

**THE PADRE PIO
PRAYER GROUP
of Cleveland**

Spiritual Director:
Fr. Edward J. Janoch

Chaplains:
Fr. William E. Browne
Fr. Michael Petkosek
Fr. Kevin C. Shemuga

Group Leader:
Cindy Russo TOF

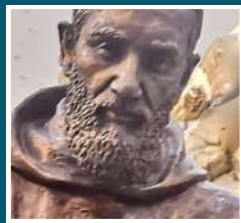
**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

May 22 -
Celebration of Padre
Pio's Birthday and
Touring St. Pio
Statue with Mass at
5:15 PM followed by
Group Leader
Presentation, St.
Augustine Church,
204 6th St NW,
Barberton

May 25 -
Saint Padre Pio's
Birthday (1887)

Jun 4 -
Padre Pio Prayer
Group Gathering
beginning with
Rosary at 8:00 AM
and Mass at 8:30 AM,
Our Lady of
Guadalupe Church,
9080 Shepard Rd,
Macedonia

Check the online
Community Bulletin
Board on our website
to view upcoming
events in the area



St. Padre Pio Prayer Group Newsletter

MAY 2022

VOLUME 10, ISSUE 5

O Beautiful Mother

The Month of May is devoted to Mary, the Mother of God and our Spiritual Mother. "God, creator and lord of the universe, chose to put himself — tiny, needy and helpless — into the nurturing and watchful hands of a human mother. Since then, every act of mothering — both physical and spiritual — in every time and every corner of the world recalls Mary's."

Catholics have long honored the Blessed Virgin Mary during the month of May. To symbolize her significance in the Church and in our lives, the "May Crowning" is set up to display her Queenship as the Mother of Jesus. Churches typically create a dedicated area to place a picture or statue of Mary, which is surrounded by flowers and candles. This tribute remains up throughout the entire month in order to memorialize the importance of our Mother Mary in Church and in our personal lives.

Another particular practice characteristic of May devotions is the May Altar, whether in a church or as a "house altar" in the home. Marian devotions such as the rosary may take place within the family around this altar consisting of a table with a Marian picture, candles, and decorated with many May flowers. The custom of the May Altar stems from southern European countries. With the development of May Altars in churches, the custom spread to set up this type of "altar" also in the home. This specific devotion has been supported by several popes including Pope Pius XII in his encyclical *Ingruentium malorum*: The custom of the family recitation of the Holy Rosary is a most efficacious means. What a sweet sight — most pleasing to God — when, at eventide, the Christian home resounds with the frequent repetition of praises in honor of the High Queen of Heaven! Then the Rosary, recited in the family, assembled before the image of the Virgin, in an admirable union of hearts, the parents

and their children, who come back from their daily work. It unites them piously with those absent and those dead. It links all more tightly in a sweet bond of love, with the most Holy Virgin, who, like a loving Mother, in the circle of Her children, will be there bestowing upon them an abundance of the gifts of concord and family peace.

Devotion to Mary is an important part of the Catholic identity. As our Mother, She is an example of a committed "Yes" to the will of God. Because of the devotion to Her, many people ask Her for help in the most difficult moments of their life as any child does with his or her Mother.

Mother's Day Prayer: "I thank you, Creator of us all, for my mother. I thank you that she gave me life and nurtured me all those years. She gave me my faith, helping me to know you and to know Jesus and his ways. She taught me how to love and how to sacrifice for others. She taught me that it was okay to cry and that I should always tell the truth. Bless her with the graces she needs and which you want to give her today. Help her to feel precious in your eyes today and to know that I love her. Give her strength and courage, compassion and peace. Bless her this day with your love. Amen."



**"On This Day,
O Beautiful
Mother, On
This Day We
Give Thee Our
Love."**

THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
MAY 31ST

Mary Visits Elizabeth.

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, *"Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*

Luke 1:39-45



The love and devotion that I have for the Blessed Virgin Mary continues to grow, day by day. This love and devotion is due, in part, by my praying the Rosary every day. The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin/relative, Elizabeth, is the Second Mystery of the Joyful Mysteries.

As I reflect on this Mystery, I ask that Mary visit me with her Son, Jesus. I also reflect on how I can be a vessel to carry Jesus to others that I "visit." How does my words and actions reflect Jesus Christ who is in my heart and soul? How does my "visit" to others help them to "leap for joy" when I am present to them?

I hope that my reflection of this mystery can help our Saint Padre Pio Prayer Group to also help others to "leap for joy" when we "visit" those that we meet with every day, by our words and actions. What are ways that we "visit" others?

