

Padre Pio Prayer Groups

National Office
St. Francis of Assisi Friary
1901 Prior Road
Wilmington, Delaware 19809

tel: (302) 798-1454 fax: (302) 798-3360 website: pppg.org email: pppgusa@gmail.com

July 2014

Dear Spiritual Children and Friends of Padre Pio,

The Lord grant you his peace!

How many of us have become so accustomed to Mass, to the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in our churches and chapels, to our “going to Mass”, that we treat these sacred places and actions as somewhat of a larger area or common activity to meet and talk with one another until Mass or the ceremonies begin. At times some do not even pause in their “necessary” interchanges with one another, although Mass has begun or others are in silent prayer. How often have we have we been present when even the conversations and comments at those moments were anything but edifying. The “Jesus of the Synagogue” and the “Jesus of the Temple” was also the “Jesus of the Marketplace”. Here He encountered many whom He graced with His words and healing presence and His compassionate touch. Wherever He was, His very presence demanded respect and awe ... not fear, but a grateful and respectful response that transformed many into disciple/companions on His preaching/teaching journeys. They hung onto His every word and sought to listen to and live all that the “Word” had to say. Nevertheless, many among them failed to recognize Him for Who He is, many left when challenged with the Eucharist, and many who had been followers cried for His crucifixion. *Familiarity breeds contempt.* Have we become so “accustomed” to Jesus that we live as though He were no longer among us?!

Coincidences can be blessed moments when they offer us unexpected opportunities to reflect on values we may have forgotten or perhaps considered no longer necessary or meaningful. Reflecting on what theme to offer this month for consideration to my sisters and brothers of the Padre Pio Prayer Groups, in reading the letters of Padre Pio for some inspiration, this simple yet beautiful letter of Padre Pio to Annita Rodote came to the fore. It is here presented in its entirety. Please read it and reflect upon it as a reminder of the awesomeness of the great gift we have in the Eucharist, and the Sacred Liturgy of the Mass in which we participate in the Mystery of our Salvation in the Passion-Death-Resurrection of Christ and that our Father and Founder Padre Pio of Pietrelcina loved and lived with total and selfless surrender to His Eucharistic Lord.

A Letter from St. Padre Pio to Annita Rodote, Pietrelcina, July 25, 1915

Beloved daughter of Jesus,

May Jesus and our Mother always smile on your soul, obtaining for it, from Her most holy Son, all the heavenly charisms!

I am writing to you for two reasons: to answer some more questions from your last letter, and to wish

you a very happy name-day in the most sweet Jesus, full of all the most special heavenly graces. Oh! If Jesus granted my prayers for you or, better still, if only my prayers were worthy of being granted by Jesus! However, I increase them a hundredfold for your consolation and salvation, begging Jesus to grant them, not for me but through the heart of his paternal goodness and infinite mercy.

In order to avoid irreverence and imperfections in the house of God, in church - which the divine Master calls the house of prayer - I exhort you in the Lord to practice the following.

Enter the church in silence and with great respect, considering yourself unworthy to appear before the Lord's Majesty. Amongst other pious considerations, remember that our soul is the temple of God and, as such, we must keep it pure and spotless before God and his angels. Let us blush for having given access to the devil and his snares many times (with his enticements to the world, his pomp, his calling to the flesh) by not being able to keep our hearts pure and our bodies chaste; for having allowed our enemies to insinuate themselves into our hearts, thus desecrating the temple of God which we became through holy Baptism.

Then take holy water and make the sign of the cross carefully and slowly.

As soon as you are before God in the Blessed Sacrament, devoutly genuflect. Once you have found your place, kneel down and render the tribute of your presence and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Confide all your needs to him along with those of others. Speak to him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart and give him complete freedom to work in you as he thinks best.

When assisting at Holy Mass and the sacred functions, be very composed when standing up, kneeling down, and sitting, and carry out every religious act with the greatest devotion. Be modest in your glances; don't turn your head here and there to see who enters and leaves. Don't laugh, out of reverence for this holy place and also out of respect for those who are near you. Try not to speak to

anybody, except when charity or strict necessity requests this.

If you pray with others, say the words of the prayer distinctly, observe the pauses well and never hurry.

In short, behave in such a way that all present are edified by it and, through you, are urged to glorify and love the heavenly Father.

On leaving the church, you should be recollected and calm. Firstly take your leave of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; ask his forgiveness for the shortcomings committed in his divine presence and do not leave him without asking for and having received his paternal blessing.

Once you are outside the church, be as every follower of the Nazarene should be. Above all, be extremely modest in everything, as this is the virtue which, more than any other, reveals the affections of the heart. Nothing represents an object more faithfully or clearly than a mirror. In the same way, nothing more widely represents the good or bad qualities of a soul than the greater or lesser regulation of the exterior, as when one appears more or less modest. You must be modest in speech, modest in laughter, modest in your bearing, modest in walking. All this must be practiced, not out of vanity in order to display one's self, nor out of hypocrisy in order to appear to be good to the eyes of others, but rather, for the internal virtue of modesty, which regulates the external workings of the body.

Therefore, be humble of heart, circumspect in words, prudent in your resolutions. Always be sparing in your speech, assiduous in good reading, attentive in your work, modest in your conversation. Don't be disgusting to anybody but be benevolent towards all and respectful towards your elders. May any sinister glance be far from you, may no daring word escape your lips, may you never carry out any immodest or somewhat free action; never a rather free action or a petulant tone of voice.

In short let your whole exterior be a vivid image of the composure of your soul.

Always keep the modesty of the divine Master before your eyes, as an example; this Master who, according to the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians, placing the modesty of Jesus Christ on an equal footing with meekness, which was his one particular virtue and almost his characteristic: "Now I Paul myself beseech you, by the mildness and modesty of Christ" (2 Cor. 10:1), and according to such a perfect model reform all your external operations, which should be faithful reflections revealing the affections of your interior.

