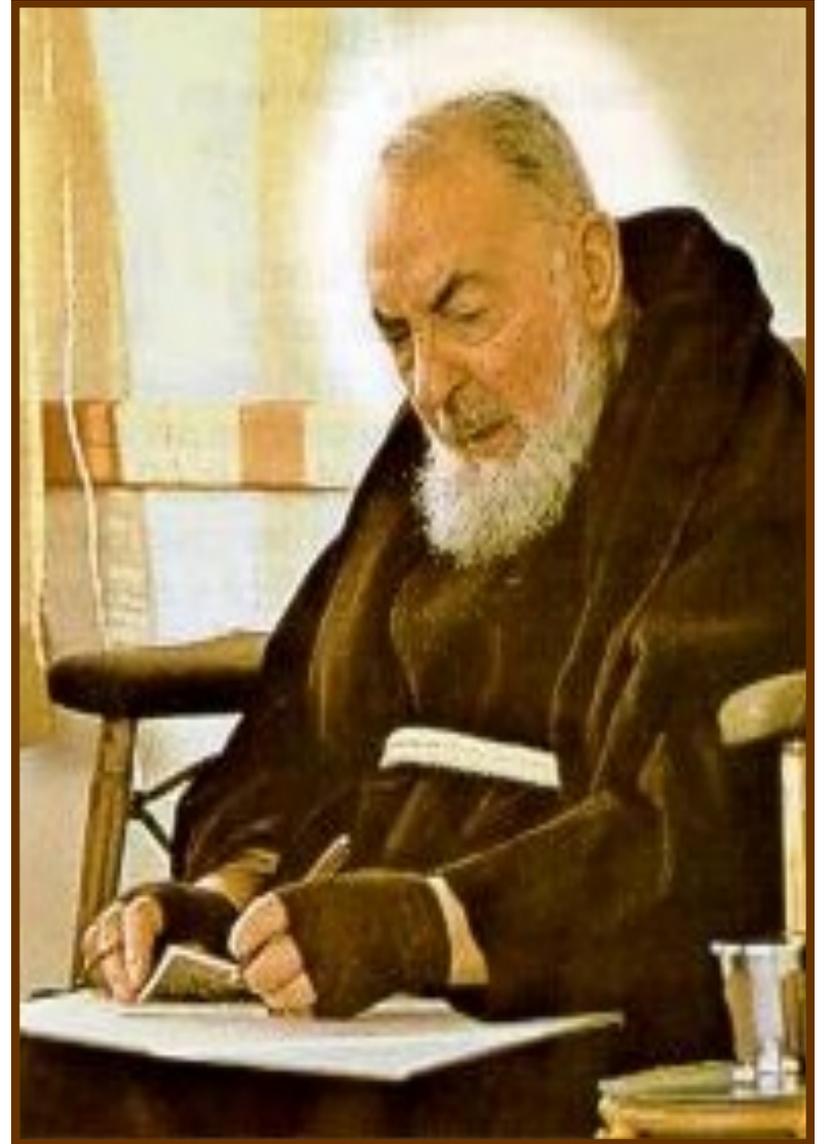


**ALWAYS LIVE UNDER THE EYES OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
AND YOU WILL WALK UNHARMED THROUGH EVIL PASTURES.**

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Letter of Padre Pio: REIGNING WITH CHRIST



Letter of Padre Pio: REIGNING WITH CHRIST

In letter seven, dated 13 May 1914, Raffaelina Cerase wrote to Padre Pio that she had delayed in responding with him because she wanted to give him some good news. She also tells Padre Pio that Jesus permits her to tell him of the many conflicts and tears, failings and discouragement, miseries and deep darkness. *"At the foot of this mournful picture of my life I wish I could add just two words: love and sacrifice. Instead, I am very far from this. The Crib, Calvary and the Tabernacle show me the way; they urge and attract me to the true life, but I am deaf, blind, wicked, in I resist. When shall I make up my mind?"*

She goes on to relate some good news on the family front and a reconciliation with her brother Matteo. She continues to worry about her sister Giovina about approaching the Eucharistic table more often and how Raffaelina cares deeply for her and that her sister is the only holy affection that Jesus has left her on this earth. Raffaelina also wants to know how to make reparation, expiate and atone for both herself and for her sister.

