

St Padre Pio - Carbohic Acid Trickster?

Who was Pio?

St Padre Pio was an Italian Franciscan who 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.

Pio reported a vision of Jesus crying about priests not being faithful and called them butchers. He said that his agony on the cross does not last three hours but to the end of the world and its over the souls he blessed most - the priests! He said he craved a drop of human compassion and was getting nothing from them. He blamed their indifference and lack of gratitude. "How many times I was about to strike them, if the angels and the souls who love me had not stopped me".

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.

So Catholic saint Padre Pio got fame from allegedly carrying the crucifixion wounds of Jesus as the result of a miracle. Pio had a proven devious side. It has long been suspected that he created the "wounds" with the help of chemicals. Even if he didn't, his deviousness is still detrimental to any trust you may want to put in him.

The following information can be found in the outstanding book, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age by Sergio Luzzato. (Despite Catholic lies in the reviews of this book, the book doesn't take a stand on the explanation for Pio's stigmata. It gives us the evidence and lets us draw our own conclusions. The Catholics simply dismiss the book and dismiss it with rancour. Looking at the Amazon reviews proves that. Dismissing is no good. They should be able to give us reasons for disbelieving the book and they give us none. By the tactic of merely dismissing, they show the weakness of their position.

Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age page 31 tells us that Pio's alleged wounds were examined by the subprefect of San Severo and the subprefect's reported stated that the stigmata were almost circular in appearance. They had a dark yellow colour as if made by iodine tincture (page 31).

Professor Enrico Morrica, a scientist, stated in an article that Pio's marks looked like iodine was used to dye unbroken skin and that Pio's cell smelled of lysoform or iodoform and that a bottle of black carbohic acid was found in it (page 33, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age).

These accounts must be taken seriously. Suppose Pio was a true stigmatic. Then if an authority is going to lie about the wounds, he will say that there are real wounds but they could be self-inflicted. He will not make up such a controversial lie as that there are no wounds at all.

The founder of Rome's Roman Catholic university hospital said that Pio was mentally ill and mutilated himself to make his stigmata and took advantage of credulous people.

Sceptics in the Church and out agree with the principle that stigmata where nobody actually sees the bleeding happening is suspect. Therese Neumann was one stigmatist who only bled when the investigator left the room. Nobody ever claimed to see the alleged wounds of Pio bleeding. They only saw them after they were bleeding.

In 2007 and in the book (pages 89 to 94, it was reported that Pio may have used carbolic acid to keep his wounds open and uninfected. Bishop Monsignor Salvatore Bella and two Church experts received sworn and signed statements testifying that was possible.

The very first statement was by Dr Valentini Vista. He owned a pharmacy in Foggia. In it he swore that he knew of Padre Pio in 1918 and wrote to him. It is interesting that Bernard Ruffin, the pro-Pio writer never even mentions this man or anything that the man revealed.

In relation to Vista's cousin who owned a pharmacy also, whose name was Maria De Vito, he wrote, "When she came back to Foggia, she brought me greetings from Padre Pio. She asked me on his behalf and in sworn secrecy to supply her with some pure carbolic acid that he needed. She showed me a little bottle containing 100 grams, a bottle given to her by Padre Pio himself to which was attached a seal with a poison sign (a skull and crossbones). I was supposed to fill the bottle with pure carbolic acid, which, as is known, is a poison that burns and has grave caustic effects when used in pure form. When I heard this request, it occurred to me that carbolic acid in that form could be used by Padre Pio to procure or to irritate those wounds on his hands" (page 91, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age).

Vesti gave Maria the carbolic acid.

If nothing was going on why the SWORN secrecy! Some weeks later Pio had a new request: four grams of veratrine no less (page 91, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). Vista testified to Monsignor Bella that as the chemical was very dangerous. He found it inexplicable that Pio wanted four grams as that was in fact a huge quantity in terms of its toxicity. Nobody ever looked for that much. He said that Pio again wanted to be supplied amid watertight secrecy and he provided no medical reason for his request. Pio didn't even seek a prescription (page 92, Padre Pio: Miracles and Politics in a Secular Age). Vesti then told Maria he thought she should refuse to supply Pio any more (page 92, *ibid*).

