

**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

**MISSION &
VISION:**

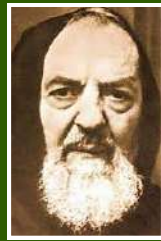
To carry out the works, words and devotion of St. Padre Pio through prayer and charitable works where we can touch lives and change souls.

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

**UPCOMING
EVENTS:**

Feb 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

JANUARY 2023

VOLUME 11, ISSUE 1

His Holy Name

The Month of January is dedicated to His Holy Name and His Holy Childhood. Liturgically, this makes sense because we just celebrated Jesus' birth and continue to celebrate the season of Christmas with January 3rd being the feast of the Holy Name. After the Blessed Virgin Mary had conceived her Child by the Holy Spirit, the angel Gabriel appeared to St. Joseph and instructed him that the Child's name should be called Jesus, which means "God Saves."

Invoking the name of Jesus goes back even further to the Early Church in the form of the "Jesus Prayer". This penitential prayer very simply says, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner," which can be repeated on a prayer rope or Jesus Beads just as the Hail Mary is prayed on the Rosary.

His Holy Name should not be taken in vain. That's even a commandment: You

will not take the Lord's Name in vain. Do you use His Name in vain? Do you allow others to use Your God and Savior's name in vain around you? What creative response can you make when others use His Name in vain? How can you use His Name with reverence?



What can you do to remember the importance of His Holy Name? Learn more about Christ's Incarnation through the Gospels to inspire you to become more child-like, and don't be afraid to use His name reverently throughout your day, even in conversation as a way of simple evangelization.

Prayer to the Holy Name: O my Jesus, thou art the Savior who hast given Thy blood and Thy life for me, I pray Thee to write Thy adorable name on my poor heart; so that having it always imprinted in my heart by love, I may also have it ever on my lips, by invoking it in all my necessities.

Mary, Did You Know? YES, SHE DID!

During this Christmas/New Year's Season, there is a song that has been played on the radio and streaming channels, concerts and church choirs. It is the song: *Mary, Did You Know?* It is a nice song and many people like it greatly. However [you knew that this was coming], it is not completely theological Catholic understanding of Mary and her chosen role, by God, for her to be the Mother of God.

As you know the song asks some questions. *Mary, did you know:*

... that your Baby Boy would walk on water?
 ... that your Baby Boy would save our sons and daughters?
 ... that your Baby Boy has come to make you new?
Answer: This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.
 ... that your Baby Boy will give sight to a blind man?
 ... that your Baby Boy will calm the storm with his hand?
 ... that your Baby Boy has walked where angels trod?
When you kiss your little Baby you kiss the face of God?
 ... that your Baby Boy is Lord of all creation?
 ... that your Baby Boy would one day rule the nations?
 ... that your Baby Boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
Answer: The sleeping Child you're holding is the Great, I Am.

These questions being asked make it sound that Mary does not know what her *Baby Boy* was or what he would do. We know that she knew because of what the Archangel Gabriel said to her at the Annunciation. It is written:

In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, ***"Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."*** But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, ***"Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*** But Mary said to the angel, ***"How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?"***

And the angel said to her in reply, ***"The holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God."*** Mary said, ***"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word."*** Then the angel departed from her. (*The Gospel of Luke 1:26-38*)



The text in **red, bold, italic** font are the words of the Archangel Gabriel and confirms that Mary knew the answers to the questions in the song. She even knew what he would do for she was well versed in the Old Testament prophets and knew from the Prophet Isaiah what the Messiah would do. He said:

The wilderness and the parched land will exult; the Arabah will rejoice and bloom; Like the crocus it shall bloom abundantly and rejoice with joyful song. The glory of Lebanon will be given to it, the splendor of Carmel and Sharon; They will see the glory of the LORD, the splendor of our God [The Messiah]. Strengthen hands that are feeble, make firm knees that are weak, Say to the fearful of heart: Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God, he comes with vindication; With divine recompense he

comes to save you. Then the eyes of the **blind shall see**, and the **ears of the deaf be opened**; Then the **lame shall leap like a stag**, and the **mute tongue sing for joy**. (*Isaiah 35:1-6a*)

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Your Path to Holiness

Every so often, an extraordinary soul graces the world with incredible holiness. Padre Pio, our Spiritual Papa, was that man for much of the 20th century. The source of Christian Joy is certainty of being loved by God, loved personally by our creator, by the One who holds the entire universe in his hands and loves each one of us and the great human family with a passionate and faithful love, a love greater than our unfaithfulness and sins, a love which forgives. Here are some aspects of Padre Pio's life and spirituality to guide you on your path to Holiness.