Since Padre Pio refuses all expression of thanks she expresses how extremely good he is who treats her with such very great charity and indulgence and that she wishes to thank Jesus for it through him. Raffaelina also mentions Padre Pio's seraphic patience in her writings to him. She also goes on and speaks about the imperfect meditations of mind and how Padre Pio can clarify them with Jesus. Realizing that she is a presumptuous and indiscreet person she asks for the confidence to be able to speak to her good Father, the confidence of a stubborn and wicked patient towards her compassionate and charitable physician. She again expresses her desire for prayers for her sister, friends and relatives, which Padre Pio is well aware of. Finally she expresses her desire to see and hear the Creator alone.

The response Raffaelina receives from Padre Pio is a letter dated 19 May 1914. In the letter Padre Pio reveals the following:

Beloved daughter of Jesus Christ,

May Jesus and Mary be always in your heart and may they make you holy.

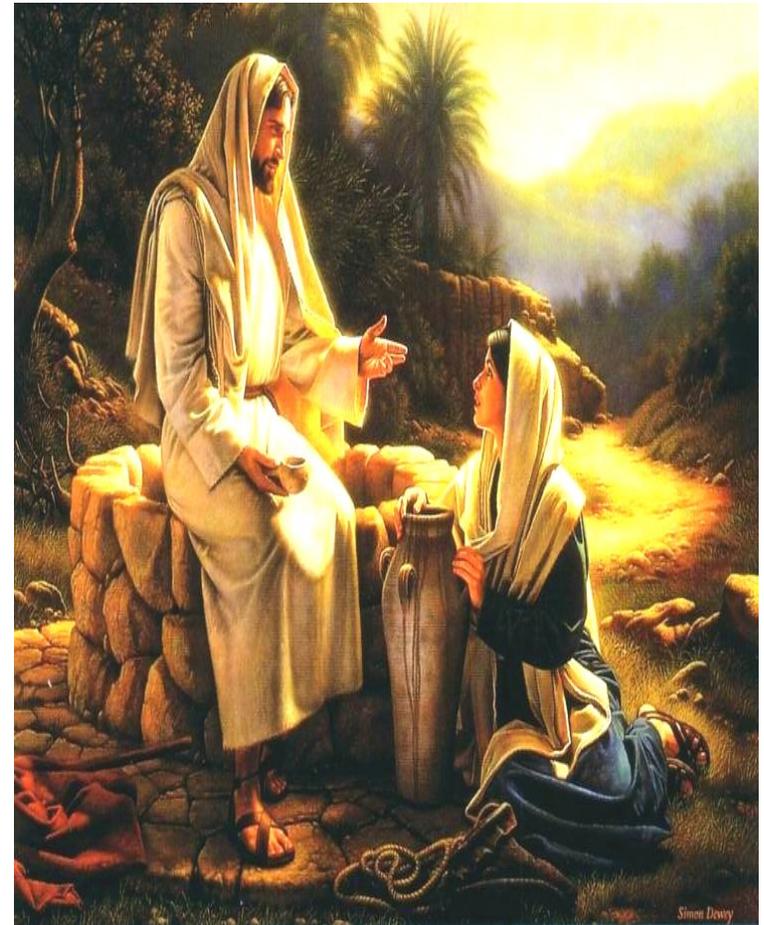
By repeated blows of the efficacious chisel and by diligent polishing the divine Artist prepares the blocks of stone which are intended to form part of the divine edifice. Thus sings our most tender mother, the holy Catholic Church, in the hymn of the Office for the Dedication of a Church (Hymn at Vespers in the old Divine Office), and this is very true.

I am obliged to end here for reasons which are well know to you.

May God bless you along with your sister and may He calm your sufferings. May He turn His merciful eyes upon you and console you by His compassion.

Fra Pio, Capuchin

Reminder: The contents of this letter is specific between Raffaelina Cerase and Padre Pio. Someone else having similar problems may receive different answers from Padre Pio.



“Calm yourself, and rejoice,
because in all this it is the Lord who is acting within you.”
Padre Pio

lucky, though, to have been made worthy through no merit of her own to share the Cross of the One who for pure love for us immolated Himself to the eternal Father.

I never cease to present to Jesus all those persons and all the needs which you have so much at heart.

You complain that I don't answer all your questions and you chide me gently on this account. All I can do is ask your pardon and beg you not to be angry with me, for I am not to blame. For some time past I have been suffering from forgetfulness, despite all my good intentions to satisfy every demand made on me. I am told that this is a very special grace of the heavenly Father, but is this a fact? (See Letters, Vol. 1, No. 169).