- ✘ We "visit" others who are a part of our family; those who live under the same roof as us.
- ✘ We "visit" others that we interact with on the roads, streets, and highways as we travel to work, school, shopping, *etc.*
- ✘ We "visit" others at our place of work, school, shopping, *etc.*
- ✘ We "visit" those who we only meet in passing, whether in the hallway, crosswalk, shopping aisle, *etc.*
- ✘ We "visit" others that we communicate with in-person or by the many ways of electronic communications.
- ✘ We "visit" others who are in need at hospitals, nursing homes, jails, food kitchens, homeless shelters, *etc.*
- ✘ We "visit" others who have died and are resting in cemeteries or mausoleums.
- ✘ And the many other ways that I have not mentioned.

Our lives need to reflect our belief in Christ Jesus and to bring Him to others as Mary brought Jesus to Saint Elizabeth and Saint John the Baptist. In a world filled with such loneliness, loss, hatred, abandonment, betrayal, sickness, death, and evil, may we help others to "leap for joy" by our "visit" that brings Jesus to them.

Mary of the Visitation, Pray for us!

P.S. I mentioned in a previous newsletter that I am being transferred to a new parish on June 14, 2022. Wednesday, April 27, 2022, I received the long-awaited phone call. I am going "home" for this assignment. My new assignment is at Saint Gabriel Parish, in Concord Township. Pray for me and all those who are being transferred to new assignments or for their first assignment. Archangel Gabriel, Pray for us!

Holy Women Who Were Mothers

“Whatever you do for your family, your children, your husband, your wife, you do for God.”

Blessed Mother Mary is our model of everything encompassed by motherhood. Her faithfulness, her humility, her purity, her love of Christ, and her sacrificial spirit are key aspects of motherhood that we should strive for daily. Mary is a mother to all, gently offering us her help and mantle of protection as we grow in understanding of the meaning of motherhood. **Virtue:** All. **Role model for:** All women.

Elizabeth is the cousin of Mary and mother to John the Baptist. St. Luke tells us that both Elizabeth and her husband were "righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, blameless" (1:6-7). Mary must have thought very highly of Elizabeth to rush to see her and spend three months of pregnancy with her. Scriptures tell us that Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth must have been the type of mother to nurture John the Baptist to be exactly who God created him to be.

Virtue: Hope. **Role model for:** Those experiencing infertility; Older than normal first-time mothers; Mothers of children who have unique personalities.

St. Monica was a mother of steadfast prayer. Her son, St. Augustine, was not always a saint! For many years, she suffered and prayed for her rebellious and wayward son. She followed him from Africa to Rome in order to watch over him. St. Monica never gave up on her son. She is an example to all mothers that our ultimate goal should be the salvation of our children. **Virtue:** Perseverance. **Role model for:** Mothers of disobedient children; Mothers of children who have lost their faith; Mothers who also care for their aging parents or in-laws.

St. Gianna Molla was a wife, a mother and a doctor. She lived out her Catholic faith daily. Faced with a high-risk pregnancy, when doctors told her that only an abortion would save her own life, she chose life for her baby. **Virtue:** Faith. **Role model for:** Working mothers; Those experiencing a difficult pregnancy; Mothers who are ill.

St. Zelig Martin is best known as the mother of St. Therese, but all five of her living children entered the religious life. This gives us insight into the emphasis on living a life for God that was present in the Martin home. **Virtue:** Piety. **Role model for:** Mothers who suffer from headaches; Mothers

with cancer; Mothers who have lost a child (4 of the Martin's children died during childhood); Stay at home moms.

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton was a dedicated wife and mother of five children. When her husband passed away, she was left as a single mother with no money. She opened a school in her home which eventually led to her establishing the first Catholic school in the United States. She is an example of overcoming the obstacles and hardships we face. **Virtue:** Fortitude. **Role model for:** Single mothers; Working mothers.

Hannah waited for many years to have a child, but she never gave up faithfully praying to God. After many years of yearning for a baby of her own, we know it must have been with great difficulty that Hannah presented her child in the temple and dedicated his life to God. She is an example of what every mother must do. We must trust that when we submit to God's plan for our child, that He will provide for them better than we can. **Virtue:** Obedience. **Role model for:** Mothers



who face anxiety about their children; Mothers who live apart from their grown children.

Mother Teresa may not have had any biological children, but she had thousands of spiritual children. She cared for those whose own mothers' had forsaken and abandoned them. She met their physical, emotional and spiritual needs by caring for them with the love of Christ. Her compassion and empathy are an example for all mothers. **Virtue:** Charity. **Role model for:** Adoptive mothers; Those who have spiritual children.

