

# HOPE AND HEALING

## *Comfort and Inspiration*

*From the Desk of Rev. Stefan Starzynski  
Catholic Chaplain at Inova Fairfax Hospital*

## THE WORK OF PADRE PIO CONTINUES



### *“The Greatest Tragedy is Wasted Suffering”*

St. Padre Pio considered his hospital to be his work. He even named his hospital “The Home for the Relief of Suffering.” He said that God would bless those who bless his work. Padre Pio, on the day of the hospital’s opening on May 5, 1956 stated, “A seed has been sown on the earth that will warm with the rays of His love. A new army made of sacrifices and love will rise in God’s glory and comfort the souls and bodies of the sick.” On the first anniversary of the hospital’s opening, May 5, 1957, Padre Pio again stated, “In the House for the Relief of the Suffering we pray constantly for the Pope.”

The sick have much to offer. In many ways they are the Church’s most powerful army. Please know that your suffering is precious and needed for the Church. Fulton Sheen said that the greatest tragedy is wasted suffering. It is critical that you not only pray for the Pope but for all the needs of the Church and world. Your prayers, united to your suffering, are precious treasures and gems in the sight of God. Pope Paul VI said on May 5, 1966, the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of the Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza, “The almighty and merciful Lord, who accepts for Himself every benefit given to his suffering brothers, will repay them many fold with generous measure and great abundance.” The Pope’s words echo Padre Pio’s words when the Padre said,

*“God will bless those who bless my work.”*

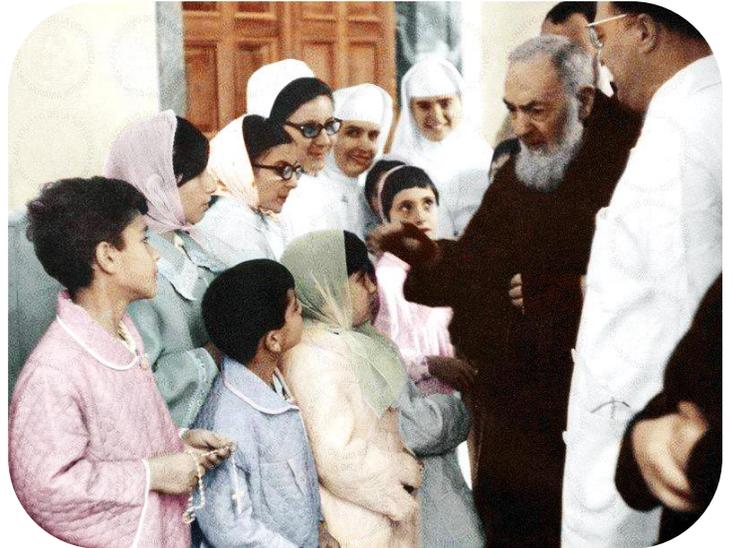
When you offer up your suffering and give from the treasures of your pain, rest assured that God will abundantly bless you for your selflessness.



# THE HIDDEN ARMY OF THE CHURCH

In J.R.R. Tolkien's novel **The Lord of the Rings**, it appears that the age of men will fail and that evil will win. Suddenly there appears the army of the dead. *"Malbeth the Seer prophesied that a day would come when need and haste would drive one of Isildur's heirs to take The Road under the Mountain, and that the dead would answer to his call."* The Prophecy came true. In the War of the Ring, Isildur's heir, Aragorn, called on the Dead Men. Summoning them to the Stone of Erech, Aragorn commanded them to fulfill their oath and be free.

Aragorn led the Army of the Dead through Lamedonand Ciril. As they went through the lands of Gondor, they found them deserted, since everyone who hadn't gone to war fled the approach of the dreaded "King of the Dead." Even the men of Umbar and Harad, who had been attacking the fords at Linhir above the mouth of the river Gilrain, stopped fighting and ran off in terror. The only person who had the courage to stay was Angbor, the Lord of Lamedon. Aragorn told him to gather his men and follow the Grey Company to Pelargir. For four days and nights after Aragorn first summoned the dead to the Stone of Erech, they rode.



“... As they are dying, I ask them to pray for me and the Church when they first get to heaven, in thanksgiving for receiving the Sacraments of the Church.”

Our mission at the hospital is to create this hidden army. Every day, I am at the bedside of 1 to 3 persons who are actively dying. As they are dying, I ask them to pray for me and the Church when they first get to heaven, in thanksgiving for receiving the Sacraments of the Church. In this, we are creating our hidden army of the dead to pray for the Church in her hour of need. We read in the book of Revelation that the martyrs under the altar in Heaven are praying for the Church in all her needs on earth. This is the hidden army of little souls we are gathering up. Cardinal Newman writes often in

his sermons of this hidden army. He states that at the time of greatest need, the saints in heaven pray all the more earnestly, and that God will answer their prayers in a more dramatic way when the Church is most in need. This is the army of the dead that we are creating in much the same way that was prophesied in the book *The Lord of the Rings*. The devil doesn't have this hidden army. We do! Gathering this army is part of our mission in the Padre Pio Ministry to the Suffering. Praise God and His saints!!!

