

Joe felt that it was an impossible request. He lived in a very small town in Pennsylvania. He was not an important person. He did not know many people. How could he tell all of America what Padre Pio had asked him to? Nevertheless, when he returned to the U.S. he tried to do what was asked of him. He made a slide show presentation of Padre Pio's life and over the years he showed it to thousands of people. Joe died in 1996, after having spent 50 years sharing the message of Padre Pio with more people than he could have ever imagined.

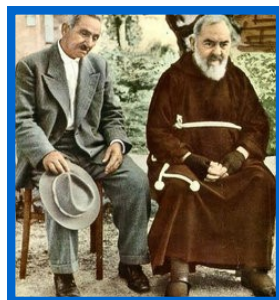
*"Remember, I accompany you always and everywhere."  
St. Pio of Pietrelcina*



CLOISTERED MOTHERHOUSE OF BENEDICTINE NUNS



ST. BENEDICT MEDAL



MICHELE FORGIONE WITH HIS BROTHER PADRE PIO

## Padre Pio and Joseph Peluso



*"Let us always keep before our eyes the fact that here on earth we are on a battlefield and that in paradise we shall receive the crown of victory; that this is a testing-ground and the prize will be awarded up above; that we are now in a land of exile while our true homeland is Heaven to which we must continually aspire."*

*St. Pio of Pietrelcina*

# Padre Pio and Joseph Peluso

Joe Peluso was an American soldier who was stationed in Italy during World War II. One day he received a letter from his mother and she told him that there was a holy priest named Padre Pio living in Italy. She did not know what part of Italy he lived in but she wanted Joe to find out and to visit him. Joe asked the military chaplain on the base if he knew anything about Padre Pio. The military chaplain started laughing and pointed to the mountain that was directly in front of them. "Padre Pio lives right on that mountain," he said to Joe. Curiosity got the better of him and Joe decided to make the short trip to see him. It was October 6, 1944.

Padre Pio loved the visits of the American soldiers and always greeted them cordially. His counsel to the soldiers was unique. He used simple and childlike words when talking to them and giving them advice. Sometimes he would pat them on the head in a paternal way and simply say, "Be a good boy."

Over the next ten months, Joe was able to visit Padre Pio many times and they became very close. Often he was invited to eat with the Capuchins at the monastery. While everyone else enjoyed their food, Joe noticed that Padre Pio simply pushed his food around on the plate. His daily intake of food would only fill the cup of his hand. He once said, "I need very little of this world's goods. I need just a little bit of food, a little sleep and few possessions."

It was Padre Pio's habit to give each visitor a religious medal when they came to the monastery. Because of the war, religious medals and rosaries became scarce and almost impossible to acquire. Padre Pio felt very bad that his supply of medals was exhausted and he had none to give his visitors. Mary Pyle and Joe talked about it and Joe wanted to help. He decided to take the 220-mile trip from his military base to Rome to try to obtain the medals. Padre Pio and Padre Pio's brother Michael both gave him letters to deliver to their sister, Sister Pia. She was a nun of the Order of St. Bridget and lived in the Brigittine Convent in Rome.

When he arrived in Rome, something prompted him to follow a road leading up a hill. As he drove up the hill, he saw a large sign, Cloistered Motherhouse of the Benedictine Nuns. Joe remembered that the St. Benedict medals were a favorite of Padre Pio. Joe knocked on the door and the nuns were extremely happy to give him a large supply of medals for Padre Pio.

Once Padre Pio asked Joe to select a name for his guardian angel. "Pick a name for your guardian angel and call him by that name always," Padre Pio said to Joe. "When you send him to me, he will come instantly."

One day Joe asked Padre Pio if he would accept him as his spiritual child. Padre Pio readily agreed. Then he asked him if he would accept his wife as his spiritual child and he agreed as well. Realizing the wonderful opportunity, he then asked Padre Pio if he would accept his daughter. Joe's aunts and uncles then came into his mind. Somehow, the way the conversation was going struck both of them as funny. Joe and Padre Pio began to laugh. They laughed so hard that tears were rolling down their faces.

Suddenly Padre Pio became very serious and said to Joe, "Joe, when the war is over and you return to the United States, tell the American people, that for those who would like me to be their spiritual father, my answer is yes. I accept all Americans as my spiritual children. I only have two requirements — that they lead very good Catholic lives and that they regularly receive the sacraments. And please, tell them never to embarrass me in front of Jesus and Mary. You must tell them, Joe."