

REGIONAL FORMATION: SUMMER STUDY OF FRANCISCAN SAINTS

ST. PADRE PIO OF PIETRELCINA



Article by Robert Antill OFS

St. Padre Pio Fraternity (emerging)

Cape Girardeau, MO

ST. PADRE PIO OF PIETRELCINA

My name is Robert (Bob) Antill and I am a 15 year convert, following a miraculous, Eucharistic healing of a cancerous tumor (esophageal) , to the Roman Catholic Church. I reside in Cape Girardeau, MO with my wife of 43 years. I am retired from St. Francis Healthcare System (volunteer) for 14 years as a Eucharistic Minister with the Pastoral Care Department. Julie is a

Migrant English Language Learner Instructional Specialist at Southeast Missouri State University. She has been in Education since 1989. We have two grown sons and four grandchildren, all residing in Cape Girardeau, MO. "We are Blessed!"

Francesco Forgione, born to Grazio Mario Forgione and Maria Giuseppa Di Nunzio on May 25, 1887, in the town of Pietrelcina, of the province of Benevento, the Southern Italian region of Campania. Privately tutored before his acceptance to the novitiate of Capuchin Friars, at 15 years of age, he completed his theological studies, medically challenged and in poor health. He was ordained a priest in 1910, by the grace of the Lord!

On September 20, 1918, the wounds of our Lord's passion (stigmata), graced Padre Pio's body as he became the only ordained priest in the history of the Catholic Church to receive such a gift! In comparison, our beloved Saint Francis of Assisi, also was the recipient of the stigmata. However, he was a deacon of the Roman Catholic Church, not ordained as a priest.

For Padre Pio's sanctity, his graciousness, piety, and love for all others; immersed in union with the Triune God, he was inebriated with many gifts of the Holy Spirit. Prayer, penance, compassion, and sacrifice! His life was marked by the many long hours he spent as a priest, celebrating the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist with profound reverence and unending devotion, at the Friary in San Giovanni Rotondo in Italy, where he lived from 1916 until his death on September 23, 1968.

As St. Padre Pio's life illuminated the Real Presence of Christ within himself, and shared with all others the Divine Mercy in his heart, this divinely inspired man of God, and his namesake, has been given to our emerging Fraternity, as an inspiration, and another image to aspire to become, in our prayers and our actions, following St. Francis of Assisi to Jesus Christ, the Risen Lord!