Quotes about the Blessed Virgin Mary from Saint Padre Pio/May 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jesus and Mary, and His foster father (Joseph) assist and console you.	2 The Mother of Christ and our Mother obtain for you from her Son every heavenly blessing.	3 Do not forget to pray with lively confidence to our heavenly Mother.	4 Place yourself in the powerful intercession of the most holy Virgin that she protects you in time of temptation.	5 Offer everything to God through the merits of Jesus and His and our Mother.	6 Be persistent in praying to Jesus and His most holy Mother.	7 Give thanks to God and our Mother (Mamma) for graces received.
3 RD SUNDAY OF EASTER	St. Athanasius	SS. PHILIP AND JAMES	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday First Friday	Easter Weekday First Saturday
8 When Mary became the Mother of God, her humility compelled her to call herself the servant of the Lord.	9 Jesus and Mary possess your spirit totally.	10 The Virgin Mary obtain strength and courage for you to fight the good fight (of virtue).	11 The Mother of Jesus and our Mother obtain strength for you to win the battles God permits to come your way.	12 May Mary smile upon all the events of your life.	13 Praise God and the Virgin Mother for all the graces you have received.	14 May She who was the first to live the Gospel fully help us to follow Her example (of discipleship).
4 TH SUNDAY OF EASTER Mother's Day	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday St. Damien de Veuster	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday SS. Nereus and Achilleus St. Pancras	Easter Weekday Our Lady of Fatima	ST. MATTHIAS
15 Praise to the Immaculate Virgin Mary in whom I trust to defeat the evil one.	16 The Immaculate Virgin is pleased with the gifts you offer her through my hands...	17 When you are troubled in spirit, say: <i>Praise be Jesus! Praise be Mary Immaculate!</i>	18 Always reflect upon the humility of the great Mother of God.	19 Knock loudly at the Hearts of Jesus and Mary (for whatever you need).	20 One thing is necessary, to be with Jesus, just as Mary and Joseph were.	21 Never desist from entreating Jesus and Mary to help you (at all times, for anything in God's Will).
5 TH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday St. John I	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday St. Bernardine of Siena	Easter Weekday St. Christopher Magallanes and Companions
22 Jesus and Mary reign in your heart and help you grow in love.	23 Consider what our heavenly Mother must have felt at the foot of the Cross and the depth of Her love.	24 Go to Our Lady and pray for the needs of the Church.	25 Jesus and Mary reign in your heart.	26 The Lord refuses nothing (asked) through the hands of our heavenly Mother.	27 Jesus and Mary assist you in everything always.	28 I send all of you the blessing of our Mother (Mamma) and her most holy Son.
6 TH SUNDAY OF EASTER	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday	Easter Weekday St. Bede the Venerable St. Gregory VII	Easter Weekday St. Philip Neri	Easter Weekday St. Augustine of Canterbury	Easter Weekday
29 Jesus and Mary help you to feel the love that awaits you in eternity.	30 May the Sorrowful Virgin (help) us to embrace the mystery of the cross and be intoxicated with the sufferings of Jesus.	31 May the holy Virgin continue to obtain for you from the Lord the strength to persevere in love.	St. Mary Magdalene de Pazzi 	"I will tell you the secret of my heart. I am in love with the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God. Long has She won my heart's devotion, which is on fire for Her. I want only to see Her, to fix my gaze upon Her forever, with the veneration that is due to Her."		
THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD	Easter Weekday Memorial Day	THE VISITATION OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY	Saint Bernardine of Siena [May 20 th]			

Miracle Man

Italy's Media television empire agreed to produce a film on the life and times of Padre Pio, the 20th century Capuchin friar who remains an integral part of the country's Catholic identity. The year 2000 not only marked the start of a new century but also coincided both with Padre Pio's beatification — his official elevation to sainthood — and a Vatican Jubilee year, in which believers were invited to make a faith-affirming pilgrimage to Rome. Mindful of the circumstances, the Padre Pio producers sought a highly recognizable and reassuring actor in the role of the visionary friar. They picked Sergio Castellitto to play the role of Padre Pio in the movie *Miracle Man*.

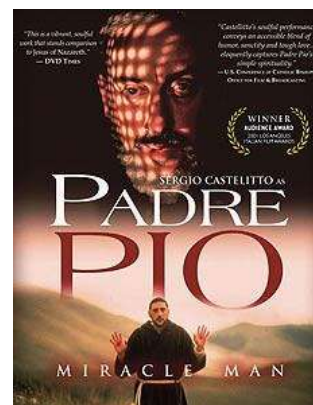


Considered among the best and most acclaimed Italian actors of his generation, the Rome-born Castellitto began his career in 1981.

