

Karl shared the unusual experience with his confessor. His confessor told him that there was a religious congregation called the Trinitarians who wore a white habit with a red and blue cross. His confessor then introduced him to the superior of the Trinitarians. Karl noticed that the habit the superior was wearing was identical to the one he had seen in the vision.

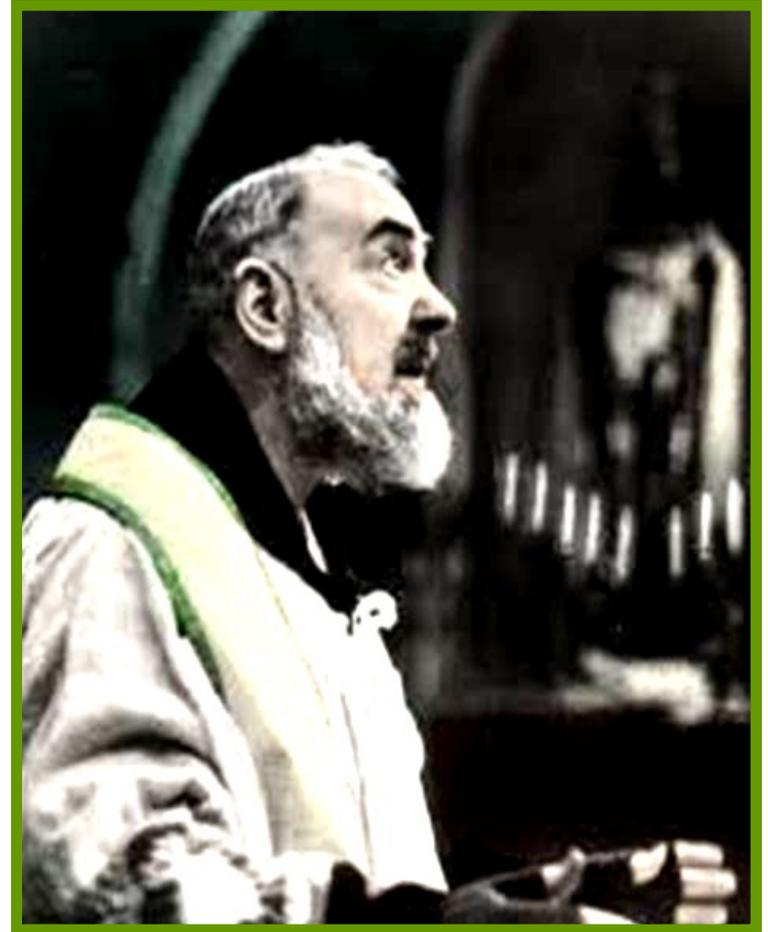
Karl realized that God had answered his prayers and had given him a clear sign of the vocation that he was to follow. He asked for admittance and was accepted into the Trinitarian Religious Order in Rome. He made simple vows and took the name, Brother Pio. He was sent to Canada where he made his solemn vows in 1924. Upon his ordination to the priesthood, he took the name Father Pio of the Most Holy Trinity. He felt Padre Pio's loving presence helping him and guiding him in his priestly ministry. He always attributed the good that he was able to accomplish to Padre Pio's intercession. Karl Klugkist (Father Pio of the Most Holy Trinity) died in Halifax, Nova Scotia in 1948 after a long and fruitful ministry in the Lord's service.

I urge you to unite with me and draw near to Jesus with me, to receive his embrace and a kiss that sanctifies and saves us. . . Let us not cease then to kiss this divine Son in this way, for if these are the kisses we give him now, he himself will come to take us in his arms and give us the kiss of peace in the last sacraments at the hour of death.

– St. Pio of Pietrelcina

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## Padre Pio and The Russian Prince, Karl Klugkist



Padre Pio Praying In Tongues

# Padre Pio and The Russian Prince, Karl Klugkist

The Russian prince, Karl Klugkist, was born in Kiev on March 25, 1871. After being exiled at the beginning of World War I, he moved to Italy. Karl, who was intelligent and well educated, was also a deeply spiritual man who was seeking a closer walk with the Lord.

