

## RELIC

### ST. PADRE PIO da PIETREICINA

- ❖ In one of the largest such ceremonies in history, Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio da Pietrelcina on June 16, 2002 before the 300,000 gathered. This was a witness to the power of suffering.
- ❖ Born Francesco Forgione in 1887, Padre Pio grew up in a family of poor farmers in southern Italy. Twice during his youth his father worked in Jamaica, New York, to provide family income.
- ❖ At the age of 15 Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. Eight later in 1910 he was ordained and was drafted during World War I. Shortly after he was discovered to have tuberculosis and was discharged.
- ❖ On September 20, 1918, as he was making his thanksgiving after Mass, Padre Pio had 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. Permission to celebrate Mass publically and hear confessions were removed. He did not complain of these decisions, which were soon reversed. However, he wrote no letters after 1924.
- ❖ Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata, but busloads of people soon began coming to see him. After morning Mass he heard confessions till lunch and again in the afternoon. In time this schedule reached 10 hours a day with people needing to take numbers while waiting to confess. Many said Padre Pio knew details they had never mentioned.
- ❖ Padre Pio died in 1968. He was 81 years old. His life was summarized in his own words, "The life of a Christian is nothing but a perpetual struggle against self, there is no flowering of the soul to the beauty of it's perfection except at the price of pain".