

**THE PADRE PIO
PRAYER GROUP
of Cleveland**

**Spiritual Director:
Rev. Fr. Edward J. Janoch**

**Group Leader:
Cindy Russo**

**MISSION &
VISION:**

To carry out the works, words and devotion of St. Padre Pio through prayer and charitable works where we can touch lives and change souls.

Our vision is to create more Spiritual Children and lead souls to heaven.

**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

Oct 7 -

Padre Pio Prayer Group Gathering beginning with Mass at 8:30 AM, St. Barnabas Church, 9451 Brandywine Rd., Northfield

Nov 4 -

Padre Pio Prayer Group Gathering (same details as Oct 7 above)

Check the Calendar page on our website for additional upcoming events



St. Padre Pio Prayer Group Newsletter

FEAST DAY 2017

SPECIAL EDITION

Relics of St. Pio of Pietrelcina

Relics include the physical remains of a saint (or of a person who is considered holy but not yet officially canonized) as well as other objects which have been "sanctified" by being touched to his body.

These relics are divided into two classes. First class or real relics include the physical body parts, clothing and instruments connected with a martyr's imprisonment, torture and execution. Second class or representative relics are those which the faithful have touched to the physical body parts or grave of the saint.

The use of relics has some, although limited, basis in sacred Scripture. In 2 Kings 2:9-14, the prophet Elisha picked up the mantle of Elijah after Elijah had been taken up to heaven in a whirlwind. With it, Elisha struck the water of the Jordan, which then parted so that he could cross. In another passage (13:20-21), some people hurriedly bury a dead man in the grave of Elisha, "but when the man came in contact with the bones of Elisha, he came back to life and rose to his feet." In the Acts of the Apostles we read,

"Meanwhile, God worked extraordinary miracles at the hands of Paul. When handkerchiefs or cloths which had touched his skin were applied to the sick, their diseases were cured and evil spirits departed from them" (19:11-12). In these three passages, a reverence was given to the actual body or clothing of these very holy people who were indeed God's chosen instruments—Elijah, El-

isha and St. Paul. Indeed, miracles were connected with these "relics"—not that some magical power existed in them, but just as God's work was done through the lives of these holy men, so did His work continue after their deaths.

Likewise, just as people were drawn closer to God through the lives of these holy men, so did they (even if through their remains) inspire others to draw closer even after their deaths. This perspective provides the Church's understanding of relics.



St. Pio's chalice

The veneration of relics of the saints is found in the early history of the Church. A letter written by the faithful of the Church in Smyrna

in the year 156 provides an account of the death of St. Polycarp, their bishop, who was burned at the stake. The letter reads, "We took up the bones, which are more valuable than precious stones and finer than refined gold, and laid them in a suitable place, where the Lord will permit us to gather ourselves together as we are able, in gladness and joy, and celebrate the birthday of his martyrdom." Essentially, the relics—the bones and other remains of St. Polycarp—were buried and the tomb itself was the "reliquary." Other accounts attest that the faithful visited the burial places of the saints and miracles occurred. Moreover, at this time we see the development of "feast days" marking the death of the saint, the celebration of Mass at the bur-



St. Pio's hair

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St. Pio's heart

ial place and a veneration of the remains.

After the legalization of the Church in 312, the tombs of saints were opened and the actual relics were venerated by the faithful. A bone or other bodily part was placed in a reliquary—a box, locket and later a glass case—for veneration. This practice especially grew in the Eastern Church, while the practice of

touching cloth to the remains of the saint was more common in the west. By the time of the Merovingian and Carolingian periods of the Middle Ages, the use of reliquaries was common throughout the whole Church.

The Church strived to keep the use of relics in perspective. In his Letter to Riparius, St. Jerome (d. 420) wrote in defense of relics: "We do not worship, we do not adore, for fear that we should bow down to the creature rather than to the Creator, but we venerate the relics of the martyrs in order the better to adore Him whose martyrs they are."

Here we need to pause for a moment. Perhaps in our technological age, the whole idea of relics may

seem strange. Remember, all of us treasure things that have belonged to someone we love—a piece of clothing, another personal item, a lock of hair. Those "relics" remind us of the love we share with that person while he was still living and even after death. Our hearts are torn when we think about disposing of the very personal things of a deceased loved one. More importantly, we treasure the relics of saints, the holy instruments of God.

In all, relics remind us of the holiness of a saint and his cooperation in God's work. At the same time, relics inspire us to ask for the prayers of that saint and to beg the grace of God to live the same kind of faith-filled life.



Five relics of St. Pio: chalice, altar cross, gloves, hair, and blood-stained handkerchief

"The longer the trial to which God subjects you, the greater the goodness in comforting you during the time of the trial and in the exaltation after the combat."

— St. Pio of Pietrelcina

The Padre Pio Prayer Group of Cleveland



Monthly Prayer Group Gatherings are held on the first Saturday of each month. Our Gatherings consist of Mass, Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Guest Speakers and Refreshments. You can read the Mission & Vision of our Prayer Group on the front page of this newsletter. As a catalyst to pass on the work and words of St. Padre Pio, our goal is to pray, support those in need, and carry out charitable works to lead others back to Christ and the Church, just as St. Pio did in his days on earth, and become his Spiritual Children, something that he hopes to obtain in us all as followers of Jesus Christ. We look forward to seeing you at one of our Upcoming Events listed on the front page of this newsletter.