

Homily Outline for the 32nd Sunday of the Year – Cycle B
Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception
November 7, 2021

† Most Reverend Thomas John Paprocki
Bishop of Springfield in Illinois

- I. Relics of St. Padre Pio will be available for the faithful to see and venerate in our Cathedral Atrium today after Mass until 4:30 PM.
 - A. St. Padre Pio is one of the more recent saints in the Catholic Church. He was known as a mystic, suffered the stigmata (wounds of Christ), and could read people’s souls in the confessional.
 - B. St. Padre Pio was born Francesco Forgione, on May 25, 1887, in Pietrelcina, Italy. His parents were peasant farmers. He had an older brother and three younger sisters, as well as two other siblings who died in infancy. As a child, he was very religious and by the age of five he reportedly made the decision to dedicate his life to God.
 - C. At the age of 15, Francisco entered the novitiate of the Capuchin friars at Morcone. He took the name of “Pio” in honor of Pope Pius I, whose relic he often saw at his local chapel.
 - D. Brother Pio became a priest in 1910. On September 20, 1916, Padre Pio was hearing confessions when he felt pain in his hands and feet. He noticed the stigmata, the wounds of Christ, appearing on his hands and feet. The experience was painful. Bleeding occurred. The wounds smelled of roses, and although they continued to bleed, they never became infected. Doctors who later examined the stigmata were amazed at their perfectly round shape. By 1919, word began to spread about Padre Pio’s stigmata and people came from far away to examine him. A Church investigation into his stigmata concluded that his condition was not faked.
 - E. Padre Pio became internationally famous. He was known for his piety, charity and the quality of his preaching. He famously advised, “Pray, hope and don't worry.”
 - F. Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968. His funeral was attended by over 100,000 people. Pope John Paul II canonized Padre Pio as a saint on June 16, 2002.¹

- G. The word relic comes from the Latin *relinquo*, literally meaning I leave, or I abandon. A relic is a piece of the body of a saint, an item owned or used by the saint, or an object which has been touched to the tomb of a saint.
- H. Four first class relics and one second class of St. Padre Pio are included in the display here today.
1. There are three classes of sacred relics. The first-class is a part of the saint's body.
 2. The second-class is a piece of the saint's clothing or something used by the saint.
 3. The third-class is an object which has been touched to a first-class relic.²
- II. In today's Gospel, Jesus invites his listeners to observe what is going on.
- A. They are looking at the treasury, where there were collection boxes to help defray the costs of running the Temple.
1. The money was flowing in, and it would seem that there were those who made sure that others were aware of how much they were contributing, but they were the rich and they could well afford it.
 2. By contrast Jesus draws their attention to the poor widow, who contributes her last two small coins – the equivalent of a penny. The message is clear: "Amen, I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all the other contributors to the treasury. For they have all contributed from their surplus wealth, but she, from her poverty, has contributed all she had, her whole livelihood."
- B. Jesus talks frequently about money, but He goes deeper than financial concerns.
1. Jesus looks not only *on the amount given, but into the very heart of the donor.*³
 2. Almsgiving, in whatever form it takes, is an expression of our love and generosity to the Lord. Our charity does not consist principally in the value of our gifts, but rather, in the love for God we bear in our soul."⁴
 3. St. John Paul II expressed it this way: "Our humble offering may be insignificant in itself, like the oil of the widow of Zarephath or the coins of the poor widow in the Temple. Yet our offering becomes pleasing in the eyes of God thanks to our union with Jesus."⁵

4. Almsgiving attracts the blessing of God and produces abundant fruits. It can heal the wounds of sin.⁶
 5. St. Cyprian taught that almsgiving is “the shield of hope, the teacher of faith, the medicine for sin. It lies within the reach of every person who wants to practice it. Charity has its own grandeur, while at the same time being easy to accomplish. It brings no risk of persecution. It is the crown of peace and truth, the greatest gift from God. It is necessary for the weak and glorious for the strong. Through almsgiving the Christian attains grace, wins pardon from Christ our judge, and makes God in some way a debtor.”⁷
- C. As we recalled during our Fourth Diocesan Synod in 2017, the world does not belong to us; it belongs to God our Creator, and we are entrusted with its stewardship.
1. The more we treasure the gift of God’s Spirit, the more we will let go and trust. What more beautiful meditation could we ask for than the image of the widow in today’s first reading, who responded to Elijah and shared her bread and water with him? Her generosity was rewarded: “The jar of meal was not spent, nor the jug of oil emptied.”
 2. May we approach our Eucharist today in that same spirit of hope and trust.

III. May God give us this grace. Amen.

¹ [St. Padre Pio - Saints & Angels - Catholic Online](https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=311), at https://www.catholic.org/saints/saint.php?saint_id=311.

² [Church Teaching on Relics \(catholiceducation.org\)](https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/church-teaching-on-relics.html), at <https://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/church-teaching-on-relics.html>.

³ St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistle to the Hebrews*, 1.

⁴ Francisco Fernandez, *In Conversation with God*, vol. 5, p, 423.

⁵ St. John Paul II, Homily in Barcelona, November 7, 1982.

⁶ *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, IV, 14, 23.

⁷ St. Cyprian, *On good works and almsgiving*, 27.