

"Padre Pio was telling me that I had not held to my bargain with him to make the Sign of the Cross and say a prayer before starting to work. The scent remained in my room for a while, and I was made very happy by it, feeling that I had Padre Pio near me.

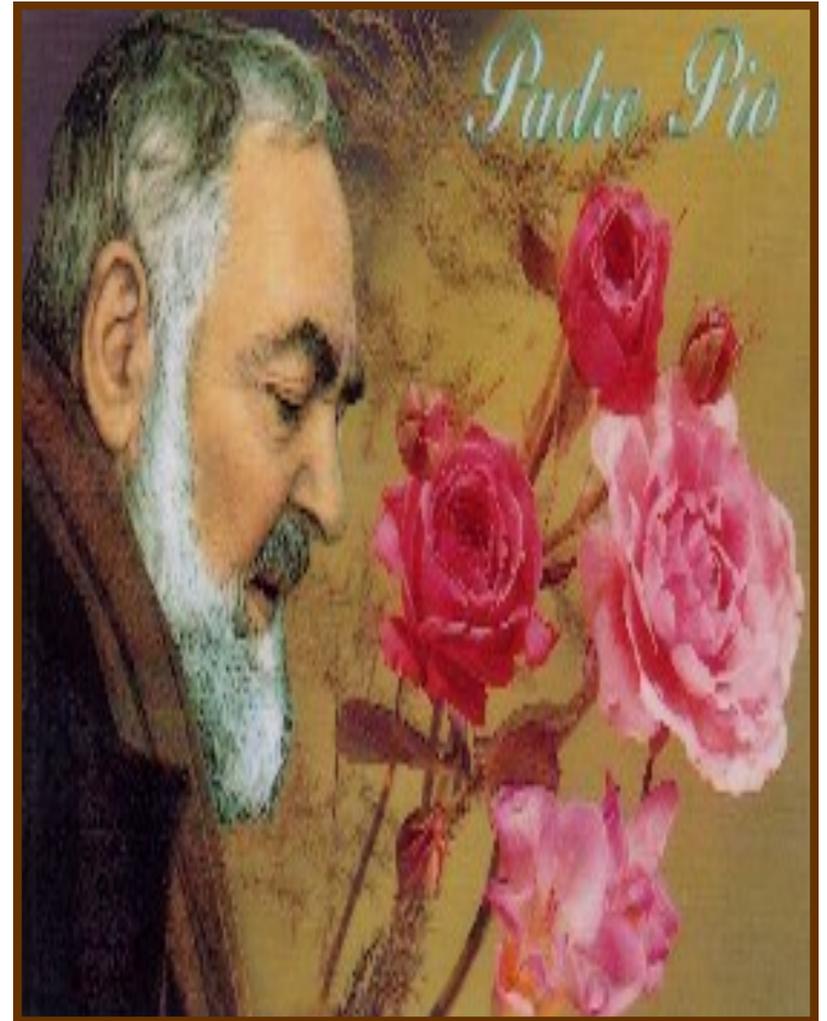
"There are innumerable accounts of this kind, and it will be very worthwhile to make a study of each particular case, since each one reveals the manner in which Padre Pio follows souls, and how he guides, counsels and comforts, using this divine gift. Many of these souls are suffering from various trials, and there are those who are begging for his powerful intercession with God. There are mothers with sick children, fathers asking help in financial difficulties, people want him to guide, support and help them. He makes them aware of his perfume to warn them not to be afraid, but to hope, to pray and to behave well. He warns them not to return to the wrong road but to steer always toward the right goal. Their spirits become serene and their hearts are filled with hope because they are no longer alone. They feel that they are sustained by a supernatural strength. Many people have been assured of their prayers being answered through the Father's perfume, and each time the scent suggest the favor that he has asked for.

"As already noted, the perfume is indescribable. It has all the varieties of ordinary odors, but it also has elements that are new and different and hitherto unknown. Sometimes it is more distinct than others, sometimes it reminds you of roses, violets or lilies, or, in fact, of any sweet smelling flower. At other times it is like incense or carbolic acid, and again it is like some very fine oriental tobacco. This is the first kind of odor that is noticed, particularly by recent converts, and it is what I smelled the first time I went to see him."