Page 92 states that Vesti informed the Monsignor that Pio may have been making the wounds with this substance and with the carbolic acid.

Maria De Vito herself made the second sworn statement to Bella. She confirmed all that Vista put down in his sworn statement to Bella.

She said that Pio took her to one side and made her take a vow of secrecy similar to one the monks took. He gave her a clean bottle and asked her to fill it with pure carbolic acid. He claimed he wanted it to disinfect syringes with which he injected novice friars. De Vito testified "Padre Pio called me to him in complete secrecy and telling me not to tell his fellow brothers, he gave me personally an empty bottle, and asked if I would act as a chauffer to transport it back from Foggia to San Giovanni Rotondo with four grams of pure carbolic acid. He explained that the acid was for disinfecting syringes for injections. He also asked for other things, such as Valda pastilles."

A follower of Pio approached her a month later relaying Pio's request for the four grams of veratrine. She said that Vesti encouraged her not to send any more medicine and told her not to tell anybody about Pio looking for the veratrine and the carbolic acid in case their suspicions about his true purpose for them were not justified. Bella sent the two sworn testimonies to Rome. He thought those suspicions were far from rash.

On page 93 we read that Pio later wrote a note to Maria which went, "My dearest Maria. May Jesus comfort you always and bless you. I have come to ask you for a favour. I need to have 200 to 300 grams of pure carbolic acid to sterilise. Please send it to me Sunday by way of the Fiorentino sisters. Sorry to bother you." If Pio was telling the truth about why he needed the acid then why did he go about getting it so indirectly. The note exists today and is in the Vatican archives. The Vatican has a transcript of a secretive note asking for the veratrine.

The consistent secrecy clearly proves that Pio was up to something. Why be so secretive if the acid really was for

disinfecting syringes? Why keep the brothers in the dark? Why not get the acid from the local doctors? As a member of his order, he had the services of a doctor.

And thought Pio had pains in his hands? Could you imagine someone with an agonising hole in the middle of his hand giving many injections? Would he have been allowed to do with the danger of infection? He would have been of little use among the sick. It is not likely he sterilised much and if he did we must ask then why would he have been so keen on sterilising? Was it a ploy to get access to the acid to make his wounds?

Pio Reeked of Carbolic Acid

Teresita De Vecchi a believer claimed that she went to confess her sins to Pio and he showed her his wounded hand. She saw a crust of dry blood. She kissed his hand and noticed a strong stench of carbolic acid.

Did Pio scrape the marks on himself and then use carbolic acid on them to keep them open? Did he make the stigmata himself? Carbolic acid does not cause wounds but burns but could certainly be useful to prevent infection and avoid the need to keep re-inflicting the wounds. It would keep wounds already made open.

Archbishop Pasquale Gagliardi thought that Pio's stigmata was fraudulent and made with carbolic acid. He remarked the carbolic acid smell that came from Pio.

A number of people reported a stench of carbolic acid from Pio. Astonishingly, even a pro-Pio booklet confesses that there was a smell of carbolic acid from the wounds at times (Who is Padre Pio? page 15).

Believers try to persuade themselves that Pio did pick this smell up from sterilising needles for the sick. Rubbish. Others who did the sterilising didn't smell at all thanks to their protective clothing. And he would have worn it too. Didn't he use soap like the others to freshen up?

The Archbishop, was found out to have engaged in illegal activities. To some irrational people that is supposed to prove that he lied about the stench. Pope John Paul II was an accessory to paedophilia for having done nothing about it and Pio's supporters believe all he says about Pio who he canonised and they damn the Archbishop though his evil was nothing compared to that of the pope.

The Archbishop had no need to falsely assert that Pio's marks carried the stench of carbolic acid. Some say he was saying it as if to suggest carbolic acid was being used to make them. But at that time it was popularly believed that autosuggestion and hypnosis could produce the wounds or marks and it would have been safer for the Archbishop to use that line. Not only could an accusation of physically making the marks or wounds end up being exposed as just a smear but he would have had more hope of winning over Pio's fans had he taken the safe road.

Carbolic acid causes chest problems and Pio suffered from a bad chest.

BOOKS CONSULTED

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.)

<http://skeptically.org/skeptics/index.html>