

# A “YES” THAT IS AN EXAMPLE TO ALL

By Fr. **FRANCESCO D. COLACELLI**

**O**ne hundred years have gone by since Brother Pio of Pietrelcina “made the profession of his solemn vows in the friary of San Elia a Pisanisi, before Fr. Raffaello of San Giovanni Rotondo, the Father Guardian, and in the presence of the Religious community”. It is Brother Pio himself who tells us this with his written avowal in the book for the profession of vows. He was at the time “19 yrs, 8 months and 2 days old”. It was 27 January 1907.

This event is referred to only briefly in the biographies of the Saint. It appears that neither his mother nor other relations were present, even though they had been three years previously when he made the profession of his temporary vows. And yet this was his definitive “Yes” as a young Capuchin to the rule of St. Francis. His final pronouncement made after much meditation and many trials.

On 27 January, a Mass presided by the Vicar General of the Capuchin Friars Minor, Fr. Felice Cangelosi opened the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Padre’s profession of vows and gave the go ahead to a year full of events arranged by our reli-

gious province. A programme of events planned with the intention, not so much of celebrating, as of drawing people’s attention to the wonderful thing of a life donated to God: to God and to one’s brothers and sisters in the case of a religious calling and to the family in the case of those called to matrimony.

This is a wonderful donation that needs to be rediscovered, in view of the always growing decline with always less marriages and fewer ordinations to the priesthood and consecrations to the religious life.

Even on this, Padre Pio has something to teach us. His example still draws vocations and fills the friaries of his and our Capuchin province. At present we have five youths in the process of entering, three who are in the postulate, two in the noviciate, nine in the post noviciate and three who are already studying theology.

In 1997, with prophetic foresight, the Servant of God Pope John Paul II, initiated the World Day for Consecrated Life held every year on 2 February with the aim of “appraising more the testimony of those people who have chosen to follow Christ in

a closer way through the practice of the evangelical counsels” and also with the awareness that “men and women today are more ready to listen to testimonies than to teachers and if they listen to teachers it is because they have given testimony with their lives”.

Convinced as we are of Padre Pio’s great worth, we take the opportunity of this anniversary year to share with everyone the testimony of his exemplary religious life that is also “a joyful proof to men and women living today in their different callings that the Lord is Love and is able to fill the hearts of all mankind”.

However, John Paul II, the late lamented Pontiff, does not want us to forget that “the consecrated life, before being a human commitment, is a gift that comes from Above, from the Father, who draws to Himself His creatures with a special love and in view of a special mission”.

Hence, his successor Benedict XVI exhorts us, in an ideal continuity, in his message for the 43rd World Day of Prayer for Vocations, “to pray for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life,” because, “where one prays with fervour, vocations blossom”. ■