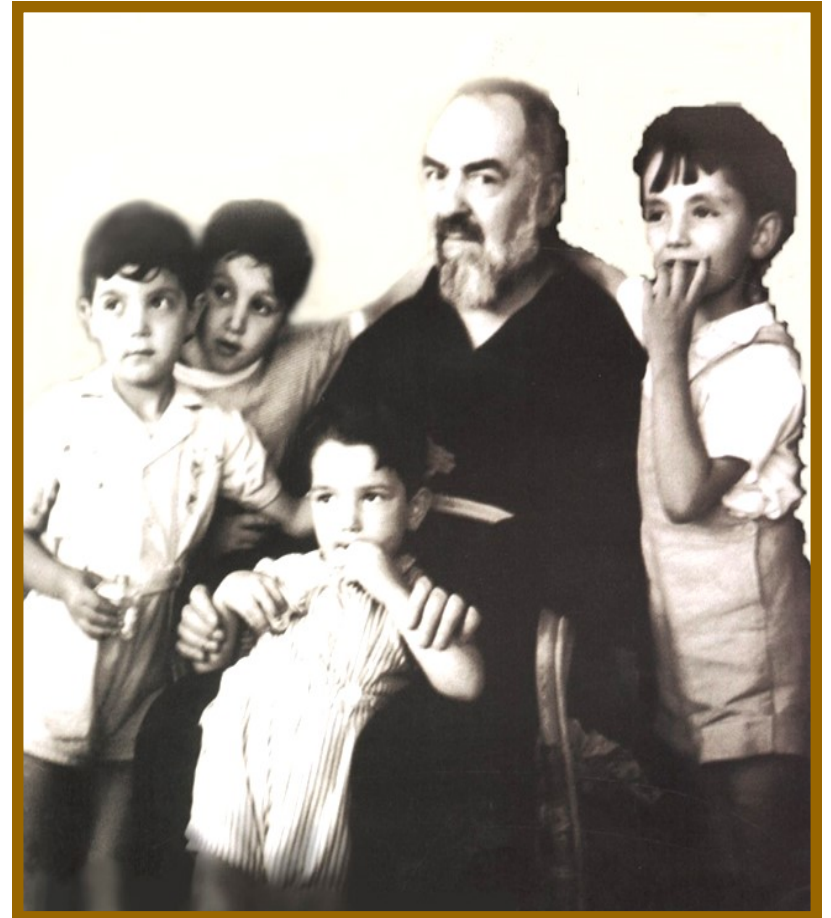




Anna's First Communion

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## Padre Pio and Anna Maria D'Orazi



"With all my heart I bless the children, who are the specially chosen flowers of Jesus."

St. Pio of Pietrelcina

# Testimony of Anna Maria D’Orazi

Ten-year-old Anna Maria D’Orazi and her mother made a trip to San Giovanni Rotondo in order to attend Padre Pio’s Mass. They planned to stay for several days. During the time of their visit, a number of children were getting ready to make their first Holy Communion. Anna had not made her first Communion yet. It was delayed because her mother had many preparations to make for a party in honor of Anna’s first Holy Communion.

The church of Our Lady of Grace looked particularly beautiful on the day that the children were to receive their First Communion. It was decorated with lovely flower bouquets and illuminated with soft candlelight. The girls had on pretty white dresses and the boys were all dressed in suits. Anna had a great desire to join the other children and to receive her first Holy Communion that day from Padre Pio.

Anna’s mother did not want her to do so. Being a dress designer, she had been planning to make Anna a beautiful dress for that very important day. She discouraged Anna by saying that there would be no gifts for her, no party, and no beautiful dress. Her mother felt that it would be a great shame for Anna to make her first Holy Communion in her plain green dress, while all of the other girls were dressed up.

Anna explained to her mother that she did not care about the party, the gifts, or a beautiful dress. Finally, her mother told her to speak to Padre Pio about it. If he gave his permission, she would go along with it. However, she did not think he would agree to it.

Anna rushed to the confessional and after making her confession to Padre Pio, she asked him for permission to make her first Holy Communion that day. Padre Pio had a slight smile on his face as Anna spoke to him. She explained to him that she had been preparing for her Communion at her parish and had studied the catechism at her school. She told Padre Pio that there was only one problem. She was wearing a simple green dress. Padre Pio said to her, “It is more pleasing for Jesus to come to you. You may certainly make your First Communion today.”

With a great joy in her heart, Anna ran back to her mother and told her she had received Padre Pio’s permission. Her mother had no choice then but to relent. She reasoned that she could make up for it at Anna’s confirmation and have the desired party then.

Anna told the ladies who were directing the group of children that she had been given permission to make her Communion that day. She moved forward to join the other girls but the ladies rudely pushed her back. The most humiliating incident occurred when Anna was made to stand to the side and then forced to wait until all the boys went ahead of her. She took her place at the end of the line, the very last of all the communicants.

Anna’s mother became furious when she saw the way her daughter was being treated. She jumped up and was about to rush up to the sanctuary to get Anna when her friend held her back. She did not want her to make a scene and ruin the day that was so special for Anna.

All of the children were then instructed to kneel down at the altar rail. Anna looked up and saw Padre Pio coming toward her. He smiled at her and told her to follow him. He walked up the altar steps to the very top and she followed behind him. He then gave her Holy Communion in front of the tabernacle. She was the only child to receive such a privilege that day. Everyone in the church watched in silence and awe. Some had tears in their eyes. Anna was overwhelmed by his loving gesture and her mother was also deeply moved. Anna and her mother would never forget the graces they received on that very special day.