

MASSES FOR THE WEEK OF September 21 2025
Twenty-Fifth Sunday In Ordinary Time
Catechetical Sunday

Please note that all daily masses will be held in the chapel unless otherwise noted. In the event of a funeral mass there will be no (8:30 AM) daily mass.

Monday 8:30AM : NO MASS

Tuesday 8:30 AM: Loretta Fochtman By: Philip & Kathy Suhrie

Wednesday 8:30 AM: Charles Hankinson (Anniv) By: The Restly Family Reunion

Thursday 8:30 AM: Tom Wambaugh (B’d day) By: Kim Wambaugh

Friday 8:30 AM: Ronald Castillo By: Dorothy Castillo

Twenty-Sixth Sunday In Ordinary Time:
Saturday 6:00 PM: George Engbert (B’d day) By: Richard & Cheryle Engbert
Sunday 8:00 AM: Ada Will (Anniv) By: Greg Will and Family
Sunday 10:30 AM: Cathy Smith (B’d day) By: Mark, Kristina, Marshal and Maria

Sanctuary Candle: Peace
St. Peregrine Candle:

Mass Readings for the Week:

- Monday: Memorial Of St. Igantius Of Santhia, Capuchin Priest
Ezra 1:1-6/PS Psalm 126:1b-2ab, 2cd-3, 4-5, 6/Luke 8:16-18
- Tuesday: Memorial Of St. Pius Of Pietrelcina, Priest
Ezra 6:7-8, 12b, 14-20/PS Psalm 122:1-2, 3-4ab, 4cd-5/Luke 8:19-21
Galatians 2:19-20/PS Psalm 128:1/Matthew 16:24-27
- Wednesday: Saint John Henry Newman
Ezra 9:5-9/PS Tobit 13:2, 3-4a, 6befghn, 7-8 (R/.1b)/Luke 9:1-6
- Thursday: Saints Louis Martin and Zélie Guérin
Haggai 1:1-8/PS Psalm 149:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6a and 9b (R/cf.4a)/Luke 9:7-9
- Friday: Saint Paul VI
Optional Memorial Of SS. Cosmos And Damian Martyrs
Haggai 2:1-9/PS Psalm 43:1, 2, 3, 4 (R/.5)/Luke 9:18-22
Wisdom 3:1-9/PS Psalm 126:5/Matthew 10:28-33
- Saturday: Memorial Of St. Vincent De Paul, Priest
Zechariah 2:5-9, 14-15a/PS Psalm Jeremiah 31:10, 11-12ab, 13 (R/.cf.10d)/Luke 9:43b-45
1 Corinthians 1:26-31/ PS Psalm 112:1/Matthew 9:35-38
- Sunday: Twenty-Sixth Sunday In Ordinary Time
Amos 6:1a, 4-7/PS Psalm146:7, 8-9, 9-10 (R/.1b)/ 1 Timothy 6:11-16/Luke 16:19-31

“Though our Lord Jesus Christ was rich, he became poor, so that by his poverty you might become rich.”

St John The Baptist Catholic Church
Box 10 New Baltimore, PA 15553 Phone: 733-2210 Hall: 733-4113
Email: dwambaugh@dioceseaj.org Website: <https://newbaltimorecatholic.com/>

Fr. Mark Pattock, OFMcap Pastor Sacramental Emergencies: 724-272-5474

Mass Schedule:
Mon: No Mass Tues: 8:30 AM Wed - Fri: 8:30 AM Sat: 6:00 PM (Vigil) Sun: 8:00 AM & 10:30 AM

Secretary Office Hours:
Mon :8:00 AM-3:00PM Wed :8:00 AM-3:00PM Thurs :8:00 AM-3:00 PM Fri :8:00AM –3:00 PM

Baptism: Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

Confessions: Saturday 5:00 – 5:45 PM

Holy Communion:
Low Gluten hosts will be available for anyone with a low gluten tolerance. If you have a low gluten tolerance, please tell the priest before mass so a low gluten host can be placed in a pyx for you.

