

Homily
Memorial of Saint Pius of Pietrelcina, Priest
Monday of the 25th Week in Ordinary Time
September 23, 2024

Who here is made in the image and likeness of God? Is this how we define ourselves?

Who here is a sinner? Is this how we define ourselves?

Today's first reading from Proverbs states, "to the humble he shows kindness." This doesn't mean we are to cower as if we are to expect a beating, and only then will He treat us nicely. It means to give God is rightful due; to be in awe of God for His omnipotence, His all-encompassing love, His great mercy. And in the greatness of our God, He made us in His image. We are made good. This is what the Gospel today means. Christ is the light of the world and we are the candle bearers. As we are made in the image and likeness of God, we share in that light, which is meant to be shared with the world.

In everything we have, in all we have been given, we are expected to share unreservedly. "To anyone who has, more will be given." Luke 8:18b. God is great and we are called to be great! I have been truly blessed, as we all have. My struggle is to figure out how to return all my gifts back to God in the form of service to His people. And at the same time, to not become too big-headed, bloated in ego, full of myself. It isn't me; it is God Who is in me. It is God Who is in you, Who gave you all the gifts you have and Who expects great things from you. No pressure.

Pio (pee oh) of Pietrelcina (pee eh trell CHEE nah), widely known as Padre Pio, was an Italian Capuchin (ka' pyoo shn) friar, priest, and mystic. God blessed (or cursed, depending on your perspective) him with many gifts not common among God's children. He could bi-locate, read souls (which made confession very intimate), and see his guardian angel, and had the wounds of Christ, which smelled like flowers. He was born into a poor Italian farm family, entered the novitiate of the Capuchin Order at 16, was ordained a priest, and spent many hours each day hearing Confessions. He once heard the Confession of a young Polish priest who ascended the throne of Peter 30 years later. Pope St. John Paul II declared Padre Pio a saint in 2002. Padre Pio said, "Prayer is the greatest weapon we have. It is a key to open the heart of God." JP II said at his canonization homily, "The life and mission of Padre Pio prove that difficulties and sorrows, if accepted out of love, are transformed into a privileged way of holiness, which opens onto the horizons of a greater good, known only to the Lord."

We are children of God; we are called to greatness, but we are not privy to how God will use our greatness. We are only to use our greatness to the best of our abilities and trust in the Lord.