

**25th Week in OT Cycle B**  
Weekday 3/Wednesday *St. PADRE PIO*  
Ezra 9:5-9, Luke 9:1-6

On August 5, 1918 Padre Pio's life changed forever! **In his writings he stated:**

"I was hearing confessions when suddenly I was filled with extreme terror at the sight of a heavenly being. He held some kind of weapon in his hand – like A LONG SHARP POINTED STEEL BLADE THAT SEEMED TO SPEW OUT FIRE. He hurled the weapon into my soul with all his might. **I thought I was dying!!!** I can't tell you how much I suffered during this period of anguish. *Even my internal organs were torn and ruptured by that weapon* – from that day on I have been mortally wounded.

I feel in the depths of my soul a wound that is always open and causes me continual agony".

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Such is the personal account of Padre Pio's reception of the **stigmata** / of the five wounds of our Lord which were not only manifest upon his person, BUT FOR 50 YEARS were a constant *source of pain* and *suffering* for him. **VICTIM SOULS**... Throughout the course of history many Saints have come among us who've had to bear the brunt of suffering on earth for the sake of alleviating God's justice towards mankind.

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In the book of Proverbs we are told: "**the King's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the Lord: he turns it wherever he will.**" In other words, each of our lives are under the constant watch by the all seeing eye of God and along the course of her earthly journey, many of us, not as intensely as PADRE PIO or some of the other great saints – **but many of us nonetheless will be asked to carry the TORCH OF SUFFERING for a time.**

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When those times come, how do we handle them? *Do we turn towards ourselves and forget about everyone else?* Or do we persevere in our tasks out of love for God and others? Because today Jesus – whose three years of public ministry were filled with suffering and persecution – today he teaches us what is most important in the midst of uncertainty: "**My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.**"

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No matter what were going through in life, as Christians, as followers of Christ, we are called to remain in relationship and in support of those around us rather than focusing in on our own problems, our own sufferings! Take for example, **Padre Pio's internal anguish concerning the fragility of faith of some Christians once exclaimed:**

"To redeem a weak soul - *like having a small tree that is drying up* - you have to transplant it, give it air, water and light: and let it live in the woods of our Lord."

Such a **tender thought** can only be born out of a heart that is not absorbed in "*self-pity*" – but rather is *continually steeped in prayer*. In the life of St. Pio, the words spoken by our Lord in John 16 verse 33 being brought to fulfillment:

"In this world you will have hardships, but be courageous, for I have overcome the world."

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Through the example of St. Pio, we discover that suffering – whether it be imposed upon us by those with **EVIL TONGUES, physical sufferings, or tragedies in life** – all suffering can be made use of in God's plan of extending salvation to all.

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The choice remains hours: what do we do with our sufferings?? Do we keep them for ourselves and allow them to turn our hearts into **bitter, sarcastic, hardened landscapes** or do we offer them up – *along with Christ's suffering in his passion* – do we offer them up like Padre Pio for the **salvation of others?**

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Today, Jesus Christ stands at the door of our hearts knocking – inviting us to join the Saints who have gone before us – he's inviting us to become VICTIMS OF DIVINE LOVE... *what will our answer be??*