Castellitto states "Interpreting Padre Pio changed me; the film turned out

to be a precious opportunity to search for documentaries, read books, talk to people who knew him. And just like that, a special closeness was born. I feel I was chosen by Padre Pio to portray him. I still dream about him and he still questions me. It was a path within spirituality, besides religious convictions and questions each of us raise."

After the Padre Pio role in 2000, Castellitto began deepening the level of his faith. He has been married for 35 years. He states "We've stuck together all this time above all because we love each other, but also because we do not put our own needs above each other." He has four children. "I've turned down parts because I didn't want my children to see me in those particular roles with bad behavior and morals. I trust my instincts." If he was not an actor, he would have chosen to be a carpenter.



Corner

Jake's

For May, I am writing about "the man who refused to take the Oath to Hitler" - Blessed Franz Jägerstätter, Layman, and Martyr. On March 20, 1907, he was born in St. Radegund, Austria.

In 1935, Franz met Franziska Schwaninger, whom he married on Holy Thursday of 1936. Franz and Franziska had three daughters, Rosalia, Aloisia, and Maria. Franz started to attend Mass daily and became the sacristan of his parish, as well as becoming a Third Order Franciscan.

Franz viewed the rise of Nazism with suspicion. He experienced a vision/dream in January of 1938 that "sealed the deal" that the Nazi ideology was incompatible with Christianity. In the vision/dream, he saw a train transport many people to perdition because they supported the Nazis and any organization affiliated with Nazism. Furthermore, Franz was the only person in St. Radegund who voted against the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany. Franz refused to serve in the Nazi German military, citing his opposition to Nazism. In 1940, he was conscripted twice, but Franz could return home with his mayor's intervention because he was a farmer and a father.

Priests and relatives encouraged Franz to change his mind. One priest even refused to give Franz absolution in Confession because he thought Franz was suicidal. However, Franz remained adamant in his opposition to Nazism. Although it was difficult, Franziska always supported Franz because she said that if she did not, "he wouldn't have had anyone at all." Furthermore, Franz believed that fighting and killing so that the Nazis could conquer the world would make him culpable.

Additionally, Franz requested a meeting with Bishop Joseph Calasanz Fließer, the Bishop of Linz. The latter told Franz that he must do what is best for his family, and that it was not his job to decide if the war was just or unjust. The bishop also told Franz that he would not be culpable for following orders. However, Franz didn't believe because



he had a family, that it would justify offending God. Additionally, Franz believed the bishop did not speak freely, not knowing him personally, fearing the Nazis.

Again on March 1, 1943, Franz was conscripted for the third time; Franz stated that he could not take the Oath of Hitler and fight for the Nazis and be a practicing Catholic. He believed that there "were some things in which one must obey God more than men." Franz volunteered to be a military paramedic but refused to fight in combat. Then, Franz was transferred to the military prison at a former convent in Linz, where he stayed for two months. The inmates often bullied him there, but Franziska encouraged him to keep faith in God through writing to him.

In May, Franz was transferred to another military prison in Berlin-Tegel. Once again, he requested to be an army paramedic, which was denied. Franz was condemned to death for "undermining military morale" and was stripped of civil rights. In prison, Franz learned of the Servant of God, Father Franz Reinisch, S.A.C., who was killed for rejecting Nazi ideology citing his Catholic faith. The Servant of God Fr. Reinisch's testimony gave Franz strength in his situation. On August 9, 1943, Franz Jägerstätter received the crown of martyrdom and was beheaded at Brandenburg/Havel. His cremated remains were returned to his family.

Franz Jägerstätter was beatified as a Martyr at St. Mary's Cathedral in Linz with his wife and children present. Franziska brought the reliquary containing the ashes of the Blessed Martyr to the altar. His feast is celebrated on the date of his Baptism, May 21.

My Journey to the Priesthood

The note on *The Spirit of Medjugorje* newsletter I received said, "You owe me a story." This stems from my first visit to Medjugorje in 1997, trying to discern a seemingly impossible (because of sinfulness and what seemed like insurmountable obstacles) call to a vocation to the priesthood. There are many parts to the journey, and I will leave some of them out to protect the innocent.



BY FR. BILL BROWNE

I had been an all-about-me kind of person who practiced little or no faith. I had gradually started to come back to the faith, when my grandmother's brother called me on the phone. "You just have to do something about your grandmother. She is outside her own window looking inside to see who is in there at 3:00 in the morning. You have to do something."

