

# Padre Pio Prayer Groups

National Office

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Dear Spiritual Children and Friends of Padre Pio,

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The Risen Christ bless you with His peace!  
and lead you through the mystery of His Passion and Death  
to the joy of His Resurrection and our renewed Life in Jesus!

The heart of Easter is the quiet but earth-shaking truth that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and the heart of Padre Pio's life is that he lived as if that truth were happening every moment. When you place these two realities side by side—the dawn of the Resurrection and the witness of a modern saint—you begin to see how God continues to break into human history, not only in Scripture but in the lives of those who surrender themselves completely to Him. And when we weave in the stories, the small human moments, the unexpected encounters that reveal grace at work, the mystery becomes even more alive.

Easter begins in darkness. The disciples were not expecting a miracle; they were grieving. Mary Magdalene walked to the tomb before sunrise, carrying spices, her heart heavy with sorrow. One can imagine her stumbling on the uneven path, wiping tears from her face, whispering prayers that felt unanswered. There is an old tradition that says Mary paused at one point, leaned against a rock, and whispered, "Lord, I don't understand." That moment is familiar to anyone who has ever felt abandoned or confused. Yet it was precisely in that darkness that God was preparing the greatest surprise in history.

When Mary reached the tomb and found it empty, she didn't rejoice immediately. She panicked. She thought someone had taken the body. It wasn't until Jesus spoke her name—"Mary"—that she recognized Him. There is something profoundly personal about that moment. The Resurrection is not just a cosmic event; it is an intimate encounter. Jesus rises not only to conquer death but to call each of us by name. Many years later, Padre Pio would say that God speaks most clearly in the silence of the heart, and that if we listen, we will hear Him calling us too.

The disciples on the road to Emmaus also failed to recognize Jesus at first. They walked with Him for miles, pouring out their disappointment and confusion. Jesus listened patiently, then He opened the Scriptures to them. But they still didn't see Him until He broke bread. There is a story told by a pilgrim who visited Padre Pio and said that during Mass, at the moment of consecration, he felt as if the veil between heaven and earth had been torn open. He said, "It was as if Christ Himself was breaking the bread." That is the Emmaus moment repeated in our time. The risen Christ continues to reveal Himself in the Eucharist, and Padre Pio lived that reality with every fiber of his being.

One of the most striking connections between Easter and our beloved Padre Pio is the presence of wounds. The risen Christ appears to the apostles with His wounds still visible. He invites Thomas to touch them, not to shame him but to strengthen his faith. Padre Pio bore those same wounds—the

stigmata—for fifty years. They were painful, bleeding, and at times humiliating. But he never complained. He once told a spiritual daughter, “The wounds are my joy, because they unite me to Jesus.” There is an anecdote of a doctor who examined Padre Pio’s wounds and left the room trembling. He said, “These are not the wounds of a sick man. These are the wounds of a crucified man.” The resurrection does not erase the cross; it transforms it. Padre Pio’s life is a living commentary on that truth.

Then there is the Easter moment when Jesus appears to the apostles in the locked room. They were hiding in fear, ashamed of having abandoned Him. Jesus does not scold them. He says, “Peace be with you.” That peace is not the absence of problems but the presence of Christ. Padre Pio carried that same peace. The story is told of a soldier who visited Padre Pio during World War II. The man was tormented by guilt and fear. Padre Pio looked at him with such tenderness that the soldier burst into tears. After confession, Padre Pio placed his hand on the man’s head and said, “Go in peace. Jesus has already gone ahead of you.” The man later said that those words gave him the courage to return to the battlefield and eventually to rebuild his life after the war.

The Resurrection sends the disciples out into the world. They go from being frightened followers to bold witnesses. We can see something similar happen around Padre Pio. People came to him from every corner of the world—peasants, doctors, atheists, politicians, mothers, soldiers, children. Many arrived skeptical or broken. Many left transformed. One woman came to him after losing her son and said she no longer believed in God. Padre Pio listened quietly, then he said, “Your son is closer to God than you are. Ask him to help you.” She later testified that those words reopened her heart to faith. The Risen Christ works through His saints to bring new life where there is despair.

