

Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Part 2

1887 - 1968

PURGATORY

“One evening Padre Pio was resting in a room of the guest quarters on the ground floor of the convent. He was alone and he had been lying on his cot for a short time when, suddenly, there appeared to him a man wrapped in a black cloak. Padre Pio asked the man who he was and what he wanted. The man answered that he was a soul of Purgatory. ‘I am Pietro Di Mauro. I died in a fire on September 18, 1908, in this convent, used as a home for the elderly after the expropriation of ecclesiastical property. I died in the midst of the flames in my bed, overtaken during sleep, exactly in this room. I am coming from Purgatory: the Lord has allowed me to come to ask you to offer for me the Holy Mass of tomorrow morning. Thanks to this Mass I will be able to enter Heaven.’

“Padre Pio assured that he would offer the Mass for him: ‘I wanted to accompany him to the door of the convent. I became fully aware of having spoken to a deceased person only when, going out to the churchyard, the man who was beside me, suddenly disappeared. I must confess that I reentered the convent somewhat frightened. I asked permission to Padre Paolino da Casacalenda, superior of the convent, to whom my agitation did not go unnoticed, to celebrate the Holy Mass in supplication of that soul after, naturally, having explained to him all that had happened.’ ”

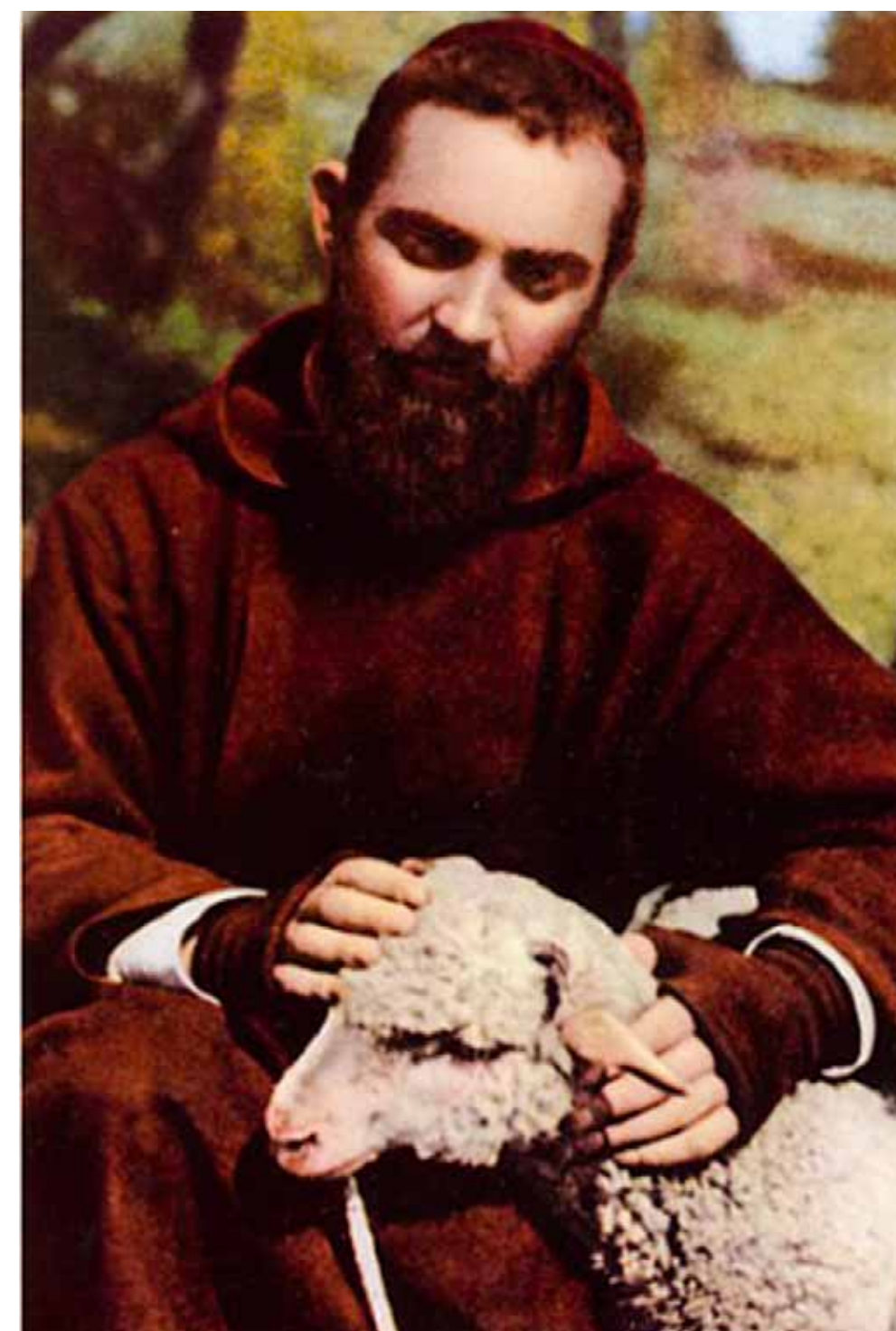
A few days later, Padre Paolino wanted to verify the information and went to the registry office of the Town of San Giovanni Rotondo to consult the

register of the dead for the year 1908. In the records listing the people deceased in the month of September, Padre Paolino found the man's first name, surname and the cause of death: “On September 18, 1908, in the fire of the home for the elderly died Pietro Di Mauro, son of the late Nicola.”

Another episode was told by Padre Pio himself to Padre Anastasio: “One evening while I was praying in the choir alone, I heard the rustling of a robe and saw a young friar puttering around the main altar, as if he were dusting the candle holders and arranging the flower vases. Convinced that it was Fra Leone organizing the altar, and since it was the time for supper, I approached the banister and said to him: ‘Fra Leone, go to eat, it is not the time to dust and set up the altar.’ But a voice that was not the one of Fra Leone answered me: ‘I am not Fra Leone.’ ‘So who are you?’ I asked.

“‘I am one of your fellow friars who did his novitiate here. For obedience I received the task to keep the main altar clean and orderly during my year of probation. Unfortunately, many times I was disrespectful to Jesus in the sacrament by passing in front of the altar without revering the Most Holy One kept in the tabernacle. For this grave omission, I am still in Purgatory. Now the Lord, in his infinite goodness, sends me to you so that you may determine how much longer I must suffer in those flames of love. Help me.’

“‘I, believing to be generous towards that suffering soul, exclaimed: You will remain here until the Mass of



tomorrow morning. That soul yelled: You are cruel! Then he screamed loudly and disappeared. That wailing created a wound in my heart that I have felt and shall feel all my life. I, who through divine delegation could have sent that soul immediately to Heaven, condemned him to remain another night in the flames of Purgatory.’ ”