Matrimony: Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program

Rosary: Saturday Evenings beginning at 5:25 PM

Parish Mission Statement

St. John the Baptist Parish is a Catholic Christian Community centered in rural New Baltimore, Pennsylvania. As members of the Body of Christ, we seek to live as entrusted stewards using God’s gifts responsibly, intelligently, prudently, and gratefully to bring about His kingdom. As stewards of our time, talents, possessions, and faith, we are called to put our lives in proper focus and to live in accord with one another giving love and caring support, to accept Christ’s challenge as related in the Gospels- to serve one another.



St. John’s News & Upcoming Events:

Twenty – Fifth Sunday Of Ordinary Time

Catechetical Sunday

Catechetical Sunday:

Today (**September 21st**) is Catechetical Sunday. Catechetical Sunday offers an opportunity to recall that all the Baptized have roles in handing on the faith in their daily life, families, work, and church involvement. This year’s theme is from the words of Matthew 11:28; “Come to me all you who labor and are burdened”. This year's theme reminds us of the invitation we receive from the Lord Jesus to follow Him and the promise that He doesn’t want to add to our burdens; he wants to lighten them. The role of the Catechist is, first of all, to be a disciple and one who draws close to Jesus in the Eucharist, and then to be a witness to others and a companion as they too come to know Jesus and to encounter him in the sacraments. May we who aspire to be effective catechists, have unwavering faith in the real presence of Christ, that we lead others by teaching and example to encounter Jesus with us at the Eucharistic table.

A Catechist’s Prayer:

Father of all families, you have called me to serve the family in truth and love as a catechist. May I be faithful to this call, rooted in your Word, and open to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. May I use these gifts, especially the gifts of faith, hope, and love, to serve the family as a witness to you, who are love and life and the source and destiny of all families. Let your Spirit enlighten my mind and strengthen my heart so that I can be a path of Christ’s love to families, especially those in need, the homebound and aged, the disabled and disheartened. Through the intercession of Mary and Joseph, I pray for the Church, the Bride of Christ, whose mission to build a civilization of love passes through the family. Amen.

DID YOU KNOW ? The word, "*catechetical*" comes from the root word, "catechesis," which is a Greek word meaning "to echo, or resound." [Catechesis](#) is the act of resounding or bringing the Church's teachings to the world. A catechist is one who teaches in the name of the Church.

Diocesan Priests’ Medical Care & Retirement Special Collection: They’ve been there for us. Now let’s be there for them. Next weekend (**September 27th and September 28th**) we will be taking up at all our masses a special collection for medical and retirement needs of our active and senior diocesan priests. Contributions are managed by the diocese’s Medical Retirement Plan Commission to help keep our parish share of priests’ benefits at manageable levels. Your generous response will provide relief to the men who bring us closer to Christ through worship, service, and community. Please use the special envelope attached to this weekend’s bulletin or donate online through the diocese’s website at www.dioceseaj.org. Thank you.

Olive Wood Religious Gifts from Holy Lands:

This weekend (September 20th and 21st) we welcome Qumsey Ramzi back to our parish with his Olive Wood Gifts from the Holy Land. **Qumsey can be found in the basement after all the weekend masses.** Qumsey is honored to bless your home and the homes of your loved ones with unique, handmade gifts lovingly carved by talented craftsmen. Each one-of-a-kind piece will serve as a devout and stunning visual reminder of the presence of God, your relationship to the Lord, and your connection to the Holy Land.

Women At The Well:

There is a Women At The Well group forming here at St. John’s. Come and learn how to pray Lectio Divina – praying with that Sunday’s Gospel. **We meet Monday morning at 9:00 AM in the Church Basement.** For more information please contact Lindsay Hankinson at (814) 233-8786. We would love to have you join us.