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Charismatic Aromas Associated with Padre Pio



**His wounds never festered
but often gave off a pleasant aroma.**

Charismatic Aromas Associated with Padre Pio

Many people have said that they have experienced an odor – they really smelled something – which was associated in some way with Padre Pio. The odor was charismatic – through it Padre Pio was telling them something, perhaps that he was nearby simply to be with them, to thank or protect, warn them, or that he was about to obtain a miracle for them.

People who have experienced Padre Pio's charismatic aromas range from atheists to devotees. They include the clergy and laity, professional and nonprofessional people, in San Giovanni Rotondo and across the ocean. Often these people, when they smelled the aroma, were not thinking of Padre Pio. Many of them had never even heard that such a phenomenon was associated with him.

The aromas were real odors, but never body odor. They might be the smell of roses, tobacco, incense, lavender, lilies, violets, pine, camphor, sulphur, or carbolic acid.

At least four doctors have given us written statements about this phenomenon. Two of the four doctors were Dr. Luigi Romanelli and Dr. Giorgio Festa, who had been commissioned to give Padre Pio an extensive physical examination.

Dr. Romanelli wrote: "in June, 1919 (sic: it was May, 1919) on my first visit to Padre Pio, I noticed a peculiar scent, so much so that I said to Father Valenzano, who was with me at the time, that I thought it was very improper for a friar to use perfume. For the next two days, either when talking to Padre Pio or just sitting in his room, I did not notice anything. Before leaving, however, as I was going down the stairs, I had a whiff of the same odor, but only for a moment, because it soon disappeared. I have consulted several learned scientists to find their opinion of perfume in the blood. Every one of them declared that it is impossible for blood to have a sweet odor, but the blood that drips from the stigmata of Padre Pio has a characteristics scent, which even people with no sense of smell can detect. Besides, when the blood is coagulated or dried on some garment that he has worn, it still retains its perfume. This is contrary to all natural properties of blood, and yet many people have experienced it."

Dr. Festa has given us his own report: "The blood which is discharged in droplets from the wounds has a special perfume, fine and delicate, that many people who have approached him have distinctly noticed.

"Padre Pio never used any kind of perfume. Nevertheless, there were many people who, as they approached him, very clearly noticed the pleasant smell of violets or roses.

"She said: 'I never heard the name before.'

"I said: 'that's his picture on my bureau.'

"I called to my wife: 'Eileen, come over here.'

"She said: 'What do you want?'

"I said: 'Just come over here. Smell the odor of my finger and the thumb of my right hand.'

"She said: 'Where did you get that?'

"I told her that it was the perfume of Padre Pio. No one knew what I had asked for at ten minutes to four, on my knees. Only myself. I knew then that I would not have to undergo the operation, even though it was scheduled for 1 o'clock that afternoon.

"Shortly after that, the doctor, Louis McAllos, came in and said: 'Jim, we are canceling the 1 o'clock surgery.'

"All I said was: 'Thanks, Louie!' I didn't say anything to him about what was in my mind. There was little or no pain, no bleeding. I was quite comfortable. I was discharged and went home."

Another person who has spoken extensively about Padre Pio's charismatic aromas is Alberto Del Fante, who attributes his conversion from atheism to Padre Pio.

"I was coming home with my family," Del Fante wrote, "after a visit to my parents. It was Saturday, and thinking that the next day I could have a rest, I decided to write and work until three o'clock in the morning. I had previously left a certain piece of work unfinished, so now I started where I had left off, but I omitted to bless myself, as is my custom.

"I was suddenly aware of a delicate scent, which I did not at first recognize. Padre Pio's different odors do not have the quality of commercial perfume. They resemble each other but are not the same. This was the smell of incense.

"I called my wife and my children, who had already gone to bed. They all came down, including the maid, Maria Rocca. Every one of them smelled incense except my Flora. In order not to influence them, I asked them to tell me what they could smell. My wife and my oldest daughter as well as the maid said at once that it was incense. My little boy could not exactly describe it. I was most particular in not suggesting the word incense to any of them, being anxious not to give them any lead.

Fortunately, Vincenzo was able to convince his wife that the aroma was associated with Padre Pio.

In Hazelton, Pennsylvania, Dr. James Falvello was for twelve years Chief of the Dental Staff at St. Joseph's Hospital. In 1957, he was admitted to the hospital as a patient for surgery to remove his kidney stones. His doctor performed two cystoscopies but without success. "The pain was so severe," Dr. Falvello stated, "that I felt as though the operating instruments was still in me."