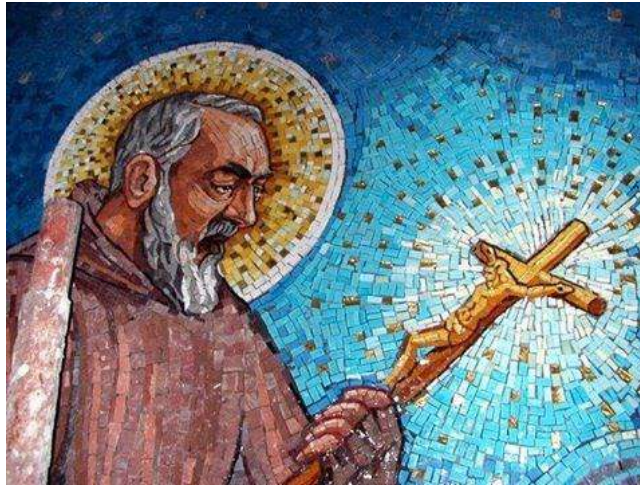
Eucharistic devotion: Any account of Padre Pio's life must start with Jesus. His offering of the Mass often lasted hours, due to a few reasons. In the early days of his priesthood, "he took so long because he was in ecstasy. He once said that in this absorption in God, especially at the Consecration ... he saw everyone who had asked his prayers." Mystically, the Mass takes us into the eternal moment of His Passion, death, and resurrection. Second, Padre Pio models for us in how we should approach Mass. The more we approach the altar of the Lord with awe and love, the more we will appreciate it. The more we appreciate it, the more the Eucharist will transform our lives.

Devotion to Our Lady: Padre Pio had a great love for Our Lady. In a letter from 1913, his affection is clearly seen: "here we are at last in the month of our beautiful Mother once again. This dear Mother continues to lavish her maternal care upon me, especially during the present month. She takes care of me to an exceeding degree. I am all aflame although there is no fire. I feel myself held fast and bound to the Son by means of this Mother. I would like to fly off to invite all creatures to love Jesus and Mary." He rarely slept more than a few hours and often spent his nights praying the rosary. He called the rosary his weapon.

Confession: In the early days of his priestly ministry, Padre Pio often spent lengthy times in the confessional. Confessing to a priest who has the charism of reading souls might seem interesting, maybe attractive—in reality, it was humbling for many. Padre Pio was not afraid to be gruff or confrontational to impenitent souls! He knew penitents' sins better than the penitents themselves, and called out anyone trying to hide something. If you haven't been to confession in years, go. Ask Padre Pio's intercession and run to Christ who can give healing and forgiveness!

Humility: No matter what happened, Padre Pio embraced every hardship in true Christian charity even those who did not believe his stigmata was real. Through the grace of God, Padre Pio has affected a tremendous amount of spiritual good. St. John Paul II

highlighted Padre Pio's humility, saying that "difficulties and sorrows, if accepted out of love, are transformed into a privileged way of holiness, which opens onto the horizons of a greater good, known only to the Lord." Each of our paths to holiness is different, but the means of getting there is the same for everyone: by grace following Christ and taking His will and cross as our own. Look at the astounding things God can do with a soul so devoted to Him!



Poverty: Padre Pio devoted himself to the discipline of poverty; he took it so seriously that he initially refused to have a picture of Our Lady in his cell. Only in obedience to his superiors did he hang the painting above his bed. Don't think that Padre Pio wouldn't want us to have a picture of Our Lady in our homes, however. His refusal was based on his vow of poverty. He refused a more comfortable chair in his confessional, as well as a heater during the winter. The less material possessions he had meant the more room in his heart for Christ. What we can learn from him on this point is the

spiritual value of simplicity of life. Do you need a kick start to your spiritual life? Try downsizing your possessions, appropriating to your state in life, and giving them away/selling them and donating the money to the poor. Put everything in order.



Fasting: While we're accustomed to fasting primarily during Lent—something seasonal—Padre Pio saw it was mandatory in the spiritual life. He fasted daily, eating sparingly as to offer up additional mortifications to Our Lord. The key point is "devotion to Jesus." Fasting shouldn't come from a hatred of our body! If it does, it won't do anything to us other than make us hungry. To deny ourselves of a worldly good enables us to better turn away from sin. It's an opportunity to take up our cross and follow our crucified Lord (see Matt 6:24).

Obedience: The final decade of Padre Pio's life (the 1960s) was marked by protest and dissent in the Catholic world. Sadly, his obedience was counter-cultural. What Padre Pio knew was that the virtue of obedience is essential to following Christ. It's a message he probably repeated in the confessional over and over: turn away from sin and toward God. That's easy to say, but when it comes to obeying the will and commandments of God, it quickly turns into a difficult task. Padre Pio serves as a great example for seeing past the emotional pain and pride that can be obstacles to obedience.