Upcoming Meetings:

The next **Christian Mothers Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday September 23 @ 6:00 PM** in the Church Basement.
The next **Maintenance meeting** will be held on **Thursday September 25th @ 6:00 PM** in the Church Basement.

“Today’s society does not pray. That is why it is falling apart.”-Padre Pio

PRAYER LIST

John Andzelik, Abby Barnes, Lori Barnes, Fr. William Barron, Debbie Brady, Cindy (Miller) Bearer, Jane Beyer, Theresa Beyer, Lisa Bischof, Tonya Brown, Mark Bruck, Macy Burke, Doug Burkett, Max Bulger, Tim Bruck, Larry Clarr, Randy Clites, Denis Crum, Lee Crum, Andrew Davenport, Sara Davenport, Michael Davis, Velma Davis, Larry DeArmitt, Alice Deitz, Donna Dennison, Tracy Dickey, Dorothy Dittmer, Joyce Dively, Tara Dively, Lisa Easter, Chris Edes, George Faidley III, Tabitha Flick, Bradley Fochtman, Harry Fochtman, Mike Fochtman, Mark Frankenfield, Myrna Fries, Becky Foor, Carol Ann Gallagher, Brian Gardill, Jarrett Gowatty, Paisley Goetzl, Helen Greenway, Kelsey Grove, Grayson Gumbert, Sam Hall, Ron Hagens, Nellie Hall, Eugene Hankinson, Phyllis Harris, Mary Jo Harrington, Aaron Hay, Paisley Hay, Bob Jenkins, Elizabeth, Ken & Kennaley Heider, Nickole Herdman, Sandra Herzing, Dale Hickey, Ida Mae Hillegass, Lisa Hillegass, Missy Hillegass, Tara Hillegass, Todd Hillegass, Amy Jo Hoffman, Phyllis Hoppert, Tina Hoover, Ernest Imgrund, Pete Innis, Mary Janachovski, Martha (Lewis) Kalbach, Matt Karns, Jason Kinzer, David Krieie, Fr. Robert Kaylor, Todd Kline, Eric Knott, Virginia Lambert, John Lancaster, Eli Lankey, Kelly Legarski, Bruce Leonard, Carol Leppert, Gordon Leppert, Brenda Leister, Chase Lester, Kaitlyn Lewis, Barry Leydig, John Lynch, Toots Maddy, Ron Makarun, Martha Marker, Susan Martin, Tim Martin, George Maser, Angie Matey, Joseph Matey, Brooks May, Janet Michael, Tony and Janet Miele, Linda McCahan, Shirley McVicker, Betty Meslovich, Terry Metevier, Erica Miller, Ray & June Miller, Tara Miller, Mike Montreal, Reed Morgan, Tracey Mowry, Carol Murphy, Kai Musselman, John Myers, Ashley Nail, Dr. Cyril Nathaniel, Eugene Nickelow, Elissa Nunamaker, Donna Otto, Rick Otto, Michael Price, Sabina Restly, Tara Ritchey, Cindy Robb, Katherine Rosenbaum, Teri Schreiber, Nancy Schrock, Barb Sarver, Shirley Sechler, Greg Seeley, Richard Seese Jr. , Jordon Seville, Lorraine Shadduck, Sandra Shaffer, Terry Shaffer, Harold Shannon, Clyde Shippy, Tom Shippy, Daniel Smith, Eddie Smith, Edith Smith, Marie Smith, Shaun Smith, Bruce Snyder, Oscar Speicher, Linda Stiffler, Rosalie Swingle, Carol Taylor, Leroy Turner, Janet Valentine, Michael Valentine, Gail Wade, Anna Lee Wambaugh, Tom Warren, Jr., Staci Weaver, Aaron Weiss, Bonnie Welsh, Dee Werline, John & Doris Werner, Christina Whetstone, Logan Weyand, Alyssa Will, Charlotte Will, Jan Will, Pat Will, Tracy Williams, Larry & Alice Winegardner, Lucy Wright, Angie Wolfhope, Dorothy Wolfhope, Ron Wolfhope, Steve Wolfhope, Shirley Varchetti, Roger Yarnell

If you added a person’s name to the prayer list and they have since recovered, please call to remove their name from our prayer list.

