

## PADRE PIO – NOT A TRUE SAINT

**"In the calmness of my spirit I humbly persist in believing that the Lord faciat cum tentatione provandum (is doing this as a test of faith), and that from this immense deception will come a teaching of clarity and health for a great many." Pope John XXIII.**

*Who was Pio?*

St Padre Pio was an Italian Franciscan who said he got the visible stigmata in 1918 after having pains in his hands and feet and side on and off since 1915. Jesus was supposedly nailed hands and feet to a cross and got stabbed in the side. A stigmatic is a person who carries similar wounds as the result of a miracle. He is in a sense more popular than Jesus Christ among Catholics. Catholics say that Jesus made him everything he is so to honour him is to honour Jesus. The Catholic pretends that honouring Pio is all about honouring Jesus. Is it indirect honour of Jesus? That is the most it could be. But to refuse to honour Jesus directly when you can do so suggests that the indirect honour you give him is an insult to him. Indirectly kissing your wife - eg by kissing her on her hat would be a snub when you can kiss her on the lips - ie directly. Catholicism's thinly disguised paganism is even worse than blatant pagan idolatry. At least the pagans though they used images saw the images as the embodiments of their gods. They did not intend to bypass their gods.

People say that if somebody came to confession to him and was not telling all their sins he was able to tell them what these sins were. But there are no cases of Pio saying, "Hey you! On 25 July last year you had sex with a prostitute in Rome." There is no detail. Fortune-telling would explain it. No human being however holy has the right to gaze into a person's soul. People should be free to tell or not to tell their alleged sins and should not go through such an experience.

You hear plenty about Pio's power to answer prayers and his miracles and his stigmata. There is little emphasis on any example he gave. The Pio devotion is unhealthy. Pio never wrote about how the stigmata improved his spiritual life and how this life helps him inspire others. A miracle that is more about the show than making people behave more virtuously is a scandal. It is superstition.

The Catholic Church claims to be able to unite faith and reason. It holds that God does not do absurd miracles and that such miracle reports are because the devil or human error or deception has been at work. If Pio had fissures one day and none the next that would be very strange. One doctor said there were holes in the hands and others found nothing only marks in the skin. A God who does absurd miracles is no better than a God who blesses only those who carry rabbits feet.

The followers of Pio have a thirst for the magical. Thus they have both an unworthy view of God and religion and man. They are superstitious. In Pio's Italy, photos of Benito Mussolini allegedly cured sick children. He worked miracles of giving speech to the dumb and hearing to the deaf. He miraculously stopped lava from flowing (page 146, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). There was plenty in their political and social context to make them to open to tales of alleged miracles and delusions of having experienced them.

*Pio's Inedia*

It is disquieting that Pio claimed that he lived on nothing but the sacred host for twenty-one days (page 5, Who is Padre Pio?). He reportedly put on weight which indicates that he was lying. But of course the believers say the weight, the evidence of eating, was a miracle and he was telling the truth. What we must never forget is that there were several mediums who had such incredible powers and were regarded as superstars for years until Houdini caught them out. What I am saying is that there have been people who did more daring and open things than Pio and who shocked sceptics and academics into faith and who were still frauds – getting caught the once was enough to prove it. To believe in Pio as in any personage with alleged supernatural powers only means you believe in a man who had the luck never to get caught if he was up to anything. You just don't know if he was the real thing. You can't and no God would waste time doing miracles through him in that case.

*Pio the Alleged Clairvoyant*

The devotional books tell us that Pio knew the thoughts of the penitents who came to him in confession. But fortune-tellers have been able to manage much the same thing. There has to be people who were not impressed by the alleged clairvoyance and their voice is ignored. And indeed there are. People like to believe that God went to the trouble of telling Pio something about them so you will have plenty who only imagined that Pio did that. Pio once answered the question a Swiss priest wrote on a letter sealed in an envelope which he gave to Pio without opening the letter (Who is Padre Pio?

page 37). This raises the question of how Pio knew that whatever told him what was on the letter was from God? Satan masquerading as God could have told him a lie to trip him up. Pio reported visions from Hell that looked exactly like Heavenly ones. Did Pio care? Did Pio know as much as God so that he could tell? There is a madness here. He reported that during one of his visions he asked the apparition he thought was from God but had suspicions about to call out "Hail Jesus", and it couldn't say the words and vanished in a cloud of sulphur (page 7, Who is Padre Pio?). This is totally ridiculous for loads of saints had visions of demons that pretended to praise God. Demons can mime the words but not mean them. Pio must have known that which is why he cannot be considered a dependable person regarding the supernatural.

### *Pio and his Visions*

Pio according to the Ruffin book said that he had a vision of a soul in Purgatory that appeared to ask for his prayers. Pio was supposed to be humbly embarrassed by the stigmata as it got him attention. Does that humility sound sincere coming from one that didn't have to tell about his visions but did nonetheless?