My grandmother had moved to be next to her sister. When her sister passed away, my grandmother was just kind of lost. I was just kind of getting away from being a selfish and self-indulgent party animal. What was I supposed to do?

My grandmother had always been loved and sought out in our community. She and my grandfather had owned a grocery store during the Depression. They always gave more than they received. Everyone came to her for advice, consolation, and aid. They trusted and loved her. Who was I to turn down her need for help?

I was a drunken divorcé with so many vices. How could I help her? I asked God to help me. I had to go to Mass every day, begging for help, to undertake this impossible mission - bring an 80-something woman into my small apartment, and she had Alzheimer's. It would have been a recipe for disaster, but God's grace stepped in.

She could still cook like an angel. We were so well fed. It was amazing. Problems started to arise, however, when we would go shopping. We would buy enough food for more than a week of meals. When I came home from work, all of the weeks' purchases of food would be cooked and prepared. Casseroles, pork chops, roast, spaghetti - all cooked and on the kitchen table or elsewhere. Soon, I started finding the food in shopping bags at the top of the stairs with the bags rolled up at the top, so that they looked like they had handles on big lunch boxes. Then those food bags started to show up in closets or other places. Sometimes, the only way I could find them was by the smell of them when they would spoil. Sometimes, it was very frustrating. I even found myself angry at her - not thinking that she was sick and needed my help.

I came home from work one night, worn out and without any patience. My grandmother was sitting at our dining room table with a beer and a long cylindrical package in front of her, wrapped with newspaper and tied with two small red ribbons. I didn't say, "Hello," or ask her how her day had gone. I blurted out, "What the h*** is this?" I ripped the silly package apart, tearing the newspaper apart, and tearing off the red ribbons. What I discovered was a beautiful white statue of the Blessed Mother! The statue was not mine, and I had moved everything from her house; it was not hers.

I soon began to discern that my grandmother, Mary, (no coincidence) had been sent to me to help me start thinking more about others and less about myself, and that it was she who was sent to take care of me, instead of the other way around.

When I was going to church every day to ask God to help me, guess who went with me? My non-Catholic, but oh-so-Christian grandmother, Mary. It was, as they say, "A match made in heaven."

Fast forward 14 years later....

My wife, the love of my life, had died two years before. I remember just being kind of numb and going through the motions. I had been watching something on EWTN and I got this strong urge to read the Bible. I looked all over the house for a Bible, but couldn't find one. I was one of those husbands who never knew where anything is. Finally, I came to a cabinet that I had never opened. On top of a stack of books was a book by Wayne Weible about Medjugorje. After I read that, I read two or three more books by him. I had been attending Mass daily, and praying the Rosary daily, and my Marian devotion was skyrocketing.

In September of that year, I went to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania for a Marian conference. I had never been to anything like that in my whole life. With a friend of mine, I got up at 2:30 AM and drove to Pittsburgh. At about 6:00 or 6:30 AM, I found myself in this big hotel conference room (not a church) praying the Rosary.

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

Not very far into the Rosary, I noticed that my rosary was kind of changing colors on the metal chain links. It eventually turned to gold and stayed that way. I showed it to my friend, who said, "I saw it before, and it was not gold." I had heard of this happening before, but really thought that it was just a result of delusional minds.

The conference was fascinating and the speakers were both inspirational and so very interesting. I remember thinking that I couldn't/wouldn't go to the restroom throughout the whole day for fear that I might miss something.

My hunger to grow in our faith and to grow in Marian devotion was intense. I don't know if it was at that conference or soon afterwards, but I found out that Wayne Weible was leading a group of people to Medjugorje in November of that year. Somehow, I was able to go on a pilgrimage to Medjugorje two months after the Marian conference and the rosary miracle. I had never been on a pilgrimage in my whole life, and now I found myself at a pile of rocks, far away across the ocean. Was I losing my mind?

We had a group of about 40 people who lived in the house that we stayed at (a very big house that could accommodate us). One morning, as I was eating breakfast, I was talking with a lady from Kansas. I had never met or spoken to her before. Her question to me was: "So how did you end up coming here?" I told her one of the reasons was the rosary turning to gold story from the Marian conference in Pittsburgh. She asked me, "When did it turn to gold?" I was a little perturbed because it seemed like she was just asking me the same question I had just answered. She asked, "Where in the Rosary did it happen?"

I remembered that we were saying the European Rosary (Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries) at the time, and we were just getting started. Then I remembered that it was at the Second Joyful Mystery, the Visitation, that my rosary had turned to gold. This was when St. Elizabeth said to the Blessed Mother: "Who am I, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me?" I recognized immediately that, somehow, those were my words, too.