OFFERTORY		
Sunday Loose: \$596.00	Sunday Adults: \$2185.00	Total Sunday: \$2781.00
Local Needs: \$20.00	Heating Fund: \$500.00	
We’re always collecting non- perishable food items for our local foodbanks. Items can be placed in the bins in the back of church.		

Twenty-Fifth Sunday In Ordinary Time - A Family Perspective by Bud Ozar:
Despite all our time saving gadgets, we still have less leisure and family time. To solve this we created the Myth of Quality Time. Don’t be fooled: Quality Time is Quantity Time. Jesus counsels us today, we “cannot serve two masters” and expect to be happy. Dedicate time to your family. No one in their final hours regretted not spending more time at work.

The Pope’s Prayer Intention For September:
For our relationship with all of creation
Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious, or ideological reasons.



WE LOVE HAVING YOU AS PART OF OUR FLOCK. Keep in touch with us via email and text. Just simply Text **BALTIMORE** to 84576 Or Connect with Us Online At: newbaltimorecath.flocknote.com

Diocesan News & Upcoming Events:

Pennsylvania March For Life:

The Bedford County Citizens Concerned for Human Life has contracted a Bollman Charter bus to take them to the Pennsylvania March For Life at the PA State Capitol in Harrisburg, PA on **Monday September 22, 2025.** The bus will leave from the Wal Mart Parking Lot at **9:00 AM. Bring Bagged Lunch- Will Not Stop To Eat On The Way Back. To reserve your seat please call (814) 623-6887. The cost is \$20.00 Adults and \$10.00 Students. Make checks payable to BCCCHL and mail to Pam Lucas, 262 Zion Road, Everett, PA 15537.** The rally will begin at 11 AM and the March will be at 12 noon. The 14th Amendment: “No state shall . . . deprive any person of life.” The overturn of Roe puts our Fight for Life into the hands of our state lawmakers.

DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE BUS TRIP TO WASHINGTON DC:

The Diocese of Altoona Johnstown is having bus trip for a Jubilee Pilgrimage to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, DC on **Friday, October 17, 2025.** Trip will include a tour of the Shrine, confessions and Mass with the Bishop. You can purchase lunch at the Shrine Cafeteria or bring a lunch. There will be a rest stop on the way to Washington and a stop on the way back to Somerset for dinner on your own. **To make reservations beginning August 4th, please call Linda Gattian at 814-443-6574 or email: lgattian@dioceseaj.org. The cost of the trip is \$50.00/person, which includes the gratuity for the driver. The bus will leave at 6:30 am from Saint Peter, Somerset. The deadline to reserve a seat (s) and make the payment is September 26th** If you are planning to carpool please go to the Diocesan website: www.dioceseaj.org to give us your numbers.

Bedford County Life Chain:

Please join us on **Sunday October 5th between 2:30 PM and 3:30 PM** for a silent, peaceful, and prayerful witness for life on **National Respect Life Sunday. Register And Get Your Sign Between 2:00 PM and 2:30 PM at the Bedford Elementary School Parking Lot.** The chain will begin at Bedford Elementary and align Old Route 220/ North Richard Street to St. Thomas Catholic Church. **For further information call Kelly Wenger at (814) 839-4806.**

Our Lady Queen Of Angels Fall Sportsmen Raffle:

Our Lady Queen of Angels Parish will be hosting their annual **Fall Sportsmen Raffle on Sunday, September 21st** at the parish activity center in Central City. In addition to the chance to win the prizes listed on the ticket, an entrance ticket entitles the bearer to an all you can eat meal, beer, and the chance to buy tickets for the walk around prizes (everything needed for a sportsman, cash, meat, and other prizes). **The event starts at 1:00 PM, tickets are \$35.00. Please call the parish office at 814-754-5224 for tickets or prize information .**

