



Collect:

Almighty ever-living God, who, by a singular grace, gave the Priest Saint Pius a share in the Cross of your Son and, by means of his ministry, renewed the wonders of your mercy, grant that through his intercession we may be united constantly to the sufferings of Christ, and so be brought happily to the glory of the resurrection. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.



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Padre Pio – an Easter Remembrance by the Friars



**His Apostolate lives on through his fellow friars
at the shrine where for more than 50 years he
celebrated Holy Mass and heard confessions.**

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by Fr. Ermelindo Di Capua

"Christ is risen, Alleluia, Alleluia!" The Church sings in its Easter liturgy.

"Christ is risen and we will rise with Him," the Apostle Paul tells us, "For since death came through a human being, the resurrection of the dead came also through a human being. For just as in Adam all die, so too in Christ shall all be brought to life."

At the hour when dawn broke on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene and the other Mary hurried to the tomb, where the Angel of the Lord told them: "Do not be afraid; you have come to look for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; He has risen, He is not here. Here is the place where they laid Him." The women went to His tomb in mourning and bringing with them spices to embalm Jesus' body and they saw in His tomb a young man clothed in white who said to them: "He has risen, He is not here. Go and tell Peter and the rest of His disciples that He is going before you into Galilee."

After the suffering of Good Friday they encounter the Risen Lord. We too, are to share in His victory. We too live thanks to the One who is Life. We too may arise to life, the life of grace, through the sacrament of reconciliation, where Jesus in His infinite mercy forgives us our sins and failures, cleansing us with the precious blood of His passion, death and resurrection. Jesus' Resurrection shatters the cycle of birth, life, death and burial. His tomb becomes the cradle of new life. But there can be no resurrection without dying.

At 2:30 a.m. on the 23 September 1968, Padre Pio died. Before gently given up his soul to the Lord he renewed his religious vows, received the last sacrament and with a voice that became always fainter repeated the names of Jesus and Mary over and over. He died in his armchair dressed in his capuchin habit with his rosary in his hands and at the same hour that he would normally begin preparing for Holy Mass.

Padre Pio's whole life was an endless climbing of Calvary, a continuous offering of his life on behalf of his brothers and sisters for their salvation. In 1916 he would say: "One thing alone remains dear to me and it is death."

He wanted to die because he feared losing Jesus. He wanted to die because he could not bear to see the Lord offended. He wanted to die so as to be united with Him forever. He would be crucified with Christ spiritually and physically through the gift of the stigmata as well as by his many terrible trials: his segregation from the faithful and his ministry, horrific calumnies, inquest into his life followed by restrictions, controversy in the media around his person and apostolic works, the relentless demands of the crowds, his various illnesses, his terrible temptations and God's silence in the dark night of his soul.

What St. Paul said of himself may be said of Padre Pio: "For ourselves, we are being hampered everywhere, yet still have room to breathe, are hard put to it, but never at a loss; persecution does not leave us un-befriended, nor crushing blows destroy us; we carry about continually in our bodies the dying state of Jesus, so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in our bodies too. Always we, alive as we are, are being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the living power of Jesus may be manifested in this mortal nature of ours. So death makes itself felt in us, and life in you."

His dying was a hymn of love on behalf of his brothers and sisters: "I have worked and I wish to continue to work, I have prayed and wish to continue to pray, I have kept watch and wish to continue to keep watch, I have shed tears and wish to always shed tears for my brothers and sisters in exile. I know that this is not much but it is all that I am able to do."

Padre Pio has died, but he lives on in the memories of countless pilgrims who come to his tomb to pray. His apostolate lives on through his fellow friars here in the shrine where for more than 50 years he celebrated Mass and heard confessions. He lives on in his hospital "The Home for the Relief of Suffering" and in his prayer groups. He lives on in the mystical body of the Church in which all its members both in this world and the next, endlessly sing:

"Blessing and honor and glory and power, through endless ages, to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

A very happy Easter to everyone!