Padre Pio

Born: 1887

Died: 1968

Feast Day:

23 September

DERRY DIOCESAN CATECHETICAL CENTRE

Padre Pio Francesco Forgione was born in the small village of Pietrelcina, in southern Italy. His parents were peasant farmers.

The Forgione family was deeply religious. They attended Mass daily, prayed the Rosary nightly, and abstained from meat three days a week in honour of Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

Although Francesco's parents and grandparents were illiterate, they narrated Bible stories to their children

It is said that by the time he was five years old, he had already made the decision to dedicate his entire life to God.

He joined the Capuchin friars at the age of 16. He became a priest 7 years later and spent fifty years at the monastery of
San Giovanni Rotondo.
He took the simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience.

After World War 1 many people saw in Padre Pio a symbol of hope. Eyewitness say that he had many spiritual gifts, including the gifts of healing, bilocation, levitation, prophecy, miracles, the ability to read hearts, the gift of tongues, and the gift of conversions.

Padre Pio reported stigmata, the wounds of Jesus on his hands, feet and side. The observations were reportedly inexplicable and the wounds never became infected. His wounds healed once, but reappeared.

Padre Pio increasingly became well known. He became a spiritual director, and developed five rules for spiritual growth: weekly confession, daily Communion, spiritual reading, meditation, and examination of conscience.

Initially the Vatican was sceptical, but by the 1960's all restrictions on Padre Pio's ministry had been removed.

Padre Pio is patron of Civil Defence Volunteers , Pietrelcina, adolescents, and 'less officially' of stress relief and 'January blues' given his advice *'pray, hope and don't worry'.*