Battles with the devil: The devil is very real, and desires the damnation of every human soul. He went after Padre Pio on every front he could. The reality of spiritual warfare highlights the importance of all the virtues on this list that Padre Pio excelled in: humility, poverty, fasting, and obedience. We should cultivate these

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Quotes from Saint Padre Pio/January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 May the consolation of the divine spirit always dwell in the hearts of all those who love God. The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD	2 May Jesus fill you with His grace. Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen	3 How sweet it is to serve the Lord. Christmas Weekday <i>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</i>	4 All of us have duties. Let us carry them out faithfully and perseveringly. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton	5 Let us accept courageously and cheerfully the orders which come from the top. St. John Neumann	6 Let us do our duty in accordance with our state in life. Christmas Weekday St. Andre Bessette First Friday	7 In moments of sadness let us raise our hearts up to God from Whom all will receive strength, peace, and comfort. Christmas Weekday St. Raymond of Penyafort First Saturday
8 It is necessary for us to call down upon us the mercy of the heavenly Father.	9 It is necessary that our life be influenced by Christian principles that it be ruled by God and by the Church.	10 We must be Christian in our daily life and not just the name. [1 st Week in Ordinary Time]	11 Let us pray fervently, humbly, and perseveringly.	12 The Lord is a father, the most tender and best of fathers.	13 The Lord cannot fail to be moved when His children appeal to Him.	14 The grain of wheat does not bear fruit if it does not suffer by disintegrating.
THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD	THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD	1st WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME	Weekday	Weekday	Weekday	Weekday BVM
15 People and countries need trials and suffering in order to come forth cleansed and renewed.	16 Wretched are those to whom the Lord does not speak anymore, not even in quiet indignation. Weekday Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	17 Tremble, all who no longer hear even the angry voice of God, for this silence is the greatest punishment.	18 Be comforted and trust in the Lord.	19 The God who still speaks to us even if He thunders so severely is still the God who loves us.	20 Let us pray to the Lord that He may never permit us to shut the ears of our heart to His voice. Weekday St. Fabian St. Sebastian	21 Praise be to God.
2nd WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME	Weekday St. Anthony	24 Offer up your distress and desolation for your own salvation and for that of others.	Weekday	Weekday	Weekday	St. Agnes
22 In His immense goodness may (God) spare us.	23 May it please (God) never to allow us to fall short of the plans He has for us in His wisdom. Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children	25 Humble yourself more deeply beneath the divine action and have no fear.	THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL THE APOSTLE 	26 Everything is decreed with view to your salvation.	27 Respond to the best of your ability to the voice (of) Jesus within you.	28 God loves you very much, so trust in Him, go on doing, humble yourself beneath the divine action and love Him.
3rd WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME	Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children	31 At times the spirit is willing and the flesh weak, but God wants the spirit more than anything else.	St. Francis de Sales	Ss. Timothy and Titus	Weekday St. Angela Merici	St. Thomas Aquinas 
29 Cling closer and closer to Him.	Weekday	St. John Bosco	Holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God and my Mother. Daughter of the Eternal Father, pray that we recognize our unity as children of the One Father. Mother of the Only-Begotten Son, pray that we accept each other as sisters and brothers in the same Jesus. Sponse of the Life-Giving Holy Spirit, pray that we be open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit, leading us to the fullness of life. Mary, Virgin Made Church, Mother of the Mystical Body of Christ, First Tabernacle, First Monstrance, be with us in life's journey, and help us see and follow Jesus. Amen.			
4th WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME						

Spiritual Resolutions

Here we are again: It's time to make our annual New Year's resolutions. Every Catholic should add to their list a few spiritual resolutions designed to help them climb that mountain of faith! Let the freshness of a new year be your impetus to make new strides in your walk with God. There is no time like the present! Pick one or two of these ideas. You can increase more when you master the first ones.

Increase Your Marian Devotion.

The way to turn back to God is the same way that God came to us—through the Blessed Mother. In 2023, commit yourself to increasing your Marian devotion so that she may lead you to deeper conversion; to a renewed following of God's will for your life; and to an increase of your faith and trust in Jesus Christ.

Make more time for spiritual reading. If you struggle with finding the time to read, make a list of books that you'd like to complete in 2023 and pray that God will show you how you can find the time to read them. Maybe this will mean cutting out TV time or slimming back on unnecessary social activities. The time you spend feeding your soul is time better spent.

