

The Bulletin needs a
stencil cartoonist...

University of Notre Dame
Religious Bulletin
November 16, 1955

...Stop in at 117 Dillon,
if you have had experience.

The Priest With The Bleeding Hands

The apparent personal sanctity of certain people now living comes up occasionally for discussion among students. Sometime ago, the press carried a story concerning an Italian Capuchin monk, Padre Pio, who lives in a mountain monastery in Italy.

Padre Pio has Christ-like wounds in his hands, feet, and side; and the wounds bleed. These marks first appeared on Padre Pio back in 1918. He was making his thanksgiving after celebrating Mass, when the wounds appeared and began to bleed. For a few days the saintly monk hid his hands from public view. When one of his fellow monks noticed the bloodstains on his sleeve, Padre Pio was questioned. And in obedience to his religious superior he told the story of his wounds. Father Charles O'Donnell, CSC, later President of Notre Dame, visited him in 1923, and wrote an account for the American public in the Ave Maria.

The wounds will not submit to medical treatment. There is no sign of healing or infection; and the wounds give off a fragrant perfume. The only time Padre Pio exposes his hands is during the celebration of Mass. At all other times he wears fingerless gloves, with a small linen pad over each wound to absorb the blood.

This phenomenon is called the stigmata (from the Greek, meaning "marks"). Since the 13th century there have been at least 300 similar occurrences. The first and most famous of stigmatics was St. Francis of Assisi. The marks, or wounds, correspond to those in the feet, hands and side of the crucified Christ. And they are accompanied by physical pain. Medical science admits the reality -- but stops there!

Why the wounds and the pain? It seems to be a way that Christ has selected for the expiation of sin. He singles out certain chosen souls who are willing to be united more closely with Him in His sufferings -- for the sake of making reparation for the sins of the world.

It takes Padre Pio two hours to offer Mass. He experiences great suffering during this time, especially at the Consecration and Elevation. It is reported that this saintly man eats but one light meal a day, and seldom sleeps more than three or four hours. His nights are spent in prayer, and his days in the confessional. During the recent war, many American soldiers were privileged to meet him and to assist at his Mass. He blessed all of them, and their religious articles, regardless of their nationality.

What does it all mean? Simply this: extraordinary expiation of sin is left to a few chosen souls. Yet, Christ asks everyone of us to play our part in praying and suffering that sinners will repent and return to the love and service of their Heavenly Father. He says to us: "Take up your cross daily and follow Me". You are helping Christ to save the world when you offer a prayer, or some suffering, for another.

Right now we are most concerned with the souls in Purgatory. The Church centers Her attention throughout November on this holy, helpless group; and tells us that there is nothing like the Mass that is so profitable for, and so welcomed by, them. Are you getting to Mass these days? The little inconvenience involved is nothing, by comparison with the sufferings Padre Pio has been singled out to endure. If you have lagged to this point, start tomorrow morning. And a missal will help your devotion.

PRAYERS REQUESTED -- Deceased: Father Thomas Kearney, CSC; mother of Rev. Terence McMahon, editor of the Catholic Transcript (Hartford). Ill: uncle of Bill Carbone.

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