

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Part 1

1887 - 1968

PURGATORY

The apparitions of the Souls of Purgatory to Saint Pio of Pietrelcina had begun already in childhood. He did not mention them to anyone because he thought they were things that happened to all people. During the last days of December 1902, while he was meditating on his vocation, Francesco had a vision. He described it years later to his confessor in this way: "Francesco saw beside him a majestic man of extraordinary beauty, radiant like the sun, who having taken him by the hand, encouraged Francesco with this precise invitation: 'Come with me because you ought to fight as a brave warrior?' He was led to a vast countryside, among a multitude of people divided in two groups: on one side there were people with a beautiful countenance and wearing white garments, bright as snow, on the other side there were people with a horrible appearance and wearing black vestments like dark shadows. The young man, placed between the two wings of spectators, saw approaching him a man of great height touching the clouds with his forehead and with a horrible countenance. The radiant being, whom Francesco had beside him, exhorted him to fight the monstrous being. Francesco prayed to be spared from the furor of the strange being, but the luminous one did not accept: 'Useless is every resistance of yours, with this one you ought to duel.

Take courage, enter confident in the fight, advance bravely for I will be near you; I will help you and I will not permit that he will knock you down.'

"The encounter was accepted and it turned out terribly. With the help of the luminous being who was always nearby, Francesco prevailed and won. The monstrous being, forced to flee, dragged behind him the great multitude of people of horrible appearance, in the midst of yells, curses and deafening screams. The other multitude of people of very beautiful appearance raised their voices in applause and praises to the one who had assisted poor Francesco in such a fierce fight.

"The radiant being more luminous than the sun placed on the head of victorious Francesco a crown of such extraordinary beauty, that it would be impossible to describe it. The crown was soon retrieved by the good being who declared: 'Another one more beautiful I keep in reserve for you, if you will know how to fight against the being you have fought now. He shall always return to attack...; fight bravely and do not doubt my help ... do not fear his vexations, do not fear his formidable presence. I will be close to you; I will help you always, in order that you will be able to cast him down.' "