Hungarian Picnic:

Holy Family Parish in Hooversville (Somerset County) will be hosting their “Magyar Bucusu” or Hungarian Picnic on **Saturday September 27 from 5:00 PM until 8:00 PM at** the Hooversville Picnic Grove (807 Barn Street). Mass will be celebrated at 4:00 PM. The picnic includes live music by Gypsy George Bayti and the Gypsy Stringz Orchestra, Hungarian folk dancing, basket raffles, games of chance, beer/wine/soft drinks, and food. Food includes goulash, hurka, kolbasz, chicken paprikash, potato pancakes, thick pork chops slow roasted around a fire and more. All are welcome to celebrate the Hungarian heritage in Hooversville’s miners and Holy Family Parish.

Johnstown Cathedral to Welcome Musicians for Jubilee Concert

In celebration of the Jubilee Year, **Saint John Gualbert Cathedral in Johnstown** will host an ecumenical concert on **October 5 at 2:00 p.m.** Featured performers include a diocesan high school choir featuring students from Bishop Carroll Catholic High School, Bishop Guilfoyle Academy, and Bishop McCort Catholic High School; the Westmont Presbyterian Choir; the Greater Johnstown Community Choir; and the Greater Johnstown Diocesan Festival Choir.

Marian Celebration Planned at Johnstown Parish

The annual Marian Celebration will be held on **October 5th at 3:00 p.m.** at **Saint Benedict Parish in Johnstown.** The gathering will include the praying of the Rosary and then Mass with Bishop Mark as celebrant and homilist

“Love our Lady and make her loved; always recite the Rosary and recite it as often as possible.”



Rosary Rally to honor Our Blessed Mother:

The month of October is the month of the Holy Rosary, a period of special devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. There will be Rosary Rally to honor Our Blessed Mother on **Sunday October 12th here at St. John’s beginning at 2:00PM** We will pray the entire rosary and close with the Litany Of The Blessed Virgin Mary. All are invited to come honor our Blessed Mother and seek her intercession for peace in the world and our homes.

Operation Christmas Child:

My name is Doris Werner. We will once again be collecting filled shoeboxes for Samaritan’s Purse Shoebox Ministry. These boxes will be sent to children in countries around the world. The main purpose is to introduce these children to Jesus Christ. **Shoeboxes and information can be found on the table in the back of Church.** We ask that you please include a **\$10** donation to help pay for shipping. If you have any questions, you may contact me at **(814)-733-4611 or 814-937-5122.** **All items are due at the latest by Sunday November 02, 2025. Thank You!**

Spaghetti Dinner: The Knights of Columbus of St. John's Parish in New Baltimore is sponsoring a **DINE IN OR TAKE OUT** Spaghetti Dinner today **Sunday, September 21st from 10:30AM to 1:00 PM.** The dinner includes spaghetti and meatballs, salad, bread and dessert. Adults (12 and over) **\$10**, Children (5 -11) **\$5** Under 4: **FREE.** WALK-INS are also welcome! All proceeds are donated to local food banks and local charities!

Catholic Ministries Drive Update:

Thank you to all who have participated in our Catholic Ministries Drive. To date we have received **\$4550.00** towards our goal of **\$22,000.00.** It is not too late for those thinking about giving as you have until the end of December to do so. Thank you for your generosity



Blessing of Animals:

The blessing of pets for the memorial of St. Francis of Assisi will take place on **Sunday October 5th at 1:30PM** in the circle in front of the Church

Per the Cemetery Guidelines-

All seasonal decorations are to be removed from the cemetery by **October 20th.** American and Military flags will remain on graves until after Veterans Day.