Make good stewardship a lifestyle. This boils down to one key concept in the life of the Christian: practicing good stewardship over the gifts God has given us. Good stewardship means good management of our "time, talent, and treasure" for the greater glory of God.

Share your Catholic faith with others. With so many people far away from God today (and more and more people noticing it), the culture is ripe for evangelism.

There is a real hunger for God and his Truth. If someone you know is going through a difficult time, give them a Rosary Scapular, Miraculous Medal or a prayer card out of a stash you always keep handy. It might be the touch of God that they need in that moment.



Bring back regular penances. Maybe it's the tried-and-true abstinence from meat, or perhaps another penitential practice such as praying the Stations of the Cross, or even acts of service for the less fortunate. Be creative. Remember that penances aren't meant to be pleasant at first, but the graces that come from them grow sweeter with time.

Go an extra day to Mass during the week. Mass is not only the source and summit of our faith—it is also the source and summit of our very life. If it's still impossible with your schedule, find out when your local parishes keep their doors open, and try to add time for Adoration outside of Mass, even if just for fifteen minutes.

Pray the Rosary. Set time each day to pray a rosary. The rosary is our weapon that will help them fight all battles.



(Continued from page 3)

virtues so to have them at our side on the day of temptation. The prideful, opulent, selfish soul is easy prey for the devil. God will fight it with you and for you. Ask Him.

Stigmata: The stigmata is a mark of the glory of Christ, but it's also a reminder of the intensity of Our Lord's passion and death. This was one of the crosses Padre Pio had. We all will not escape this life without our crosses. We accept suffering for the

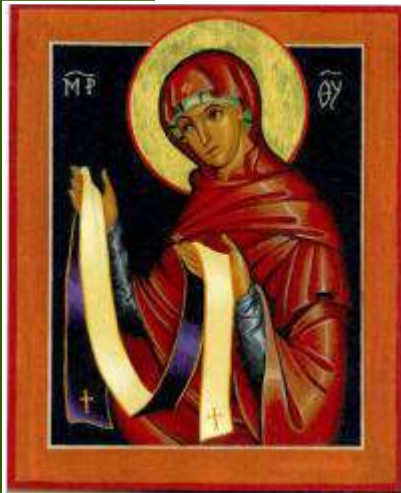
love of Jesus and to be united with Him.

Love of his spiritual children: An incredible amount of people had a claim on Padre Pio's love and affection. He touched thousands of lives while on earth, and continues his work in heaven. He helped preserve people from sin, kept them from harm, saved lives, and interceded for miraculous cures. He has a genuine love for all who come to him. You were chosen by him to be his spiritual child. He directed his spiritual children to Jesus in three steps. First, they are to keep the commandments of the Church. The second step is prayer—the basic prayers being a daily rosary and daily Mass. The third and final step was to spend thirty minutes in meditation before the Blessed Sacrament on the truths of the faith. That wouldn't be the end, however! If his children faithfully undertook that half hour, they would soon see that they needed more.

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Prayers for Priests

Mary Immaculate & Pure, pray with us for your priest sons and place them in the wound of the sacred and living heart of Jesus



Mary Immaculate & Pure

Accompany them as you did your Son, Jesus, in their daily way of the cross.

Heart of Jesus be their refuge.

Help them to die to the world and give themselves completely to their priestly vocations. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Help them to bear patiently, the challenges of their daily lives. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Give them true humility as an example to all they serve. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Help them to avoid deliberate sins and if they fall to rise and continue in their vocations. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Mary Immaculate & Pure

Give them courage to overcome the need for human respect and to do only the will of God. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Be their sweet mother during life and their comfort at the hour of death.

Heart of Jesus be their refuge.

Help us to be the Simon of Cyrene to every priest in our lives and to be a support in anyway needed. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Never let the crosses of their daily lives be more than they can bear, be their motherly support.

Heart of Jesus be their refuge.

Mary Immaculate & Pure

Help your priests to recognize Jesus in all they meet and care for, with fidelity to their duty as shepherds of souls. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Give them the grace to totally forgive any wrongs done to them with the grace to be merciful and kind to all. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Give them the grace of fortitude and complete fulfillment of their daily duty. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Give them great upright purity of heart and graces to serve Jesus, so their flock can see Jesus in all their actions. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Help your priest sons to great charity as they sacrifice themselves to increase the Kingdom of God on earth. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Mary Immaculate & Pure

May all priests live so as to merit your embrace at their death and be presented by you to your Son, Jesus. *Heart of Jesus be their refuge.*

Be with your priest sons as they consecrate the bread and wine into the Most Precious Body and Blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ. May their hearts be united to Jesus as they receive Him at Holy Mass.