Many blessed and extraordinary things happened while we were there, but I will tell you about Thelma and how we got to know each other. Thelma was from Texas and she had come to Medjugorje with her sister. She had pretty much no money but had a daughter who worked for the airlines, so she was able to make the trip from Texas. She had broken her foot a few weeks before the trip but was determined that even a broken foot was not going to prevent her from going on this trip of a lifetime. She arrived at Medjugorje on crutches.

We had an Oblate of Mary priest who was kind of assigned to our group. He had been serving in South America. He was also an exorcist, and listening to his stories and faith journey was fascinating. I loved listening to every word he had to say, and when he told us he was going to lead us in the Rosary on the hill where the Blessed Mother appeared to the six visionaries, I was overwhelmed with expectation.

We arrived at the bottom of the hill and began our ascent. Pretty soon, I saw Thelma and her sister struggling to climb over the jagged and often unstable rocks that cover the hills. I needed hunting boots just to get around. I went back to help them both, and then just Thelma, as we struggled to catch up with the group. Father spoke at every Station, not from a book, but from his heart. But as it turned out, we never got to hear him because we were just too slow. I remember

saying to God something like: "Lord, You have guided me to this sacred place, with the opportunity to listen to this on-fire and incredibly gifted priest. Why would you saddle me with this lady to hold me back?"

Well, Thelma and I got to know each other pretty well. She had a very challenging life but an incredible and very simple faith. Almost immediately, she addressed me as "son", but I just thought that since she was from Texas, they just talked that way. We opened up our lives and souls to each other and spent a lot of our pilgrimage together with me on her arm as the week went on. We stayed in touch as we got back to the States, and she soon became known as my "Texas mom".

Thelma had left a message on my home phone voicemail, but it was over a month old. I called her back and apologized to her that I was sorry it took so long to call her back, but that I was in the seminary. She began crying and cried for a long uninterrupted time. I think it was at least three minutes. I then said, "I'm sorry; what's wrong?" She said, "You don't understand. When I came back from Medjugorje, I discerned that one of the things I was supposed to do was to pray for vocations to the priesthood, and now one of my sons is going to be a priest!"

Six years later, Thelma, my "Texas mom", attended my ordination to the priesthood. She got to meet some of the people who had been such a big part of my faith journey. I had gone to Medjugorje trying to discern whether this highly unlikely (at least to me) vocation could be authentic and viable. My "Texas mom" had led me all the way to ordination.

God is so good and so incredibly merciful!

Editor's note: I heard Fr. Browne give his testimony at a church where visionary Ivan was speaking in April of 2005. I was so touched, especially when he mentioned that his daughter, Jacqui, made his vestments for ordination. (Father has 4 daughters, 13 grandchildren, and 4 great-grandchildren!) I asked Fr. Browne if he would be willing to write up his story for our newsletter and he said he would, but to remind him. I put him on our mailing list and every once in a while, I would send him a reminder note. Last month, I received his story with a note attached that said, "June, you are like Sergeant Preston: You always get your man. Sorry for the long wait." How providential that his story arrived 17 years later, in time to share it this month when we commemorate the institution of the priesthood on Holy Thursday!

—Article from *The Spirit of Medjugorje*, April 2022, pp. 6-7.

**"My grace is sufficient
for you, for power is
made perfect in
weakness."
(2Cor 12:9)**

Prayers for Priests

As we pray to the Blessed Mother in this month of May, let us ask her to protect her priest-sons.



Mary, Mother of Jesus, throw your mantle of purity over our priests. Protect them, guide them and keep them in your heart. Be a Mother to them especially in times of discouragement and loneliness. Love them and keep them belonging completely to Jesus. Like Jesus, they, too, are your sons, so keep their hearts pure and virginal. Keep their minds filled with Jesus, and put Jesus always on their lips, so that he is the one they offer to sinners and to all they meet. Mary, Mother of Jesus, be their Mother, loving them and bringing them joy. Take special care of sick and dying priests, and the ones most tempted. Remember how they spent their youth and old age, their entire lives serving and giving all to Jesus. Mary, bless them and keep a special place for them in your heart. Give them a piece of your heart, so beautiful and pure and immaculate, so full of love and humility, so that they, too, can grow in the likeness of Christ. Dear Mary, make them humble like you, and holy like Jesus. Amen.

***Mother
of Jesus,
throw your
mantle of
purity over
our priests.***

St. Pope John Paul II's Prayer for Priests to Our Blessed Mother

Mother of Jesus Christ and Mother of priests,

Accept this title which we bestow on you to celebrate your motherhood
and to contemplate with you the priesthood of your Son and of your sons,
O holy Mother of God.