He had a third and a fourth cystoscopy, neither of them anymore successful than the others. When his doctor said that he would try a fifth cystoscopy, he told Dr. Falvello that if he did not have any better results he would have to undergo open surgery on his side.

"At ten minutes to four, on the morning of June 19," Dr. Falvello stated, "I got out of bed. I rested my elbows on the stool that we used at that time to get out of bed. I knelt down and signed myself with the Sign of the Cross, and I said an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be.

"This was my petition. I said: 'Padre Pio, if you are at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, or if you are in meditation and can hear me, won't you be so kind as to include my petition with yours, that I may be spared the open incision in my body, and may the hand of my surgeon be the divine instrument to rid me of my stone.'

"I had the cysto. I guess it was around 8:30 when I returned to my room. I was just coming out of the anesthesia, when my wife came into the room. I could see the door leading to my private room. I can see the little picture of Padre Pio which I had kissed so often, and a little piece of palm which was loaned to me by an attorney who is a devotee of Padre Pio.

"I could hear my wife walking into my room. My nurse said: 'What a strong perfume you have on!'

"Mrs. Falvello said: 'Who, me? I stayed with my widowed sister-in-law last night just two blocks from here, and I came hurriedly to see how Jim made out. I haven't used any powder or any cosmetics at all.'

"Within a few minutes the nurse came to my bedside and said to my wife: 'The smell is stronger at his bedside.'

"By this time I was worried if I was out of the anesthesia, and if I had heard them correctly. I said to them: 'I heard you talking about a strong odor.' By this time I had passed my right forefinger and thumb near my nose, and the rose perfume, which I had identified, seemed to be admitted from them. This was the hand in which I held the picture of Padre Pio so many times during the day.

"I asked the nurse, Mrs. Brill: 'Did you ever hear of Padre Pio?'

"As far as I am concerned, I can testify that during my first visit I took from his side a small piece of cloth stained with blood. I wanted to examine it under the microscope. I did not notice any special odor because I had been deprived of my sense of smell. However, a distinguished official and other people in the car with me as we were returning from San Giovanni very clearly noticed the special fragrance. They did not know that I had brought with me the special piece of cloth enclosed in a small case.

"They noticed this, in spite of the fact that the car was moving and air was circulating. They assured me it was exactly the same perfume that emanates from the person of Padre Pio. In Rome, during the following days, and for a long time afterwards, I kept the same cloth in a closet in my study. It filled the whole room with perfume, so much so that patients who came to consult me continually asked me how to explain it.

"My colleague Dr. Romanelli accompanied me during my second visit to Padre Pio. His sense of smell is normal. Along with a large number of people, he verified the same impression that I got from the people mentioned above."

Dr. Festa went into a lengthy analysis of the properties of blood and concluded: "This phenomenon, then, is contrary to every natural and scientific law. It goes beyond the possibility of logical discussion. But in all honesty we cannot deny the reality of its existence."

The doctor raised the question whether the perfume might possibly be the result of the tincture of iodine. He answers very definitely that that is impossible. In fact, iodine would cause a repulsive odor.

Just as Padre Pio had applied iodine in the hope of healing the wounds, so also Dr. Festa applied iodine and other medications to the wounds. As time went on, the wounds continued to discharge little drops of blood. The iodine had no effect. The smell of the iodine was usually very strong. A long time after the iodine was no longer used, drops of blood continued to come from the wounds. The perfume did not diminish in any way but continued to be equally strong.

To the testimony of Doctors Romanelli and Festa we can add the written reports of two other doctors. Dr. Amanzio Duodo, of Veglio Mosso Picco (Vercelli), wrote: "On February 15, 1950, I was with the Battista Bertolo family, of Vallemosso. We were engaged in pleasant conversation. In addition to myself, all the members of the above-mentioned family were present.

... A friend who had recently come from San Giovanni Rotondo was describing to us the great humility of Padre Pio in spite of all the publicity

about his work, when suddenly and unexpectedly an intense perfume of violets enveloped us all. It lasted about a half hour, although the doors and windows were wide open. Later on, a pungent and strong odor of perfume blanketed (literally: assailed) us."