Pio had so many visions and revelations that if anybody knew that an apparition of the Virgin was authentic it was he. In a letter written by Manuel Pio Lopez, Archbishop of Jalapa to Fr Gustavo Morelos in 1966 it is stated that Pio believed the visions of Mary at Garabandal in Spain were genuinely from God and had told the four witnesses to speak the messages. But Garabandal was a hoax and the visionaries confessed to the hoax. Pio was a false prophet and God says in the Bible one error is enough to prove that God was not speaking through a man for God makes no mistakes (Deuteronomy 18). It would be blasphemous to trust a prophet to give the word of God when he makes mistakes in what he says is the word of God. You have to be very sure that something is the word of God before you could say you respect God by accepting that word.

St John of the Cross spoke about how dangerous revelations were and that it was a sin to desire them. If it is a sin to desire them then it is a sin to talk about them. Many saints revelled in their miracles and visions. They attracted those who admired them for their experiences and thereby led them into sin. That's the kind of holiness they produced. The Church rejects miracles that have bad fruits in the lives of those who experience them. So miracles reduce their goodness and give them a devotion to goodness but not for its sake but for their own. They always have bad fruits. Period. Christians endlessly harp on about fruits proving the visions and miracles they want to believe in not realising that the fruits are at the end of the list of the four things for discerning if a revelation is really from God (Criteria for Discerning Apparitions by Mons Ratko Peric, Bishop of Mostar). The first is there must be only a few revelations. The second is that the revelations must not contradict the faith or incite to disobedience against the bishops. Third there must be no element of human work – for example, when the visionaries tell the apparition when to appear. God will do what he sees is best not what we see. Fruits are the fourth and are not a reliable test for any false apparition gets converts and ignites reports of healings – the Church says that the regular workings of God through the sacraments are often hijacked by miracle mongers as evidence that there is something in what they claim. Pio who read about the mystics knew fine well that his revelations if supernatural were not from God but Satan and didn't care and didn't warn people to ignore them.

### *Pio and his Nazi funded hospital*

Pio lied that he was keeping his distance from those he described as false apostles and from crooks such as Brunatto (page 187-8, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). He was also involved in shares and managing money despite his vow of poverty (page 193, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). It comes as no surprise to learn he was always a cheat who wanted to convey a public impression of him that didn't match the truth. His arch-apostle the con-man Brunatto pretended to have empty pockets and provided the money to pay for Pio's hospital (page 205, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). These funds were raised through fraud and black market trading.

The only excuse Pio supporters for his taking money from fascist Brunatto who is labelled as a chronic liar and money that came from dirty deals with the Nazis is that Pio didn't know. But Pio got millions of francs out of him for his hospital which means a lot of people were involved mainly him so he had to know. Why are we told how clairvoyant Pio was? Pio had to know and was careful not to comment.

Pio got the pope's permission to own the hospital in 1957 (page 259). Pio's shares were deposited with the Vatican Bank

### *Finally*

The context of Pio's life shows that he was capable of lying about and faking his stigmata. The medical reports at best say he may have had deep fissures in his hands but the doctor did not do the examination well for Pio complained of being in great pain. It is known that Pio's marks could be explained without miracles.

Arthur C Clarke's World of Strange Powers, John Fairley and Simon Welfare, Collins, London, 1984

Chapter 7 of this book explores evidence that willpower can make bodily changes when it is strongly enough exercised by some people. Breasts have been increased in size by mindpower and the research of Dr Albert Mason and Professor Oscar Ratnoff verifying that non-religious stigmata happens is detailed in this book. A girl Maria K could make herself bleed from the ears and eyes and the head just by making herself very angry according to a study undertaken by Dr Magnus Huss. The fact that Teresa Neumann was doing erratic things and making strange unnecessary motions under her bedclothes before her wounds appeared is mentioned – was she making the wounds then?

The Bleeding Mind, Ian Wilson, Paladin, London, 1991

Looking for a Miracle, Joe Nickell, Prometheus Books, New York, 1993

England's Lost Eden, Adventures in a Victorian Utopia, Philip Hoare, Harper Perennial, London, 2006

The Stigmata and Modern Science, Rev Charles Carty, TAN, Illinois, 1974

Who is Padre Pio? Fathers Rumble and Carty, TAN, Illinois, 1974

Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age, Sergio Luzzato, Metropolitan Books, New York, 2010

Padre Pio Under Investigation, Francesco Castelli, Ignatius Press, San Francisco, 2008

Criteria for Discerning Apparitions, Mons Peric, Bishop of Mostar, available from Militia Immaculatae Trust, 35 New Bond Street, Leicester

Counterfeit Miracles, BB Warfield, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, 1995

The Book of Miracles, Stuart Gordon, Headline, London, 1996

The Jesus Relics, From the Holy Grail to the Turin Shroud, Joe Nickell, The History Press, Gloucestershire, 2008

The Physical Phenomena of Mysticism, Herbert Thurston SJ, H Regnery Co, Chicago, 1952 or Roman Catholic Books, PO Box 2286, FortCollins, CO 80522

The Supernatural A-Z, James Randi, Headline Books, London, 1995

(Note: This book in the entry for Stigmata observes that the claims made for people like the alleged stigmatist Teresa Neumann with their miraculous bleeding and living on communion wafers cannot be verified for they were never observed 24 hours a day every day. Fr Siwek, an investigator of Neumann wrote that he had grave doubts about her miracles. To me no God is going to bother doing all these miracles when the miracle worker is not going to be watched all the time.)

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