The Lord only allows me to recall those persons and things He wants me to remember. In point of fact, on several occasions our merciful Lord has suggested to me people whom I have never known or even heard of, for the sole purpose of having me present them to Him and intercede for them, and in this case He never fails to answer my poor feeble prayers. (See Padre Pio's letter to Padre Benedetto, from Pietrelcina on 20 December 1913: Letters, Vol. 169; *ibid.*, No. 250). On the other hand, when Jesus doesn't want to answer me, He makes me actually forget to pray for those persons for whom I had firmly decided and intended to pray for.

This forgetfulness frequently extends even to the things most necessary to our human nature, such as eating, drinking and the like. I thank divine Providence in the meantime that I have never been led to forget the obligatory duties of my state.

Judge for yourself, now, if I am guilty or worthy of your compassion. I exhort you, however, when you do not receive a reply to some question, to be so good as to remind me the second and third time, without any human respect. If in such cases you do not receive satisfaction, then adore the divine judgment and do not doubt that if He allows you to remain in the dark on these matters it is for your own good. He will not allow any good thought of yours to go unrewarded.

I cannot reply adequately to the question you state as follows: "I don't know why it is that almost invariably in my brief and imperfect meditations my mind turns on what I must say to Jesus through you," because I don't quite understand your question. If possible, please explain yourself more fully. For the moment it is enough for you to know that in this I don't see the slightest shadow of anything wrong.

For several days past I feel as if my soul were tightly bound by an iron band. Pray, therefore, to the most bountiful God to give me the strength to conform meritoriously to this burdensome desire of his. I shall be eternally grateful to you if you add to these prayers the three novenas to Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary of Pompeii with the Communions you receive in the meantime, all according to my intentions, to obtain a grace which I await from the Lord's goodness, a grace which to me seems to be for the glory of Jesus. However, if all this is seriously inconvenient for you, just dispense yourself from it.

Every soul intended for eternal glory can very well be considered a stone destined for the erection of the eternal edifice.

The soul that is destined to reign with Jesus Christ in eternal glory, then, must be remodeled by the blows of hammer and chisel. But what are these blows of hammer and chisel by which the divine Artist prepares the stone, that is to say, the chosen soul? Dear sister, these strokes of the chisel are the shadows, fears, temptations, spiritual torments and agitation, with a dash of desolation and even of physical pain.

Thank the infinite mercy of the eternal Father, then, for treating your soul in this way, for it is destined to be saved. What I say is, why not rejoice at this loving treatment by the best of all fathers? Open your heart to this heavenly Physician of souls and abandon yourself with complete confidence in His most holy embrace. He is treating you as one chosen to follow Jesus closely up the Hill of Calvary and I observe with joy the keenest emotion this action of grace in you. Be quite sure that all that is going on within your soul is decreed by the Lord and for this reason you must not be afraid of acting wrongly, in a word, of offending God.

Let it suffice for you to know that in all this you are by no means offending the Lord and that, on the contrary, He is glorified all the more by it. If this most tender Spouse hides from your soul, it is not because He intends to punish your infidelity, as you imagine, but because He wants to test more and more your faith and steadfastness and at the same time to purify you of certain little attachments which to the eyes of the flesh do not appear as such. I am speaking here of those affections and faults from which not even the righteous are exempt, for it is written in the holy pages that *a righteous man falls seven times*. (Prov 24:16).

Believe me, if I did not see you so disconsolate, I should be less satisfied, for I should see the Lord bestowing less jewels on you. Hold firm, then, and banish as temptations all doubts on the subject, for they are really temptations. Do this in the name of Jesus on whose behalf I tell you that in all these spiritual combats you are not offending God, you are not committing sin and your soul derives much profit from it all.

Once more, get rid of all those doubts which are clouding the heavens of your soul, such as the idea that you are deaf to the divine call, that you resist his tender invitations, that you yourself are the only obstacle in the way of perfection on the part of your sister, for this does not come from the good spirit but consists in the devil's cunning attempts to turn you aside from your purpose, or at least to make you pause in your progress towards perfection and lose heart.

I hope I have said enough on the subject and that you will heed what I say. I urge you to pray continually to the heavenly Father that He may always keep you close to His divine Heart, that He may make you hear His loving voice more and more clearly and lead you to correspond with increasing gratitude. Ask Jesus with boundless confidence, like the bride in the Song of Solomon, to draw you after Him and let you smell the fragrance of His anointing oils (Cf. Song 1: 3-4), so that you may follow swiftly with all the faculties of your soul and body wherever He goes. (Cf. Rev 14:4).