Stewardship Reflection September 21st- The Twenty-Fifth Sunday In Ordinary Time
After today’s readings, we can’t say we have not been warned about the dangers of mixed-up priorities. God’s Word is so very clear today on the necessity of putting Him first in all areas of our lives. What can we learn from the curious parable to help us avoid the worldly thinking condemned in our First Reading, and give ourselves away as Jesus did as is described in our Second Reading? We know this ‘bad steward’ was clever and energetic. He put thought, prudence, and creativity into the plans he made for his self-serving ends and carried out his plans with great success. What if we put that kind of effort into our own tasks as good stewards of all God’s gifts to us? Into our ministries, into the ways we could make more time for prayer as individuals, as couples, as families, and as a parish? What if we got as creative as the ‘bad steward’ in the use of our finances so that we could give more generously to the poor and the advancement of God’s kingdom on earth? That’s our lesson and our challenge.

Volunteer to take up the Offertory At Mass: During Mass, there’s a little moment that often goes unnoticed. After the collection baskets are passed, there is a very meaningful part of the Mass: members of our parish carry the gifts of bread, wine and the offertory to the priest. **The entire congregation is represented by those who bear the gifts. Through this act, we return to God a small part of the many blessings that He has given to us. What a wonderful way to express thanks and joy to God by bearing these gifts! There is a sign-up sheet in the back of church for the month for families to sign up to carry the offertory gifts up at mass.**

Religious Education News:

Teachers Needed:

A teacher is needed for Seventh and Eighth Grade, and Ninth and Tenth Grade so please call the office if interested ASAP so preparations can be made to obtain child abuse clearances and the Virtus Training. All teachers must have both Clearances and Virtus completed before the start of Religious Education on Sunday September 21st

SHYCON:

Information was received on Monday August 18th from the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown regarding SHYCON 2025. SHYCON 2025, is scheduled for Sunday October 19th beginning promptly at 11:30 AM at the Stokes Center at St. Francis University in Loretto. Gathering our young people in grades 9-12 not only is an opportunity to grow in their faith but to see themselves members of Christ’s body the young Church on a bigger scale than their parish. It is necessary that we Support and Encourage our young people to participate in events like these. This is open to anyone in grades 9 -12. Just a reminder that this is part of the formation for confirmation. This year’s theme for SHYCON is based on the Jubilee of Hope Psalm 71:5 “For You are my hope, O Lord God; You are my trust from my youth. The keynote speaker is Joe Melendrez. Joe is one of America’s most exciting Catholic performers. Joe is a natural MC, dynamic and sought after musical performer as well as captivating and inspirational speaker and retreat leader. Please call or email the office to register your child or children for this event. The deadline to register is Wednesday October 1st at 3:00 PM. Please feel free to call Francine Swope @ 814-317-2646 if there are additional questions.

Office Of Youth Protection- “Empowering God’s Children Lessons For Youth:

Youth protection Lessons for students in our Religious Education Programs will need to be completed and turned into the Office NO LATER THAN December 31, 2025 (For All Grades) which then will be recorded ONLINE!! Unless they are recorded online, they are considered incomplete. Year after year, many are not completing these until the last minute and we are chasing around students up to the end of their session. Since both St. John The Baptist Catholic Church and the Diocese Of Altoona-Johnstown gets either an in-person or paper audit EVERY year, this information is needed in order to get it prepared for the reports. The lessons will be emailed to the parents for each child (s) grade level in the upcoming weeks. The email address that is on file for religious education will be the email the lessons are sent to. If you don’t receive these lessons please call the office to ensure correct contact information is on file.