We pray for all your priest sons in purgatory, especially those priests who have ministered to us during our lives. Let our prayers release them to the joys of heaven. May their priestly vows shine and be united to Jesus, the Eternal High Priest, for all eternity, we pray to you, O Lord, Amen.

**Heart of
Jesus be
their
refuge.**

Dear Spiritual Children of Padre Pio

The December gathering turned out to be quite a festive day. The Baby Jesus's on the steps of the altar was a beautiful image with Father blessing all of the Baby Jesus's so we can bring them back to our homes with the special blessing for Christmas. It brought us to remember what Advent is all about. We had a Christmas miracle: the Baby Jesus that was lost was found under a Christmas tree! We started last year with Eucharistic Adoration and ended the year the same way. The Christmas Cookie Bake Sale was a huge success. We collected \$2500 for Fr. Julius' Cameroon Diocese Project. Thank you for all your generosity. It was wonderful having social time at the Christmas luncheon. We were graced with music from Kathly Hlad and her button box. Saint Pio was smiling on seeing his spiritual family having so much joy and fun.



As was suggested to do the Bible in a Year program, we now have the opportunity to participate in Catechism in a Year with Fr. Mike Schmitz: <https://ascensionpress.com/pages/catechisminayear> This link will get you started. It will take about 20 minutes a day. It is a way to keep increasing your knowledge of our Catholic faith.



We will start our January Prayer Gathering with a mini retreat (*Be Healed*) after Mass on Saturday January 6. Please plan on staying for it. We should be finishing by noon. Refreshments will be available. *Be Healed* books will be available for sale.

During December I was able to visit Brother Richard Merling OFM at the Solanus Casey Center at St. Bonaventure in Detroit. He sends his love and prayers to our Prayer Group. He invited us to come and visit him on a pilgrimage to Detroit. We are working on these plans. I also connected with a Padre Pio Prayer Group in Birmingham, England. Please keep Fr. Leonard Cox in your prayers as he leads his group to holiness.



I am looking forward to this year. I am very grateful to all our faithful chaplains, helpers and Prayer Group members. Happy Blessed New Year!

Love,

Cindy Russo TOF
Group Leader

We welcome all of your prayer intentions, so please let Pat Shea know so we can add them to our list.
(H: 330-825-4659, C: 330-212-5818, or billpatshea@gmail.com)

PRAY FOR OUR SICK SISTERS & BROTHERS

Jacqueline Bercik
Jan Cornachione
Vince Feora
Mary Ann Fintti
Heidi Gingerich
Jonathan Gingerich
Mary Beth Leonard
Frank Maggio

Paula Maggio
Bill Shea

FOR ALL THE INTENTIONS IN
OUR ONLINE PRAYER BASKET,
LORD, HEAR OUR PRAYER.



† PRAY FOR OUR RECENTLY DECEASED †

Karen Baglieri
Margaret Kahl
Dennis Pollock
Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

BEST WISHES to our Spiritual Children celebrating birthdays and special occasions in the month of January!

(Continued from page 2)

Even in the song it says:

*The blind will see.
The deaf will hear.
The dead will live again.
The lame will leap.
The dumb will speak
The praises of The Lamb.*

So, Mary did know who she has given birth to. The *Baby Boy* she holds in her arm, who she wrapped in swaddling clothes, who she kissed: IS THE MESSIAH, THE SON OF GOD.



The line of the song that is completely not Catholic in its theology is the line:
This Child that you delivered will soon deliver you.

We know that Mary was already delivered by Jesus before he was born. In fact, we know when she was delivered by her *Baby Boy*. It was at her Immaculate Conception. Where, according to Pope Blessed Pius IX, in his papal bull *Ineffabilis Deus*, which states that Mary, through God's grace, was conceived free from the stain of original sin through her role as the Mother of God:

We declare, pronounce, and define that the doctrine which holds that the most Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instance of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege granted by Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, the Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin, is a doctrine revealed by God and therefore to be believed firmly and constantly by all the faithful.

So, God, out of space and time, offered Mary the privilege to receive the benefits of her Son's Paschal Mystery which occurred in space and time. For as the Archangel Gabriel said: *for nothing will be impossible with God.*

I am not trying to destroy your enjoyment to this song, but Mary did know what her *Baby Boy* is and what he would do. She received the privilege of already sharing in the Paschal Mystery of her Son and to enjoy the results of that mystery by being assumed into heaven, body and soul. If we want to honor Mary at our Christmas Masses, let us sing, instead, *Silent Night*.

I pray that this Christmas Season and the beginnings of this New Year 2023 will be a blessed and holy one.

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

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