Mother of Christ,
to the Messiah Priest you gave a body of flesh
through the anointing of the Holy Spirit
for the salvation of the poor and the contrite of heart;
guard priests in your heart and in the Church,
O Mother of the Savior.

Mother of Faith,
you accompanied to the Temple the Son of Man,
the fulfillment of the promises given to the fathers;
give to the Father for his glory the priests of your Son,
O Ark of the Covenant.

Mother of the Church,
with the disciples in the Upper Room
you prayed to the Spirit for the new People and their shepherds;
obtain for the Order of Presbyters a fullness of gifts,
O Queen of the Apostles.

Mother of Jesus Christ,
you were with Him at the beginning of His life and of His mission,
you sought the Master among the crowd,
you stood beside Him when he was lifted up from the earth
consumed as the one eternal sacrifice,
and you had John close by you, your son;
accept from the beginning those who have been called,
protect their growth, accompany your sons in their life and in their ministry,
O Mother of Priests.

Amen.

Dear Padre Pio Spiritual Children

Our April gathering was powerful and full of graces. The traveling Icon of Our Lady of Fatima visited us. Katie Moran is President of the World Apostolate of Fatima USA (Our Lady's Blue Army), Byzantine division in Ohio and a National Board Trustee. Her presentation was amazing.

Our Padre Pio Prayer Group donated \$1400 from the proceeds of our Easter bake and candy sale for the rescue mission of the Ukrainian Orphans. Thank you to our bakers, candy makers and for all of your donations. We do make a difference! Fr. Jason Charron from Carnegie has returned from a rescue mission in Ukraine. The pastor of Holy Trinity Ukrainian Catholic Church in Carnegie took 22 orphans and 18 other refugees to safety in Lithuania. The community is now showing support for Fr. Jason Charron's humanitarian efforts. Fr. Jason Charron tried to bring over orphans and refugees from Ukraine as the Russians continue their invasion, but he has run into some obstacle. Continue to pray for this orphan mission.

I had the opportunity to speak at the Knights of Columbus 4th degree ladies' brunch. What a beautiful morning it was sharing my faith and my story to such holy women. The Knights will participate with us this month as we have our May Crowning. It seems wherever Mary is, the Knights are there.

Celebrating on Divine Mercy Sunday brought back great memories of being in Krakow, Poland and Stockbridge, Massachusetts with our pilgrims. What a blessing it had been.

The Catholic Healthcare International (CHI) traveling statue of a young Padre Pio has arrived. It will be at Our Lady of Guadalupe until May 8. Our speakers for this month are Fr. John Rocus (under the initiative of Cardinal Burke) and Bobby Schindler (Terri Schiavo's brother). They are part of CHI under the directive of Cardinal Burke. The presentation will immediately follow the celebration of Holy Mass. The touring statue will be in Broadview Heights at the Church of the Assumption from May 9-15.



Padre Pio's Birthday Celebration will be at St. Augustine Church in Barberton on Sunday, May 22 at 5:15pm Mass. The traveling statue and Padre Pio's relic

will be there. I will be doing a witness at this event. Refreshments will follow. (It will be a few days earlier than his birthday because the statue will be back in Michigan where Cardinal Burke will be celebrating a Mass on Padre Pio's birthday.)

Seats are available for our Pilgrimage to the World Apostolate of Fatima USA from Aug. 26-28 for \$399 and EWTN from Oct. 10-13 for \$499.

And lastly, if you are not receiving our emails, please contact us with your information at info@padrepiocleveland.org

Have a Blessed Happy Mother's Day!
Cindy Russo TOF, Group Leader



Touring St. Pio Statue

The life-size statue of St. Pio is on his second tour of churches in the region before being installed on the Casa USA campus in Howell, MI, where he will remain permanently to greet devoted pilgrims and his spiritual children. The statue is a one-of-a-kind depiction of Padre Pio created to sit under a magnificent tree on the property in Howell, MI. On September 7th, 1910, in the first year of his ministry, Padre Pio received the first stigmata while sitting beneath a magnificent elm tree in Piana Romana, Italy. St. Pio shared the experience in a letter to his spiritual advisor, "In the center of my hands, a red spot appeared, about the size of a coin, and with it, an intense pain

in the soles of my feet." This pain in his hands and feet was the first occurrence of the stigmata, even though they were not visible at the time. It was not until September 20, 1918, that Padre Pio received the visible stigmata after he celebrated morning Mass. The statue is based on one of the few photos of St. Pio when he was younger.

