



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

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RELICS OF PADRE PIO ON DISPLAY IN ST. LOUIS

WHAT: Relics of St. Pio of Pietrelcina available for public veneration

WHEN: Wednesday, September 27, 9 a.m. – 9 p.m.

WHERE: Assumption (Mattese) Catholic Church (4725 Mattis Road, St. Louis, MO 63128)

ST. LOUIS – Assumption (Mattese) Catholic Church (4725 Mattis Road) will host relics for public veneration of the beloved Capuchin priest St. Pio of Pietrelcina, better known as “Padre Pio,” on Wednesday, September 27, from 9 a.m. until 9 p.m. The event is one stop on a nationwide tour between September 16 and October 8, 2017. Mass will be offered at 7 p.m. by Most Reverend Mark Rivotuso, Auxiliary Bishop, Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Padre Pio, a humble Capuchin priest, was blessed by God with the stigmata, the wounds of Christ he bore for 50 years, as well as other gifts such as perfume, bilocation, prophecy, conversion, reading of souls, and miraculous cures. People are still being cured through his intercession in ways that cannot be explained by medicine or science.

The relics of Padre Pio which will be on display for veneration include his glove, crusts of his wounds, gauze with his blood stains, a lock of his hair, his mantle, and a handkerchief soaked with his sweat hours before he died. Attendees will be able to venerate these relics of St. Pio and learn more about his holy life.

In the Catholic Church, relics are physical objects associated with a saint or candidate for sainthood – part of the person’s body or something with which he or she was in contact. Relics are not worshiped, but treated with religious respect. Touching or praying in the presence of such an object helps a faithful individual focus on the saint’s life and virtues, so that through the saint’s prayer or intercession before God, the individual will be drawn closer to God.

St. Pio was born on May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy, and baptized Francesco Forgione. He first expressed his desire for priesthood at age 10. In order to pay for the preparatory education, his father, Grazio Forgione, emigrated to the United States in 1899, where he worked for several years.

The future saint entered the Capuchin order at age 15, taking the name Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 at the age of 23. During his lifetime, Padre Pio was known as a mystic with miraculous powers of healing and knowledge, who bore the stigmata. Stigmata is the term the Catholic Church uses to speak about the wounds an individual receives that correspond to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ. They can appear on the forehead, hands, wrists, and feet.

His stigmata emerged during World War I, after Pope Benedict XV asked Christians to pray for an end to the conflict. Padre Pio had a vision in which Christ pierced his side. A few weeks later, on September 20, 1918, Jesus again appeared to him, and he received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on September 23, 1968. Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2002.

The event is sponsored by the Saint Pio Foundation. More information about St. Pio can be found at saintpiofoundation.org. The Saint Pio Foundation promotes awareness of St. Pio and his mission by working with institutions and individuals who share the same vision to serve “those in need of relief of suffering.” Funds raised by the Saint Pio Foundation are used to provide grants to American Catholic healthcare, educational, social, religious, and cultural partner organizations.

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