In 1919, Karl learned of Padre Pio for the first time. A priest that Karl met in Foggia, Italy told him a few details of Padre Pio's life. The priest had known Padre Pio when Padre Pio was a fifteen-year-old student in the Capuchin novitiate in Morcone. The priest told Karl that all of the young aspirants in the novitiate loved Padre Pio. The priests and instructors at Morcone felt the same way. They admired him for his goodness and for his humility. According to the priest who spoke to Karl, "There was not a trace of evil in Brother Pio." Karl then read some articles in the newspaper about Padre Pio which further sparked his interest. He had a number of spiritual problems at the time and decided that it would be beneficial to go to San Giovanni Rotondo and speak to Padre Pio, asking for his counsel.

Karl had to wait two days to get a seat on the bus that traveled from Foggia to San Giovanni Rotondo. San Giovanni Rotondo was a popular destination at the time as many people wanted to make their confession to Padre Pio and to attend his Mass. Karl was finally able to board the bus but it was anything but a comfortable journey. It took two hours for the rickety old bus to maneuver along the worst kind of roads enroute to the monastery of Our Lady of Grace. On the journey, Karl enjoyed looking out the window at the wide expanse of sky. He also enjoyed breathing the fresh mountain air which he found to be invigorating. However, the closer that he got to San Giovanni Rotondo, the more oppressive the landscape became. Scrub trees and rocks dotted the barren hills and the bleakness of the area made Karl feel depressed.

Karl enjoyed talking to the local citizens of San Giovanni Rotondo and he especially enjoyed the interesting stories they told him about Padre Pio. Karl learned that a blind woman had come to San Giovanni Rotondo from a long distance, hoping that her sight might be restored through contact with Padre Pio. When she finally had the opportunity to speak to Padre Pio, he said to her, "I cannot obtain the grace that you are asking for. But do not become discouraged, because you will soon be able to see." The woman went away in great distress. She told the priest who had accompanied her on her journey that she had given up all hope of ever being able to see again. She kept thinking of Padre Pio's words, "I cannot obtain the grace you are asking for." She believed that Padre Pio had simply tried to pacify her when he told her that she would soon be able to see. But less than two hours later, while on the trip home, the woman suddenly regained her vision.

When Karl returned to his home in Rome, he spent many hours in church, praying to the Lord for enlightenment. He was trying to discern the path that God might be calling him to follow. He was very happy that he had been able to speak to Padre Pio one last time before leaving San Giovanni Rotondo. Padre Pio told him that he would remember him in his prayers.

One day, when Karl was praying in front of the Blessed Sacrament, he saw two hands coming out of the tabernacle. The hands were holding a white habit with a red and blue cross on it. To his great surprise, the habit was coming toward him. He thought that his mind might be playing tricks on him. He closed his eyes and then opened them again. He rubbed his eyes to make sure that he was actually seeing what he thought he was seeing. It was true. It was not his imagination. He saw the white habit clearly and then finally, it disappeared.

size of a small coin in the middle of each of his hands. Karl noticed blood trickling from the wounds in his hands during the Consecration. Karl could not contain his emotions and upon receiving Holy Communion from Padre Pio, he began to weep.

After the Mass, two men approached Padre Pio and wanted to make their confession. Karl was standing nearby and noticed that Padre Pio would not agree to it. "Those men did not come here to make their confession," Padre Pio said.

During the days of his visit to Our Lady of Grace monastery, Karl occasionally walked to town. Whenever he did so, it always felt as though he had stepped back in time. Life at the monastery seemed to be far removed from the secular concerns and realities of the modern world. Padre Pio reminded him more of a prophet from the Middle Ages than a man of the twentieth century.

On one of his visits to town, Karl met the local state commissioner. The commissioner told Karl that he had first-hand knowledge regarding Padre Pio's gifts of reading hearts. One day, the commissioner went to the monastery to say goodbye to Padre Pio. He was going to be leaving his job in San Giovanni Rotondo in just a few days and another individual would soon be taking his place. Padre Pio smiled at the commissioner and said, "You are mistaken. You will not be leaving. You will stay in San Giovanni Rotondo for many months." The commissioner was surprised at Padre Pio's words. He did not want to disagree with him openly but he knew that Padre Pio was wrong. He had already received his transfer orders. However, a change was made at the last minute and the commissioner was asked to continue on with his job in San Giovanni Rotondo.

Karl was happy that he had been able to obtain a letter of introduction from the archbishop of Gaeta. The letter included a request that Karl be allowed to speak to Padre Pio. When he arrived at the monastery of Our Lady of Grace, he handed his letter to the first Capuchin he saw. The Capuchin instructed Karl to go through the monastery courtyard and then enter the church through the small door that was just beyond.