Another doctor, Dr. Eduardo Bianco, of Vallemosso, corroborated Dr. Duodo's statement: "I, the undersigned, assert that on the occasion referred to by Dr. Duodo, I was present and smelled the odor of violets. I must add that on various other occasions I have repeatedly perceived odors of roses, violets and carnations, whose source was positively not artificial. I wish also to declare that these observations of mine elude all scientific explanation, although I have done my best to rationalize them."

Sometimes Padre Pio's charismatic aroma was sensed by people without a sense of smell. Mrs. Ann McAvoy, who lives in the Bronx, N.Y., had never heard about Padre Pio until an Augustinian priest, Father Robert E. Reagan, O.S.A., mentioned him to her.

Mrs. McAvoy had been praying that tension in her family be resolved, and that her brother, Frank Stoddard, would be relieved of the severe pain of terminal cancer of the stomach, so that he might die in peace.

On November 1, 1968, Frank began to take the medication which the doctor had prescribed. On November 11, Father Reagan visited him again. For the first time he told Frank and Ann about Padre Pio. He applied to Frank's stomach a crucifix which Padre Pio had blessed, and he left the crucifix with them. Afterwards, Ann applied the crucifix a few times to her brother's stomach and prayed with him. All the while, Frank did not have to take a single pill for his pain.

The following evening Ann was exhausted. "My brother was in the bedroom," Ann stated, "I was sitting on the couch and picked up the *Times*. I had not even opened it when I sensed a beautiful, sweet odor. I thought to myself: 'What is this?'

"Twenty-three years ago I had pneumonia, and ever since that time I did not have any sense of smell. But then I smelled honeysuckle. There was nothing around to give off an aroma. It got stronger and stronger. It came two or three times. Then it died away.

"I broke into a sweat, because this was unusual and frightening. Perspiration dripped from my forehead. I thought I was losing my mind. I couldn't figure it out. I had on no makeup. I had just sat down, and there wasn't even time for the heat of the lamp to affect anything.

"I didn't connect this with Padre Pio, but it bothered me all night. I didn't tell Father Reagan about it. When I told him later on, he scolded me: 'You should have told me sooner.'

"I said I didn't tell him because I didn't know how to explain it. Then for the first time he explained that frequently the aroma of flowers and incense are connected with the presence of Padre Pio.

"My brother said the rosary every day until he died. Since November 11, he said that he was very comfortable, even though he had not taken any more medication. I asked him: 'How do you feel? Do you feel any pain?'

"He answered: 'No, I don't feel any pain, but I do have a little nausea.'

"On December 6, 1968, my brother fell asleep and slept for twelve hours. He died a beautiful, peaceful death in his sleep. And peace was restored to the family, too."

Mrs. Mario Pasqualini, of San Francisco, wrote to Padre Pio to thank him for helping her daughter. "Our little girl, who is six years old," Mrs. Pasqualini wrote, "is very delicate and subject to colds leading to pneumonia and bronchitis. Last June was no exception. It was the afternoon just following her first Holy Communion, and we had prepared a little dinner to celebrate. A few friends were invited, including Mr. and Mrs. Victorio Caimotto (Padre Pio's spiritual children). Suddenly, our little girl began to complain of not feeling well. She coughed violently, vomited repeatedly and ran a temperature of 104 degrees. We called the doctor immediately, but it seemed ages before he arrived.

"In the meantime, Mrs. Caimotto suggested that we pray to Padre Pio and to our Blessed Mother. No sooner had we finished our prayer than our little girl opened her eyes and said: 'Oh mother, I smell such a sweet smell. It's like the incense they have in church.'

"Her eyes seemed brighter, her cheeks were no longer burning with fever. By the time the doctor arrived, her temperature was almost normal. He diagnosed that she had bronchitis, but it was the mildest case she ever had."

On one occasion the aromatic sign of Padre Pio's presence almost ended in a broken marriage. Vincenzo Catalano, who lived in East Harlem, New York City, had just returned to the Sacraments after being away for sixty-four years. He makes it known very emphatically that it was Padre Pio who led him to make a good confession to a Capuchin priest at Our Lady Queen of Angels Church, on East 113th Street, in New York City.

On the way home, he bought a money order for \$12.00, to send to Padre Pio. When he arrived home, he took the receipt out of his pocket and tried to tell his wife what he had done. But she did not hear a word he said. The receipt reeked of perfume. "You have another woman!" she screamed.