Never forget this divine model, Annita. Try to see a certain lovable majesty in his presence, a certain pleasant authority in his manner of speaking, a certain pleasant dignity in walking, in contemplating, speaking, conversing; a certain sweet serenity of face. Imagine that extremely composed and sweet expression with which he drew the crowds, making them leave cities and castles, leading them to the mountains, the forests, to the solitude and deserted beaches of the sea, totally forgetting food, drink and their domestic duties.

Thus let us try to imitate, as far as we possibly can, such modest and dignified actions. And let us do our utmost to be, as far as possible, similar to him on this earth, in order that we might be more perfect and more similar to him for the whole of eternity in the heavenly Jerusalem.

I end here as I am unable to continue, recommending that you never forget me before Jesus, especially during these days of extreme affliction for me. I expect the same charity from the excellent Francesca to whom you will have the kindness to give, in my name, assurances of my extreme interest in seeing her grow always more in divine love. I hope she will do me the charity of making a novena of Communions for my intentions.

Don't worry if you are unable to answer my letter for the moment. I know everything so don't worry.

I take my leave of you in the holy kiss of the Lord. I am always your servant.

Fra Pio, Capuchin

The organizational character of our Association tends to get us all involved in "apostolic" endeavors. This is all well and good. **God's Providence** is concretized through us when we seek to assist those in need. Padre Pio made it very clear that we are to be aware of those who are in need and assist as best we can where and when we are able. The *Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza* is a prime example of this concern of Padre Pio for all who are needy-in this case, his concern for the sick and infirm. **God's Will** is seen and concretized in those who recognize the circumstances of their lives as a way to live in the Divine Presence every moment. They accept what cannot be reasonably changed. They accept these "circumstances" as God's indirect, or maybe even "direct", way God is asking them to accept the moment and trust in Him. **God's Mercy** is concretized in those who are able to forgive without expecting retribution to the offender. They recognize the other as companion on the journey of life subject to the same challenges and pitfalls as they, needy as they of God's never ending mercy. There are myriad ways for us to make visible God's will and work.

BUT, God's Love is first and foremost concretized for all humanity in **His Divine Presence in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the Altar, the Most Holy Eucharist**. God's Love is found especially in that Divine Action where Jesus is re-presented in His Saving Passion-Death-Resurrection during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy of the Mass. At that time heaven and earth are united as one in a bond more intimate than that of husband and wife. God, in His "condescension of compassion" as Saint Leo the Great refers to the Incarnation of Jesus in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, re-lives with us, in us, for us, and even through us the great moment and grace of Redemption in the saving Body, Blood of the Son of God offered once and forever on the Altar of the Cross. The Eucharist is that Same Body of Christ, still with us mystically, sacramentally and really. The Eucharist is the same Jesus Who is also before the Father. In His Ascension He raised our redeemed human nature to a glory we all share in hope in time, as we journey through life to achieve the goal of sharing the Life fully and totally with Him for eternity.

As Spiritual Children of Padre Pio how can we not take to heart the words of our Father and Founder. The words he wrote to Annita Rodote can be considered as written to each one of us. He reminds us that all the other “concretizations” of God’s attributes are beautiful, wonderful, and even necessary, but the greatest and most fundamental, that makes all the others worthwhile and effective, is that of God’s Love in the Eucharist. Let us remember the words of the simple letter of Padre Pio to Annita and strive to live his encouragements more profoundly and personally. When Jesus becomes “truly real” for us in the Eucharist, we cannot help but live, and move, and have our being in Him, especially when we are before Him and prepare to enter and participate in the Mystery of His Saving Redemptive Love. Our committed and continued loving response to the Extravagant and Limitless Love of God in the Eucharist will undoubtedly affect our hearts and souls and consequently transform our lives. Why would anyone hesitate making the **Eucharist the Center of Life** rather than a haphazard devotion!?

The Prayer Groups were established to set in motion a “revolution” ... that is, a “**revolution of love**” through prayer and goodness. This “revolution” is not a violent one from without. It does not propose to overthrow political systems, convert different religious expressions, answer social issues and agendas. This “Revolution of Love”, through the Eucharist, seeks to affect substantial transformations in individuals and communities (made up of personally committed individuals) by the power of prayer and good example, strengthened by the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist Who is the Center of one’s life. This may sound like Utopia in our modern world, but how many are still looking, hungering “for something more”. They hunger for something that can fill them with a fullness of life, a liberating freedom, an immense and sincere joy of living. Many forget so often that it is not “something” but “Someone” Who can and will fulfill all our yearning. We can be God’s instruments of peace and transformation, and help others find the “Someone” they are really seeking, if we take our role seriously as Spiritual Children of Padre Pio. Let us enter the “Eucharistic Revolution” of Jesus’ acceptance of the Father’s Will as we seek to become “Eucharist” with Jesus, even to the Cross if necessary. Thus all who see us will see Jesus and come to understand the power of the “Revolution of Love” that God set in motion when the Virgin of Nazareth, our Heavenly Mother Mary, said “Yes” to give God a body, Who is Jesus the Christ. Do not be afraid to let go! It is Jesus we will surrender to in the Eucharist. My sisters and brothers, *let us begin, for up to now we have done so little* (Words of St. Francis to his friars).

Wishing you and your loved ones a great summer, I pray that the Lord bless you; Our Lady guide, guard, and protect you; and Padre Pio watch each one of you, his Spiritual Children, with loving care.

Peace and Blessings
Fr. Francis A. Sariego, O.F.M. Cap.
National Co-ordinator