

CELEBRATING A NEW BEGINNING

by Bro FRANCESCO DILEO OFMCap



There is a great desire to be together, it is stronger than the fear of contagion. There is a new spiritual fervour, a sign of hope and tentative testing that concerns all of humanity. We noticed this, most particularly, by the increased presences in our shrine during the summer months. Certainly, we have not returned to the pilgrimage numbers previous to the crisis, but the recovery is real, it has not gone unnoticed, and there is reason to celebrate.

To give a pastoral response to these signs, we have decided to begin again the traditional schedule that, until 2019, we followed every year with faith and devotion to prepare and celebrate the feast of Saint Pio of Pietrelcina.

So, once again, we shall unite on the weekdays for the prayer of the novena and celebration of the Eucharist in the lower Church named after the saint containing his mortal remains. On one weekend only will the assembly of faithful gather in the large upper church.


The evening Masses will be presided, as usual, by a preacher: we shall commence with our fellow friar Bro Nazario Vasciarelli, the Father Guardian of the Isernia friary and pastor of the Sacred Heart parish and Vice Postulator of the Cause of Beatification and canonisation of the Servant of

God Bro Modestino Fucci of Pietrelcian; he will be followed by another Capuchin friar Bro Giuseppe Maria Antonino of the Puglia province, presently assigned to the International fraternity of Loreto; he will be followed by the Carmelite priest Luigi Borriello, specialised in spiritual theology and a consultant of the Congregation of the Causes of Saints; and Bro Carlo Calloni, the Postulator General of the Capuchin Friars Minor Order, will conclude the series.

We shall begin once more, on the morning of 20 September 2022, also the meeting of the whole fraternity of the Sant'Angelo and Padre Pio province in San Giovanni Rotondo to commemorate the anniversary of the appearance of the visible stigmata on the body of our fellow friar saint, and also confirmed is the Eucharistic Celebration on the morning of 21 September, for the personnel and patients of "The Home for the Relief of Suffering" hospital that will be presided by the Diocesan Archbishop, Father Franco Moscone, who is also the President of the hospital Administration Committee. But the real news is the commencing once more of the traditional vigil of prayer on 22 September, in the large Saint Pio of Pietrelcina church square, beginning at 6:00 p.m.

with the liturgy of welcome and concluding with the midnight Mass presided by the Minister General of the Order, Bro Roberto Genuin, and that ends with the reading of Father Pellegrino Funicelli's testimony of Padre Pio's final moments in this world.

Finally on the feast day there will be three liturgical engagements: firstly the recitation of the Rosary led by the pastoral service for the youth and vocations of the Province of Sant'Angelo and Padre Pio, then two solemn Eucharistic celebrations: one in the morning, presided by the Capuchin Cardinal Sean Patrick O'Malley, the Archbishop of Boston (USA), who is also one of the closest assistants of Pope Francis, and then in the evening, presided by the Archbishop Moscone, pastor of the local church of Manfredonia- Vieste- San Giovanni Rotondo.

My wishes, therefore, are that this year's feast day, that coincides with the 20th anniversary of his canonisation, may really be, not just a beginning again of the shrine's peaceful routine but above all a spiritual new beginning in the building of a better world to attain that same goal officially recognised in the Capuchin friar and mystic, 20 years ago, of sanctity. 

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