

"My heart is forgotten. Nobody thinks anymore of my love and I am continually grieved [...]."

"My son,' Jesus went on, 'I need victims to calm my Father's divine anger; renew the sacrifice of your whole self and do so without any reserve.'

"I have renewed the sacrifice of my life, dear Father, and if I experience some feeling of sadness, it is in the contemplation of the God of Sorrows.

"If you can, try to find souls who will offer themselves to the Lord as victim for sinners. Jesus will help you" (Letters-1-dated-12-3-1913).

His renewed offering was pleasing to the Lord who replied by increasing his pains and sufferings. On 30 May 1918, Padre Pio received one of the many mystical favors described as "substantial touches" and in reporting this to his spiritual director later he adds:

"While this was taking place I had time to offer myself entirely to the Lord for the same intention which the Holy Father had when He recommended to the whole Church to offer prayers and sacrifices. I had hardly finished doing so when I felt myself falling into this most harsh prison and heard the loud clang of the prison door as it closed behind me. Cruel shackles seemed to close on me and bind me tightly and I felt I was about to die. Since that moment I have felt myself in hell without even an instant's respite" (Letters-1-dated-27-7-1918).

The victim state is undoubtedly one of the constituent factors of Padre Pio's spirituality. His letters make it clear that on one hand the range of the victim's various constituent and integrative elements and, on the other hand, the faithfulness, fortitude, generosity and perseverance with which Padre Pio devoted himself to the fulfillment of such an important and demanding mission can be discovered in his letters.

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Padre Pio – His Mission Fulfillment of the Program of Co-Redemption



"Jesus, His beloved Mother, the little Angels and the others continue to encourage me, and they keep on repeating that a victim properly so-called must lose all his blood. To have such a tender Father by one's side in the battle is sweet and consoling."

Padre Pio – His Mission

Fulfillment of the Program of Co-Redemption

"Victim" is the deeply meaningful ascetico-mystical term which can serve as common denominator in the complex fulfillment of the task of co-redeemer entrusted by God to Padre Pio. From his very early years he was deeply conscious of the need to offer himself as a victim for souls and later on he tasted lavishly the painful consequences of such an offering, freely made and freely renewed.

In one of his first letters to Padre Benedetto, after mentioning an idea he has cherished for a long time, Padre Pio asks permission to renew the offering of himself as a victim:

"For some time past I have felt the need to offer myself to the Lord as a victim for poor sinners and for the souls in Purgatory.

"This desire has been growing continually in my heart so that it has now become what I would call a strong passion. I have in fact made this offering to the Lord several times, beseeching him to pour out upon me the punishments prepared for sinners and for the souls in a state of purgation, even increasing them a hundred fold for me, as long as He converts and saves sinners and quickly admits to paradise the souls in Purgatory, but I should now like to make this offering to the Lord in obedience to you. It seems to me that Jesus really wants this. I am sure that you will have no difficulty in granting me this permission" (Letters -1-dated-29-11-1910).

The permission was granted to him. His offering was not lightly made. Padre Pio had a very clear understanding of the victim state. He was well aware what the consequences of this offering would be, but he never turned back on the path he had undertaken:

"Did I not tell you that Jesus wants me to suffer without any consolation? Has He not asked me and chosen me to be one of His victims? Our most sweet Jesus has really made me understand the full significance of being a victim.

It is necessary, dear Father, to reach the *Consummatum est* (it is finished) and *In manus tuas* (into your hands)" (Letters-1-dated-5-11-1912).

Obviously in order to obtain to such a demanding, difficult and sublime ideal towards which he felt increasingly urged, Padre Pio did not trust his own powers, but neither did he doubt the help which would make him invincible. He readily acknowledges this:

"Jesus, His beloved Mother, the little Angel and the others continue to encourage me, and they keep on repeating that a victim properly so-called must lose all his blood. To have such a tender Father by one's side in the battle is sweet and consoling" (Letters-1-dated-18-11-1912).

In another letter he adds:

"My soul must endure a continual combat. I see no other way out than to abandon myself in the arms of Jesus where He often allows me to fall asleep. Blessed sleep! Happy refreshment for the soul in the struggles it endures" (Letters-1-dated-10-7-1914).

Being a victim was no burden to him, but rather a source of unspeakable joy: "O what a beautiful thing it is to become a victim of love," he confides to Padre Agostino (Letters-1-dated-26-8-1912). Not only did he frequently renew the sacrifice of his life, but his zeal urged him to increase the number of generous souls who would offer the same homage to the Lord for the benefit of their fellows. In this he was seconding the desire expressed to him by Jesus:

"Listen, my dear Father, to the justified complaints of our most sweet Jesus: 'With what ingratitude is my love for men repaid [...].