



Dearest Pilgrims,

In a beautiful and practical catechesis on the family, Pope Francis said:

*“God chose to be born in a human family that He Himself formed. He created it in an out-of-the-way village on the outskirts of the Roman Empire. Not in Rome, which was the capital of the Empire, not in a big city, but in a nearly invisible hamlet. So, right from there, from that edge of the great empire, a most holy and wondrous story was begun, the story of Jesus among mankind! And this story was begun in a family!”*

In that decision of God there is a clear message: saints blossom within the family! Indeed, when the soil is good, it yields marvelous fruits. The life of Padre Pio is clear proof of that assertion.

Padre Pio's parents lived a simple yet staunch and steady faith. Above all, they took care to instill in their children the love for the Lord through the example of their everyday lives. If only there were more parents like this! How different the world would be!

On winter evenings it must have been a touching scene to see all the family gathered around the hearth for the rosary. Indeed, in the home of Padre Pio's parents they sacrificed much, but not the rosary.

And so, Francis (the future Padre Pio) understood Who was at the center of his parents' lives ... and he also learned to live like a Christian. As the time for his first studies approached, there was also a growing economic crisis that began to weigh heavily on the family. Grazio, Padre Pio's father, decided, then, to leave for America in search of work: it must have