APR 25-MAY 8: Our Lady of Guadalupe | Macedonia
MAY 9-15: Church of the Assumption | Broadview Heights
MAY 16-22: St. Augustine | Barberton

Contact Pat Shea (H: 330-825-4659, C: 330-212-5818, or billpatshea@gmail.com) to add a member to the list.

PRAY FOR OUR SICK SISTERS & BROTHERS

Vincent Baka
Mary Kay Balk
Jacqueline Bercik
Fred Billow
Bonnie Bobrowski
Donna Bolton
Mario Bruschi
Sarajini Bruschi
Gia Cefaratti
John Ciarlariello
Virginia DeJesus
Serena DiCillo
Colin Dinasky

Bob DuMound
Roy Evans
Michele Ferrara
Maryann Finotti
Cynthia Fonseca
Oscar Fonseca
Marty Franck
Bob Garcar
Rose Gullo
Michael Hurley
Helen Husky
Tony Kazmierczak
Connor Lewis

Jonathan Lipreads
Mark Magda
Fr. Pio Mandato
Fr. Cory Mayer
Joe Morici
Fr. Terry O'Connell
Molly O'Leary
David Peck
Eleanor Phillips
Carmie Pruchnich
Steve Pruchnich
Judy Purdy
Phyllis Schilling

Regis Schilling
Bill Shea
Margaret Talbot
Edward Toth
Patricia Toth
Pilgrim George Walters
Joseph Wojtyla
Fr. Chuck Works
Ray Zozar
Daryl (lung cancer)



🙏 PRAY FOR OUR SPECIAL INTENTIONS 🙏

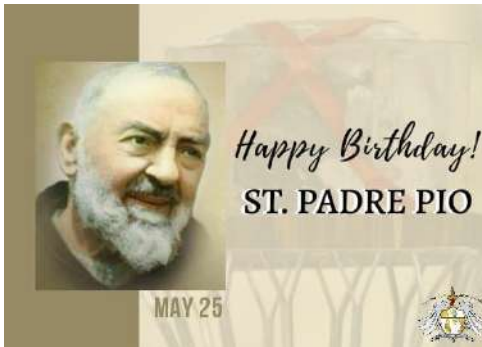
- * That God protect our Group Leader Cindy Russo, and give her wisdom in leading our Padre Pio Prayer Group.
- * For all Cleveland Seminarians and their families.
- * For all the intentions in our online Prayer Basket.

✝ PRAY FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED ✝

Vince Ciclone
Nick DeNapoli
Debra Dochery
Deborah Gardner

Maryann Thomas, sister of PPPG member Virginia Kovacina

Happy Birthday, St. Pio



On May 25th we celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Padre Pio. We remember with love, his birthday. We turn our thoughts and prayers to Padre Pio on the day. Padre Pio is so treasured, loved and adored because he shows us in a simple way, the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Padre Pio's greatness is embodied in his belonging to God, and to Christ crucified, who freely gave his life to and for our salvation. From his birth, he was chosen by God as a partner in Christ's redeeming work. Padre Pio was an instrument in the hand of God, allowing many men the opportunity to experience mercy and conversion.

The first sign of his sanctifying grace was had in Pietrelcina when he received the stigmata beneath an elm tree in the nearby Piana Romano, Italy. The years he spent in Pietrelcina prepared the young Padre Pio to understand the great mission that God had planned for him. Deep inside, he heard a voice that was constantly telling him "Sanctify yourself and sanctify others." The great mission entrusted to Padre Pio involved spiritual and physical suffering: divine gifts, the cross, the whipping. Beginning at his birth on May 25th, Padre Pio developed a deeper understanding, year after year, of the purpose of that suffering to atone for the guilt of God's people and to offer himself up in place of the sinner.

Prayer: Padre Pio, teach us to work alongside God. Pray for us so that we, as you showed us, may know the joy of being loved, desired, cherished, and cared for by God. Help us to pray without fail and without losing hope. We thank you, Lord, for giving us Our Spiritual Father, Padre Pio. May we emulate him and make our lives one that is given to charity, God's mission, and our neighbor. But, above all, help us to never give up and never give into negativity. Amen.

BEST WISHES to our Spiritual Children celebrating birthdays and special occasions in the month of May, and God Bless all the mothers!

**WEBSITE: WWW.PADREPIOCLEVELAND.ORG CONTACT US: INFO@PADREPIOCLEVELAND.ORG
FACEBOOK: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/PADREPIOCLEVELAND TWITTER: [@PADREPIOCLEVELAND](https://twitter.com/PADREPIOCLEVELAND)**

The Padre Pio Prayer Group of Cleveland is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.