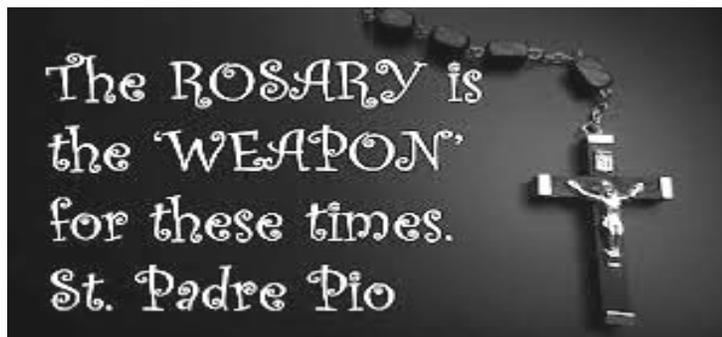


Indeed, if man does not create this silence, he will not be freed from his perplexities and risks existential ruin. This is a risk that God Himself takes with man, having made him free, and free to respond to Him.

If God had not made man free, He would not have been a God who is a Father, but a cold, detached, abstract Divinity, perhaps incapable of love: ultimately a loveless God who would not have interested anyone, not even Padre Pio.



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A Saint's Advice to a Complex Society in Crisis



*Jesus wants only
to sanctify your soul*

A Saint's Advice to a Complex Society in Crisis

by Michele Lamedica

The political philosopher, Giacomo Marramao in a collection of essays (The Crisis of Our Times) has affirmed that man today is undergoing a widespread economical, political and moral identity crisis. Man inhabits now a vast area of the globe that in appearance seems alike but that is in fact complex, and is imprisoned, because of his shortsighted vision, to the present. His vision of the past is unclear and his vision of the future uncertain. His vision lacks depth or perspective. For a number of years he has resigned himself to the shallow postmodern world of appearances and living only for the moment.

Man who by nature acts and reflects according to tried and tested experience (learning from the past, placing his hope in the future and discovering his limits) once he has given up his traditional tried and tested instruments finds himself suddenly alone and lost in a sort of no man's land, an interim world with a past that has been closed to him and a future still unopened.

Francesco Casella who teaches in the faculty of the Science of Education at the Salesian Pontifical University moreover, affirms that, despite all our hopes in globalization, he frequently sees an economical progress that is at odds with man's needs and those of the environment. Globalization should have facilitated the cooperation of the markets and production of the whole world and brought about improvements in every sphere of life, from the social, political and cultural and with repercussions in the regulatory mechanisms of the World System itself.

Instead a whole series of problems have arisen because of the needs of the developing nations, the separation of the world of finance from the real economy, the domination of economics and politics, the environmental degradation, and the leveling of all thinking and culture.

Globalization did not bring more democracy. It did not bring about a more human world of production placing the primacy of value on the person and not on the mere product, the profit and material well-being.

Globalization has brought on a series of difficulties and a general existential 'malaise' that affects the relations between everyone, particularly those between the different generations. In fact, the older generations who have little time other than seeing to the necessities of life and seeing no possible change for the better in the future have simply resigned themselves to pessimism. The younger generations blame their parents, their teachers and elders for this situation and accused them of not understanding their needs. All uphold their opinions loudly without effect, and at times turn to violence and even homicide. The daily newspapers verified this every day!

Perhaps it is necessary to admit that mankind, despite all the progress in culture and science over the centuries that has wholly excluded God and decreeing even "the death of God," cannot find in technological progress, those answers able to satisfy his thirst for meaning, and those profound spiritual needs that arise from the depth of his being and able to free him from his past and present perplexities.

Perhaps it is necessary to turn to the saints for the answers? In our case we can direct these questions to our saint, Padre Pio. He too must have assuredly found himself before difficulties not so different from those we face today. From his writings and apostolate we can draw advice worthy of attention.

Saint Pio's whole life was concerned with the problem of spiritual and material poverty and its resulting marginalization that so often can be the cause of violence, intolerance, and failure to communicate. He was concerned with the problems of exploitation, unemployment, underemployment, with all material and moral destitution. Saint Pio did not evangelize in an abstract, exhortative, moralistic and pietistic way. He knew that evangelizing meant bringing relief in a concrete way to man's existential difficulties. In the secrecy of the confessional he was able to restore hope and faith to souls. With his promotion and realization of his magnificent apostolic works such as the Prayer Groups and his hospital "The Home for the Relief of Suffering" that all can see, he demonstrates how a simple friar who prays, as he would define himself, can be an authentic and sincere beneficiary to mankind both spiritually and materially.

Padre Pio was able to do all this without making the Christian feel himself to be in any way a superior kind of citizen, since faith in God confers a spiritual distinction beyond all labels and classifications that are so often representative of little or nothing.

Ultimately we can say that Padre Pio and his apostolic works give us the answers to the difficulties and existential worries we face, because they all speak to us of the work of God – of Our Savior who listens to the needs of mankind. They speak to us of God never ceases to speak to man of today, but whose call remains unheard because mankind is too distracted.

Saint Pio seems to tell mankind surrounded by all the noise and clamor that God is waiting for him to become silent, to become once more humble and poor in spirit so that He can fill him with His mercy.