Padre Pio’s confessional was a place of Resurrection. He sometimes spent fifteen hours a day hearing confessions. People would wait for days just to speak with him. There is a famous story of a man who had not been to confession in decades. He went to Padre Pio out of curiosity, not repentance. Before the man could speak, Padre Pio said, “You left your wife alone for many years. You broke her heart. Why?” The man was stunned. He had never told anyone about that. He began to weep and confessed everything. Later he said, “I walked into that confessional dead. I walked out alive.” That is Easter. That is the power of the Resurrection working through a humble friar.

Padre Pio had a deep love for the suffering. He founded the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, the Home for the Relief of Suffering, a hospital that combined medical excellence with spiritual care. He once said that the sick are “the living image of Christ.” There is a story of a young boy who was dying of cancer. His mother brought him to Padre Pio, hoping for a miracle. Padre Pio held the boy gently, prayed over him, and whispered something in his ear. The boy died a few days later, but his mother said he died with a smile. She later told friends, “Padre Pio didn’t heal his body, but he healed his soul.” The Resurrection does not always remove suffering, but it transforms it with hope.

One of the most beautiful anecdotes about Padre Pio involves a man who doubted the Resurrection. He told Padre Pio, “I believe Jesus was a good man, but rising from the dead? That is too much.” Padre Pio looked at him and said, “If the sun can rise every morning, why can’t the One who made the sun rise once for all eternity?” The man later said that those words stayed with him for years until he finally returned to faith. Sometimes a simple image can open the heart to grace.

Easter is also about joy—deep, quiet, unshakeable joy. Padre Pio, despite his suffering, had a surprising sense of humor. One day a woman asked him, “Padre, will I go to heaven?” He replied, “With God’s help, yes. But don’t run too fast—you might get there before me!” His joy was not superficial; it flowed from the certainty that Christ had conquered death. That same joy is what Easter invites us to receive.

The Resurrection calls each of us to rise from our own tombs—fear, sin, despair, resentment, doubt. Padre Pio often told people, “Begin again. Every day, begin again.” That is the Easter message in simple words. There is a story of a man who confessed the same sin over and over. He said, “Padre, I am tired of falling.” Padre Pio answered, “God is not tired of lifting you.” That is Resurrection grace.

When we place Easter and Padre Pio side by side, we see a single truth shining through: Christ is alive, and He continues to act in the world. The empty tomb is not just a historical memory; it is a present reality. The wounds of Christ are not just symbols; they are sources of healing. The peace of Christ is not just a greeting; it is a gift. And the mission of Christ is not just for the apostles; it is for us.

This simple letter for Easter was a delight to write. The simplicity of truth revealed through the events of life and the beauty of being a part of a history that turns into a mystery that fills with unbelievable joy and serenity. All the anecdotes between scriptural history and Padre Pio help us to place ourselves with the early followers and with our beloved Padre who shows us, through his woundedness in Christ, the wonder, magnificence, tremendous love of God. God loves us “to death” so that we might rediscover the joy of life, His Life.

As you sit with these stories and reflections, it may help to ask yourself where might I fit into the mystery and the stories above. What speaks most personally to you—the empty tomb, the wounds, the peace, the call, or the quiet joy that comes from knowing Christ is truly risen.

***Alleluia! Christ is Risen! Alleluia! Christ is Truly Risen! Alleluia!***

You and your loved ones are in my prayers and Masses always. During the great celebrations of our Faith, your presence and intentions are intensified that Padre Pio’s wounds may help us to bear ours in light of the Resurrection of the Son, the Son of God, Who shatters the darkness and leads us into the brilliance of His eternal Light. We need not fear the dark of night because...

***You can’t hold back the Dawn!  
Christ, our Light has Risen!  
Alleluia!***

Peace and Blessings for a Happy Easter  
Fr. Francis A. Sariago, OFM Cap  
National Coordinator