

Thus let us try to imitate, as far as we possibly can, such modest and dignified actions. And let us do our utmost to be, as far as possible, similar to him on this earth, in order that we might be more perfect and more similar to him for the whole of eternity in the heavenly Jerusalem.

I end here as I am unable to continue, recommending that you never forget me before Jesus, especially during these days of extreme affliction for me. I expect the same charity from the excellent Francesca to whom you will have the kindness to give, in my name, assurances of my extreme interest in seeing her grow always more in divine love. I hope she will do me the charity of making a novena of Communions for my intentions.

Don't worry if you are unable to answer my letter for the moment. I know everything so don't worry.

I take my leave of you in the holy kiss of the Lord. I am always your servant.

Fra Pio, Capuchin

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Pamphlet 638

**A Letter from St. Padre Pio  
to Annita Rodote,  
Pietrelcina, July 25, 1915**

Beloved daughter of Jesus,

May Jesus and our Mother always smile on your soul, obtaining for it, from Her most holy Son, all the heavenly charisms!

I am writing to you for two reasons: to answer some more questions from your last letter, and to wish you a very happy names-day in the most sweet Jesus, full of all the most special heavenly graces. Oh! If Jesus granted my prayers for you or, better still, if only my prayers were worthy of being granted by Jesus! However, I increase them a hundredfold for your consolation and salvation, begging Jesus to grant them, not for me but through the heart of his paternal goodness and infinite mercy.

In order to avoid irreverence and imperfections in the house of God, in church - which the divine Master calls the house of prayer - I exhort you in the Lord to practice the following.

Enter the church in silence and with great respect, considering yourself unworthy to appear before the Lord's Majesty. Amongst other pious considerations, remember that our soul is the temple of God and, as such, we must keep it pure and spotless before God and his angels. Let us blush for having given access to the devil and his snares

many times (with his enticements to the world, his pomp, his calling to the flesh) by not being able to keep our hearts pure and our bodies chaste; for having allowed our enemies to insinuate themselves into our hearts, thus desecrating the temple of God which we became through holy Baptism.

Then take holy water and make the sign of the cross carefully and slowly.

As soon as you are before God in the Blessed Sacrament, devoutly genuflect. Once you have found your place, kneel down and render the tribute of your presence and devotion to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Confide all your needs to him along with those of others. Speak to him with filial abandonment, give free rein to your heart and give him complete freedom to work in you as he thinks best.

When assisting at Holy Mass and the sacred functions, be very composed when standing up, kneeling down, and sitting, and carry out every religious act with the greatest devotion. Be modest in your glances; don't turn your head here and there to see who enters and leaves. Don't laugh, out of reverence for this holy place and also out of respect for those who are near you. Try not to speak to anybody, except when charity or strict necessity requests this.

If you pray with others, say the words of the prayer distinctly, observe the pauses well and never hurry.

In short, behave in such a way that all present are edified by it and, through you, are urged to glorify and love the heavenly Father.

On leaving the church, you should be recollected and calm. Firstly take your leave of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; ask his forgiveness for the shortcomings committed in his divine presence and do not leave him without asking for and having received his paternal blessing.

Once you are outside the church, be as every follower of the Nazarene should be. Above all, be extremely modest in everything, as this is the virtue, which, more than any other, reveals the affections of the heart. Nothing represents an object more faithfully or clearly than a mirror. In the same way, nothing more widely represents the good or bad qualities of a soul than the greater or lesser regulation of the exterior, as when one appears more or less modest. You must be modest in speech, modest in laughter, modest in your bearing, modest in walking. All this must be practiced, not out of vanity in order to display one's self, nor out of hypocrisy in order to appear to be good to the eyes of others, but rather, for the internal virtue of modesty, which regulates the external workings of the body.

Therefore, be humble of heart, circumspect in words, prudent in your resolutions. Always be sparing in your speech, assiduous in good reading, attentive in your work, modest in your conversation. Don't be disgusting to anybody but be

benevolent towards all and respectful towards your elders. May any sinister glance be far from you, may no daring word escape your lips, may you never carry out any immodest or somewhat free action; never a rather free action or a petulant tone of voice.

In short let your whole exterior be a vivid image of the composure of your soul.

Always keep the modesty of the divine Master before your eyes, as an example; this Master who, according to the words of the Apostle to the Corinthians, placing the modesty of Jesus Christ on an equal footing with meekness, which was his one particular virtue and almost his characteristic: "Now I Paul myself beseech you, by the mildness and modesty of Christ" [*Douay-Rheims*, 2 Cor. 10:1], and according to such a perfect model reform all your external operations, which should be faithful reflections revealing the affections of your interior.

Never forget this divine model, Annita. Try to see a certain lovable majesty in his presence, a certain pleasant authority in his manner of speaking, a certain pleasant dignity in walking, in contemplating, speaking, conversing; a certain sweet serenity of face. Imagine that extremely composed and sweet expression with which he drew the crowds, making them leave cities and castles, leading them to the mountains, the forests, to the solitude and deserted beaches of the sea, totally forgetting food, drink and their domestic duties.