

PARTICIPATION IN THE PASSION

Padre Pio's victimhood was a living participation in the Passion of Christ. The suffering occurred every Tuesday and Friday, until he asked Our Lord to augment his suffering; it then became daily.



"If you knew the value of suffering," he said, "you would ask for nothing else."



It was in this weak and ill physical condition, suffering the Passion of Christ, that he was called to military service in World War I. After several failed attempts to build up his health, he was given a medical discharge. The doctors counseled him to go home because they believed he had only about two weeks to live.

His superiors thought the mountain air in San Giovanni Rotondo would be good for him. He stayed fifty-two years. While there, a direct intervention of Our Lord opened the five wounds of the stigmata in his body. They were to remain open and bleeding for half a century. * (excerpted from: www.peacethroughmercy.com)



Pope John Paul II on

Divine Mercy

and

Padre Pio



There were times before Padre Pio approached the altar that he could be seen shaking.

When asked if It was because of what he was about to suffer, he answered that ***it was not***, explaining, ***"It is what I have to offer."***

At his beatification in 1999, Pope John Paul II called Padre Pio's stigmata ***"a sign of Divine Mercy."***

Minister of Divine Mercy

*Padre Pio's life spanned more than half the twentieth century. He died in San Giovanni Rotondo on September 23, 1968 at the age of eighty-one. There is no doubt that the stigmata and his amazing charisma, which included spiritual and physical healing, brought instant fame to the humble Capuchin. And like Jesus, they also brought the cross and persecution. God's purpose in raising up the mystic and stigmatist of the Gargano transcends our ability to comprehend. We do know, however, that in Padre Pio we see the mystery of the priesthood. Which cannot be fathomed.



What is easier to understand is that Padre Pio inspires in priests and laity, a renewal of heart and mind with respect to the ministerial priesthood. I believe one of the key reasons he has been given to the Church in these times is to define the priesthood for those

whose image has been shattered by the world, the enemies of God and the church. For this reason, Saint Padre Pio's priesthood is a gift to the Church for the renewal of priests and the renewal of families.

In living out the Passion of Christ, the humble friar drew the attention of the world to the events that occurred on the first Holy Thursday and Good Friday, when mankind received the gift of **Divine Mercy** flowing from the pierced Heart of Jesus on the Cross. At his beatification in 1999, Pope John Paul II called Padre Pio's stigmata "a sign of divine mercy."

The Stigmata - A Sign of Divine Mercy

In the choir loft of the Church of Our Lady of Grace, the dramatic manifestation of the Wounds of Christ occurred on September 29, 1918, making Padre Pio the first priest in the history of the Church known to have the stigmata. Although the first signs of the stigmata had appeared in 1910 at Piana Romana, in the countryside of Pietrelcina, the Lord answered Padre Pio's plea that the wounds remain invisible. It was only for a brief time, however. Heaven's plan advanced. It included the healing of a world deeply wounded by sin; a world in need of a new and dramatic lesson in the meaning of the Priesthood of Jesus Christ.

The crisis in the priesthood, which was evident while Padre Pio was alive, is a crisis pawned and sustained by the forces of evil. Only a merciful God could choose to address this crisis by calling a priest to be a "living crucifix" for fifty years. Saint Padre Pio's ongoing martyrdom through the daily shedding of his own blood, echoed the supreme gift given to us



on Holy Thursday night and completed on Good Friday on the Cross by the One Priest and Victim, Jesus Christ.