

PPPG NEWSLETTER

COMING FULL CIRCLE

Let the world turn topsy turvy, everything be in darkness and Mount Sinai all aflame, covered with lightning, thunder — God is with you. But if God lives in the darkness and Mount Sinai is all aflame, covered with lightning, thunder, and noise, will we not be safe near Him? - St. Pio of Pietrelcina

A half century has passed since Padre Pio left us and yet his words still reverberate true in these topsy turvy Covid times. Cathedrals remain closed, victims cough thunderously, young people silently descend into darkness but “will we not be safe near Him?”

Father Elton Fernandes, SJ, gently guided our PPPG members to *choose hope* when he led last month's Zoom prayer meeting on “How we can hear Christ's voice more clearly in our lives.” First and foremost, “test the spirits,” he counseled. For our world is drowning in noise and news so it would behoove us all to dedicate time to discern.

Discernere: to sift

As a home baker, I pictured fine particles of flour falling like snow when Father Elton suggested that we “sift voices.” Is the voice we hear during prayer our own? Is it perhaps our parents' expectations? Is it the deceptions of the evil one or is it the “still small voice” (1 Kings 19: 12) of God?

The spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola give the faithful practical guidelines to determine between the various sources. In a nutshell, however, we must sift out whether the voice brings us consolation or desolation, closer to God or further away from him?

Three years ago, on a casual mention by Lucy Rodjito in fact, I embarked on an 8-month-long Ignatian Spiritual Exercises regimen that altered the course of my life. During that time, I battled multiple physical illnesses, constant spiritual

struggles and nearly debilitating self-doubt. Yet never before had I felt as close to Christ as I did during the daily hour of contemplative prayer. Though I have not kept up the practice, I continue to return to the moments of intense consolation with which God graced me when I took the time to discern His will and then chose to listen.

“What makes my heart sing?”

This was the question that prompted my renewed quest for discernment in 2021. Father Elton had asked us to consider whether we felt peace or God's presence, the strength to love, renewed hope or a sense of being recharged when we pondered a decision for discernment. His casual question, “What makes my heart sing,” however, spoke directly to my soul. In a flash I heard one of my favorite songs, “Hallelujah” by Casting Crowns, resounding through my body. I also pictured the children I care for as an early childhood educator. I recalled the thrill of watching my daughter grow into a young woman and felt the warmth of my spouse's hand in mine.

God's ways are not definitely our ways for I had different ideas when I first embarked on the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises. I was certain that discernment would lead down one path but Christ in his infinite wisdom methodically kept me on the narrow path. And during this PPPG primer on the spiritual exercises, our Lord rang out reassurance in my soul. By choosing to place Christ on the throne instead of myself, I had chosen rightly three years ago. Despite reservations, doubts, fear bordering on dread, Padre Pio seemed to be reminding me, “will we not be safe near Him?” Come what may.

By: **Cecilia Cho**

Editor's note:

We received two testimonies from our members after attending the prayer meeting on January 9th, 2021. Fr. Elton Fernandes, SJ was the presenter. The first article (testimony) was published last month.

PRAYER INTENTIONS

February 2021

1 | Ministry of Confession

Father, bless our priests as they serve you in the confessionals. Lead sinners to seek your mercy and forgiveness; give peace and joy to the penitents.

In Jesus name we pray through Mary Our Mother.

St. Padre Pio, please pray for us!

2 | 40 Days for Life

Father, we thank you for those who work to defend life. Bless them with strength and courage; create in us a desire to join their ranks.

In Jesus name we pray through Mary Our Mother.

St. Padre Pio, please pray for us!

3 | For a return to the celebration of Masses with a public congregation

Father, we praise and thank you for during this time when the doors of Your House were closed, we realized that we should never have taken your

blessings for granted. Please open the doors once more.

In Jesus name we pray through Mary Our Mother.

St. Padre Pio, please pray for us!

4 | Spiritual Vitality of our Priests

Father, Your son's chosen ones, our Priests, need rest and recuperation. Grant them vigour and vitality.

In Jesus name we pray through Mary Our Mother.

St. Padre Pio, please pray for us!

5 | Our Communities of Faith

Father, we praise and thank you for the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. By the power of the Holy Spirit stir up our communities of faith.

In Jesus name we pray through Mary Our Mother.

St. Padre Pio, please pray for us

Do you want us to pray for you? Email us: PPPG.Prayer.Request@gmail.com