2025-2026 Confirmation Retreat Schedule for Grades 9 to 12:

Praying With Scripture	3 Zoom Sessions	December 7 th , 10 th , and 14 th
Praying With Scripture	3 Zoom Sessions	January 18 th , 21 st and 25 th

Gifts And Fruits of the Holy Spirt	3 Zoom Sessions	November 2 nd , 5 th , and 9 th
Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit	3 Zoom Sessions	January 11 th , 14 th , and 18 th

Living The Discipleship And Mission Of Jesus Christ	5 Zoom Sessions	Sept 28 th , October 1 st , 5 th , 8 th and 12 th
Living The Discipleship And Mission Of Jesus Christ	5 Zoom Sessions	February 1 st , 4 th , 8 th 11 th and 15 th
Living The Discipleship And Mission Of Jesus Christ	5 Zoom Sessions	March 8 th , 11 th , 15 th , 18 th and 22nd

Students need to attend one zoom session for each retreat. Final registration needs to be sent from the parish office at least 2 weeks before retreat begins to Sr. Suzanne Thiabult. There is no cost to the student as it will be covered by the parish. All retreats are conducted via Zoom by Sr. Suzanne Thibault of Bethany Youth Retreat Center. Sr. Suzanne Thibault has been presenting youth retreats since 1986. She is best known for the ability to engage students and adults on retreat. For more information call Sr. Suzanne at 814-263-4177 or by email BethanyYouthCenter@gmail.com

Padre Pio Quotes:

“Pray, hope, and don't worry. Worry is useless. God is merciful and will hear your prayer.
“Have courage and do not fear the assaults of the Devil.”
“Today’s society does not pray. That is why it is falling apart.”
“Prayer is the best weapon we possess, the key that opens the heart of God.”



HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

You are invited to the first in a series of active, inspiring, age-appropriate opportunities:

A guided small group tour of Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament With Msgr Stanley Carson

Sunday, 10/26/25 from 1:30-2:30

This is a unique opportunity to join Msgr Carson to learn more about our beautiful Cathedral's history, architecture, rich art and stained-glass that together symbolize the presence of God in a different and transformed world. Invite a friend to join you!

RSVP interest by 10/12/25: Reply to your flock note invitation, or akcurtis@verizon.net

Saint Of The Week:

St. Pius Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

Feast Day: September 23rd



Born Francesco Forgione, Padre Pio grew up in a family of farmers in southern Italy. Twice his father worked in Jamaica, New York, to provide the family income. At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was ordained in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have tuberculosis, he was discharged. In 1917, he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo, 75 miles from the city of Bari on the Adriatic. On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had a vision of Jesus. When the vision ended, he had the stigmata in his hands, feet, and side. Life became more complicated after that. Medical doctors, Church authorities, and curiosity seekers came to see Padre Pio. In 1924, and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned; Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed. However, he wrote no letters after 1924. His only other writing, a pamphlet on the agony of Jesus, was done before 1924. Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. Each morning after a 5 a.m. Mass in a crowded church, he heard confessions until noon. He took a mid-morning break to bless the sick and all who came to see him. Every afternoon he also heard confessions. In time his confessional ministry would take 10 hours a day; penitents had to take a number so that the situation could be handled. Many of them have said that Padre Pio knew details of their lives that they had never mentioned. Padre Pio saw Jesus in all the sick and suffering. At his urging, a fine hospital was built on nearby Mount Gargano. The idea arose in 1940; a committee began to collect money. Ground was broken in 1946. Building the hospital was a technical wonder because of the difficulty of getting water there and of hauling up the building supplies. This “House for the Alleviation of Suffering” has 350 beds. A number of people have reported cures they believe were received through the intercession of Padre Pio. Those who assisted at his Masses came away edified; several curiosity seekers were deeply moved. Like Saint Francis, Padre Pio sometimes had his habit torn or cut by souvenir hunters. One of Padre Pio’s sufferings was that unscrupulous people several times circulated prophecies that they claimed originated from him. He never made prophecies about world events and never gave an opinion on matters that he felt belonged to Church authorities to decide. He died on September 23, 1968, and was beatified in 1999. Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio of Pietrelcina on June 16, 2002.

St. Pius Pietrelcina, Pray For Us!