

Memorial of St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina

Homily of Bishop Barres

St. Agnes Cathedral

September 23, 2020

The second chapter of St. Paul's letter to the Galatians and the sixteenth chapter of the Gospel of Matthew express the charisms and ecclesial mission of the Capuchin priest friar St. Padre Pio of Pietrelcina (1887-1968).

In his June 16, 2002 homily for the Canonization of St. Pio, Pope St. John Paul II said: "Is it not, precisely, the 'glory of the Cross' that shines above all in Padre Pio? How timely is the spirituality of the Cross lived by the humble Capuchin of Pietrelcina. Our time needs to rediscover the value of the Cross in order to open the heart to hope. Throughout his life, he always sought greater conformity with the Crucified, since he was very conscious of having been called to collaborate in a special way in the work of redemption. His holiness cannot be understood without this constant reference to the Cross."

St. Pio died on September 23rd, 1968 and so today we commemorate the 52nd anniversary of his death. He received the stigmata of Christ on September 20th, 1918 and so last Sunday we celebrated the 102nd Anniversary of that moment in Church history.

The stigmata are the wounds of Christ – the wounds of Christ in his hands, in his feet and in his side – which he experienced in his passion, crucifixion and death.

Certain saints in the history of the Church have been given the gift of the stigmata as a special sign of their union with the Crucified Christ.

As a Capuchin Friar, St. Pio was a son of St. Francis Assisi (1181/1182--1226) who also received and lived his life with the stigmata. St. Pio's stigmata showed

how he lived the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ in a mystical way. He was the first priest to receive the stigmata.

St. Pio's wounds helped him to understand the cosmic power of the Catholic Mass, the unbloody renewal of Christ's sacrifice on Calvary and the relationship between a holy living of the priesthood and the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

If you ever have the opportunity to see St. Pio celebrating Mass on You-Tube, you will see a priest in touch with the invisible truths and realities of our Catholic faith in a truly moving and mystical way.

St. Pio's wounds helped him to be a Doctor of Mercy in the confessional and a Doctor of Mercy for those who had experienced all types of suffering and trauma in life.

St. Pio was a great champion of the Holy Rosary.

We ask for St. Pio's intercession that we may embrace the Crosses of life with greater courage and faith.

We go to St. Pio today and ask for his intercession for the grace of a fuller, more active and conscious participation in the Holy Sacrifice of the Catholic Mass.

We ask for his intercession for in our experiences of the Sacrament of Confession – that we may be truly humble penitents open to ongoing conversion.

We ask for his intercession that we may pray the Holy Rosary with greater devotion and consistency.

Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us!

St. Padre Pio, pray for us!