

PRESS RELEASE  
For immediate release

## RELICS OF SAINT PIO OF PIETRELCINA AND SAINT JOHN PAUL II TO VISIT MONTREAL

Montreal, September 16, 2019 - The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Montreal, in collaboration with Totus Tuus Canada, invites the faithful to take part in the veneration of the relics of two great modern saints: Saint Pio of Pietrelcina (commonly known as Padre Pio) and Saint John Paul II. Both reliquaries will tour local churches between September 21 and September 28 inclusively (see schedule below). All events are free and open to the public.

The following will be on display for public veneration:

- 1- Linen cloth used by Saint Pio of Pietrelcina to cover the stigmatic wound in his side
- 2- A blood relic of Saint John Paul II

### **A brief look at the life of Padre Pio**

St. Pio was born on May 25, 1887 in Pietrelcina, Italy, and baptized Francesco Forgione. He first expressed his desire to become a priest at age 10. In order to pay for his preparatory education, his father, Grazio Forgione, immigrated to the United States in 1899, where he worked for several years.

The future saint entered the Capuchin order at age 15, taking the name Pio. He was ordained a priest in 1910 at the age of 23. During his lifetime, Padre Pio was known as a mystic who bore signs of stigmata and was also known for miraculous powers of healing and knowledge. Stigmata is a term the Catholic Church uses to refer to the mysterious appearance of bodily wounds on an individual; the location of these wounds corresponding to the crucifixion wounds of Jesus Christ. They can appear on the forehead, hands, wrists side, and feet.

His stigmata appeared during World War I, after Pope Benedict XV asked Christians to pray for an end to the conflict. Padre Pio had a vision in which Christ pierced his side. A few weeks later, on September 20, 1918, Jesus again appeared to him, and he received the full stigmata. It remained with him until his death on September 23, 1968.

Pope John Paul II canonized him in 2002.

### **A brief look at the life of St. John Paul II**

Pope John Paul II was one of the most memorable popes of the modern age. He lived through the century's most turbulent times and offered a clear moral stance and provided decisive direction for the Catholic Church. He also played an important role in the transition from communism to greater democracy in Eastern Europe.

Pope John Paul II died in April 2, 2005.

John Paul II was canonized by Pope Francis on April 27, 2014. His feast day is October 22, marking the date he was elected pope.

### **The tradition of relics**

From the earliest times, Christians have honoured relics, i.e. the physical remains and personal effects of early Christians who were martyred or lived especially holy lives. In many places, their graves became pilgrimage sites, where the faithful journeyed to be inspired by their example, and to ask for their help in the struggles of life and in leading holy lives themselves. Over time, shrines dedicated to these holy people were built to create a proper place for pilgrims to honour or venerate these saints, to attend Mass, and to receive the sacraments.

Traditionally, pilgrims venerate relics by touching or kissing the reliquary in which the fragment of the holy person's physical remains or personal item is kept. Veneration is an expression of reverence for the holiness of the saint, and pilgrims often ask for the saint to intercede on their behalf before God for spiritual assistance, physical healing, or other particular graces.

“The religious sense of the Christian people has always found expression in various forms of piety surrounding the Church's sacramental life, such as the veneration of relics...” (Universal Catechism, 1674)

### **Detailed schedule**

**(Events will be animated in Spanish, with simultaneous French translation available, unless otherwise indicated.)**

**Saturday, September 21, 2019**

**From 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. - Public Veneration**

**Notre-Dame Basilica, 424 Saint-Sulpice St., Montreal, QC H2Y 2V5**

**Sunday, September 22, 2019**

**From 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

**Mary Queen of the World Cathedral, 1085 de la Cathédrale, Montreal, QC H3B 2V3**

**2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. - Rosary and confessions**

**3 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. - “Pray, be hopeful and let nothing disturb you”  
Conference (Spiritual theme of Saint Padre Pio with messages for the family from  
Saint John Paul II)**

**3:45 p.m. to 4 p.m. - Break**

**4 p.m. to 4:45 p.m. - Conference (continued)**

**5 p.m. - Mass and veneration of relics**

**Monday, September 23, 2019**

**From 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Public Veneration**

**St. Thomas à Becket Parish, 4320 Ste-Anne St., Pierrefonds, H9H 4Y7 (English  
only)**

**Wednesday, September 25, 2019**

**From 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Public Veneration**

**Saint-Gilbert Parish, 5420 des Angevins St., Saint-Leonard, QC H1S 1H9**

**Friday, September 27, 2019**

**From 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. - Public Veneration**

**Saint-René-Goupil Parish, 4251 Parc René-Goupil St., Montreal, QC H1Z 1X8**

**Saturday, September 28, 2019**

**From 8 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. - Public Veneration**

**Saint-Louis-de-France church, 825 St-Louis St., Terrebonne, QC J6W 1J7**

From 2:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. - Public Veneration  
Saint-Charles-Borromée Parish, 3341 Saint-Charles Rd., Terrebonne, QC J6V 1B4

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**For more information or an interview, please contact:**

Erika Jacinto  
Press officer for the archbishop and  
Director, Communications and Media Relations  
Archdiocese of the Catholic Church of Montreal  
ejacinto@diocesemontreal.org  
514 925 4300 ext. 204