# SPIRITUAL CHILDREN OF PADRE PIO

St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) is known for his gift of healing. Pope Francis said recently that the Church should look to Padre Pio as a powerful intercessor. Padre Pio wants to take you under his wings and into his heart and prayers. When you become a child of Padre Pio, he also takes into his prayers your entire family. So spend a moment now asking Padre Pio to be your helper in heaven and for him to make you his spiritual son or daughter.

*“I have made a pact with the Lord: when my soul has been purified in the flames of purgatory and deemed worthy to be admitted to the presence of God, I will take my place at the gate to paradise, but I shall not enter until I have seen the last of my spiritual children enter.”*

~ St. Pio, from a letter to spiritual daughter Antonietta Pompilio ~

## **PRAYER TO BECOME A SPIRITUAL CHILD OF ST. PADRE PIO**

O Saint Padre Pio, holy bearer of the Wounds of Christ, accept us this day as your spiritual sons and daughters and keep us always on the narrow path by your intercession. And to thou, O our Spiritual Father, stay there at the Gates of Heaven until all of your spiritual children have entered through, even and including us. Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Dear Padre Pio, I recall your promise to the Lord, *“Lord, I will stand at the gates of heaven until I see all my spiritual children have entered.”* Encouraged by your gracious promise, I ask you to accept me as a spiritual child and to intercede for my prayer requests ... *(here state your petitions)*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.

The following quotes from Padre Pio tell how he looked after and loved his spiritual family:

*“I love my Spiritual Children as much as my own soul, and even more.”*

*“Once I take a soul on, I also take on their entire family as my spiritual children.”*

*“To my Spiritual Children, my prayers for you will never be lacking.”*

*“If one of my spiritual children ever goes astray, I shall leave my flock and seek him out.”*

*“I shall stand at the gates of Paradise until all my spiritual children have entered.”*

For more information on Padre Pio, please go to <https://www.padrepio.org>



# GOLD COINS OF SUFFERING

In the booklet, *The Work of Padre Pio*, we read, “In a simple ceremony on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, 1947, Padre Pio blessed the first stone in the construction of his hospital – Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza (The Home for the Relief of Suffering)”. Three days later, approximately 20 builders, who did not even have plans for the project, began to prepare the access road for the building site. There were only four million Lire (at the time, 1 Lire was worth about \$100US)\* in the bank, but Padre Pio wanted building to commence no matter what. Supervision was entrusted to Don Peppino Orlando. Don Peppino Orlando was from Pietrelcina and an old friend of the esteemed

Capuchin monk. He was also a member of the clinic’s oversight committee, which was created on the afternoon of the 9<sup>th</sup> of January 1940 with Padre Pio’s blessing. Padre Pio took from his pocket a small gold coin that had been given to him by one of the faithful that morning and added, I want to be the first to make an offering.”

We are continuing Padre Pio’s mission of bringing hope and healing to the sick here in our INOVA Fairfax Hospital Ministry. You can help by giving God the Gold Coin of your prayers and suffering. Padre Pio himself said, *“I will bless those who bless my work.”*



## Dear Patients, Family Members and Friends,

Did you know that saints pick us? We don’t choose the saints!

I am sure you are wondering, how did the Arlington Diocese hospital ministry come to be called the Padre Pio Ministry to the Suffering? For some of you who are not familiar with Padre Pio, you may be wondering, why write an entire newsletter on Padre Pio?

Here is the story behind the name of our ministry in the Arlington Diocese:

On May 23 2018, Padre Pio appeared to me in a dream. In my dream, Padre Pio’s face appeared as large as life on the cover of the Evangelization Folder that I give out at the hospital to all the patients. At that moment, I knew in my heart the meaning behind this vision of Padre Pio.

Padre Pio was blessing our work of handing out Evangelization Folders to all Catholic patients at the hospital. Since Padre Pio had founded “La Casa Sollievo della Sofferenza” (the Home for the Relief of Suffering) in 1956, he had a special place in his heart for those who suffer in the hospital. Padre Pio’s life work was his hospital.

So it seemed to make sense that Padre Pio was blessing our work in the Diocese of Arlington. In fact, Padre Pio said he would bless those who bless his work. If Padre Pio is praying for you, how can you go wrong?

Now you know the rest of the story.

It is because Padre Pio appeared on our folder in my dream, that we now call this ministry ‘Padre Pio Ministry to the Suffering.’ So the work of Padre Pio continues!

**Blessings,**

*Fr. Stefan*