I exhort you once more to abide steadfastly by all that I have told you up to the present, to believe that this is how the matter stands, namely, that the raft which conveys us to the haven of salvation, the divine weapon which leads to victory, consists in full and unquestioning submission of our own judgment to the injunctions of the one to whom is entrusted the task of steering us through the shadows, perplexities and battles of life. Holy Scripture itself confirms this with infallible authority: *The obedient man will speak of victory.* (Prov 21: 28 [Latin Vulgate]).

If Jesus manifests Himself, thank Him and if He remains hidden, thank Him just the same: all is a trick of love. I earnestly hope that you will come to breathe your last with Jesus on the Cross and with Him softly exclaim: *It is finished.* (Jn 19: 30).

Your desire to feel the Creator alone in all things and the tedium you experience in approaching and dealing with creatures is a most singular grace of the divine mercy which is not granted to all poor wayfarers. Make sure, then, that you know how to profit by it and thank God for it. Don't listen to what your imagination tells you, for it is upset and powerfully attacked by our enemy, who wants you to consider your life unproductive of good. This is merely a clever plot contrived by the devil. The grace of Jesus, my dear, makes you only too watchful with regard to what is good. You are trying to measure, understand, feel and touch this love you have for God, but, my dear sister, you must accept as certain that the more a soul loves God the less it feels this love.

The thing seems too strange and impossible in the case of transient love for creatures in this poor world, but when it is a case of love for the Spouse of the soul, things are very different. I am not able to explain this truth very clearly, but you can take it as certain that the matter is as I have said. God is incomprehensible and inaccessible; hence the more a soul penetrates into the love of this Supreme Good, the more the sentiment of love towards Him, which is beyond the soul's knowledge, seems to diminish, until the poor soul considers that it no longer loves Him at all.

In point of fact, in certain instances it seems to the soul that this is really the case, but the events prove the very opposite. That continual fear of losing one's God, that holy circumspection which makes one look carefully where to place one's feet so as not to stumble, that courage in facing the assaults of the enemy, that resignation to God's will in all life's adversities, that ardent desire to see God's kingdom established in one's own heart and in the hearts of others, are the clearest proof of the soul's love for the Supreme Good.

No, your love is not indolent, nor is it sterile. You ought rather to say that you love your heavenly Bridegroom, but that you want that love to grow continually.

The divine Master has left us in writing the injunction to recognize as our brethren those only who do the will of His Father. (Cf. Mt 12: 50). Well, then, do you not desire and make every effort to conform at all times to the divine will? Would you not give your life a thousand times rather than resolve to go against God's will? You are quite sure of this and you feel it in your heart. Let this, then, be the touchstone by which you recognize and convince yourself that your life is well spent.

Oh, how far you are from that which your feelings would lead you to believe! You love this most tender Spouse, but this seems very little to you because you desire to love with a perfect and consummate love. To us wretched and unfortunate mortals this love, at least in its fullness, is only granted in the next life. O wretched condition of our human nature! May our heavenly Spouse break through this thinnest of thin veils which separates us from Him and grant us at last that perfect love; otherwise our life is no longer life, our illness incurable and our sojourn here below a most bitter and prolonged agony.

You have interpreted too rigorously the sentiments I expressed when I wrote to you about your sister. I never once doubted that her soul is pleasing to the Lord. All I said was that I disapproved of her conduct with regard to the Eucharistic table. In these sad times when so many souls are turning away from God, I cannot convince myself that anyone can live the true spiritual life without the food of the strong. In these days in which we are continually surrounded by people who harbor hatred for God in their hearts and who blaspheme continually, the sure means of remaining immune from this pestilential disease is to strengthen ourselves with the Eucharistic food.

Now, to remain immune from sin and make progress on the path to perfection is not possible for those who remain for months on end without partaking abundantly of the immaculate Flesh of the divine Lamb. I do not know what others think about this, but to me it is very clear that in the circumstances in which we live at present, for those who limit themselves to receiving Communion once or twice in the year, it is illusory to want to convince themselves that they can take even one step towards perfection.

I cannot tell you how distressed I am about your sister's health and only the Lord knows how much I pray for her spiritual rather than her corporal well-being. May my feeble but constant prayers be acceptable to the One who rules over and governs all things, for our welfare and his glory. She is