When Karl walked into the church, the first thing he noticed was a Capuchin priest who was hearing a man's confession in an open confessional. The penitent who knelt beside the priest appeared to be a local farmer. Slowly, the priest who was hearing the man's confession raised his head and looked up at Karl. Karl recognized the priest immediately. It was Padre Pio. For some reason, he had not expected to see him so soon after arriving at the monastery. Karl felt both surprised and afraid at the same time.

The corridor was packed with men waiting in line to make their confession to Padre Pio. At the other end of the corridor, there was another door. There were a number of men trying to force their way through the door so that they too could get in the confessional line. They were dressed in work clothes and they all appeared to be farmers from the local area. The noise and commotion that the men were making struck Karl as very irreverent. He quickly summed up the situation and realized that in order to talk to Padre Pio about what was on his mind, he would need to get in the confessional line.

Karl took his place in the line and began to prepare himself for his encounter with Padre Pio. From where he was standing in line, he could easily observe Padre Pio. Karl noticed that he remained immobile, with his arms either crossed or resting on the chair in front of him while he heard confessions. He kept his head lowered. As Karl looked at Padre Pio, he was awed by the beauty of his face. It was the most beautiful face that he

had ever seen. Karl got caught up in gazing at Padre Pio, and forgot all about making his preparation for confession.

Karl continued to stare at Padre Pio. Just before he gave absolution to the man who was in the confessional, Padre Pio recited a prayer in a low voice. Karl was close enough to hear the prayer. It sounded as though Padre Pio was speaking in another language, possibly an Asian language. Karl, who was fluent in a number of languages, could not identify the words.

Karl was still trying to focus his mind and prepare himself for confession. He let six men go in front of him in the line. All of a sudden, a man, thinking to do Karl favor, pushed him forward. Karl could postpone the encounter no longer. As he knelt before Padre Pio, he realized how truly unprepared he was to speak to him.

Padre Pio asked Karl when he had made his last confession. Karl told him that it had been the day before.

“What sins have you committed since yesterday morning?” Padre Pio asked. Karl could not think of a single sin to confess. “I did not realize that I was going to have the opportunity to make my confession to you today,” Karl explained. “I am not really prepared to do so. I came here hoping that I might be able to have a chat with you.” The moment the words were out of his mouth, Karl regretted them. “That is impossible,” Padre Pio answered. “There are too many people waiting in line. I cannot allow people to have a chat with me. If you have something to tell me, you must tell it to me during confession.”

Karl had written out the items that he wanted to discuss with Padre Pio on a piece of paper. He wished that he had the paper with him but unfortunately he had left it in his suitcase. He knew that he had to speak quickly. There was not a minute to waste. Karl then began to talk about himself, jumping from one period of his life to another in no particular order.

As Karl spoke, he continued to study Padre Pio. He felt the full impact of his holiness. He was convinced that he was in the presence of a true saint. Padre Pio was different from anyone that Karl had ever met. Spiritually, he seemed to be in a class all by himself. To Karl, he appeared like a bright light, shining in the midst of the world’s darkness. He was direct and confident and there was no trace of false sweetness or sentimentality in his manner. At one point, Padre Pio blew on his hands several times, as if they were burning. He showed absolutely no self-consciousness in doing so.

Padre Pio listened with the greatest attention as Karl spoke, but he did not make eye contact with him. Because of it, Karl felt as though there was no personal relationship or personal connection between he and Padre Pio. Although Karl could have talked much longer, he finally stopped himself after about ten minutes, knowing that many others were waiting in line for the same opportunity.

When Karl finished speaking, Padre Pio said to him, “You are seeking the way but you have already found the way.” He did not admonish or scold Karl. He did not tell him what course to take in his life. He did not try to influence his will. He left him completely free to make his own decision. Then he spoke in the mysterious language that Karl had heard before but could not identify. Before leaving the confessional, Karl kissed Padre Pio’s hand. To his great surprise, he noticed a beautiful perfume coming from his hand.

During his visit to the monastery of Our Lady of Grace, Karl felt blessed to be able to attend Padre Pio’s Mass. When Padre Pio came out of the sacristy, a great silence fell upon the congregation. At the Mass, Karl was seated close enough to the altar to see Padre Pio’s hands very clearly. Padre Pio had removed his gloves and Karl saw a red circular mark about the