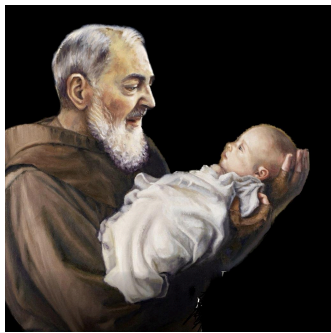




TASTE Reflection Questions
22 January 2026

Embracing God's Call with Mary's Example and Pio's Maxim

Fr. Paul Kongnyuy

Pray, Hope, and Don't Worry. ~ Padre Pio



1. We all have problems and sometimes it feels as though God has abandoned us. In that moment, we should take advice from Padre Pio — **“PRAY, HOPE, & DON'T WORRY”** because God is walking beside us in silence and preparing something better for us.

- How did you feel about Fr. Paul's vocational story from Cameroon to the US? **(See back page)**
- What did you find most inspiring? Did the events almost seem miraculous?
- How did God clear the way for him both for good and to avoid danger?
- What can you learn from this and apply to your own life?

2. **PRAY**— Fr. Paul gave us a number of thoughts to ponder about PRAY. **(See back page)**

- Which of these elements of prayer do you often incorporate (**P**raise, **R**epent, **A**sk, **Y**ield to God's Will)?
- Which elements do you need to add into your prayer life? e.g., Do you yield to take time to listen to God?
- How do you feel about prayer as not just communicating with God, but also being a relationship with Him?
- How can you better pray from your heart vs. the lips?

3. **HOPE** — Fr. Paul also gave us a number of thoughts to ponder about HOPE. **(See back page)**

- How did you feel about the acronym for HOPE— **H**ave, **O**nly, **P**ositive, **E**xpectations?
- What did you think about the idea of undoing our prayer if we say, “What if God refuses”?
- How does it make you feel when God does not seem to be answering your prayer?
- What do you think about hope transforming fear into trust?
- How can you have more hope when facing a family crisis, financial difficulties, health concerns, loneliness, and/or broken relationships? Do you go to the Bible for consolation?
- How can you avoid getting angry and instead have the courage to change the situation?

4. **DON'T WORRY** — Fr. Paul also gave us a number of thoughts to ponder about DON'T WORRY. **(See back page)**

- Who do you turn to when you have burdens? How has it been helpful?
- In challenging times, do you trust in God's power or tend to rely on your own? Explain.
- How does it feel to turn your problems over to our Blessed Mother Mary?
- When you are anxious, do you follow the words of Philippians 4:6-7? What results?
- Have you ever considered that although it is natural to be worried, living in worry is spiritual suffocation?
- Were you surprised to learn that surrender is not weakness, but rather powerful trust?

FR. PAUL'S VOCATIONAL STORY

- When he was in 3rd grade, his father died and his uncles took all of the money.
- He and his siblings lived with their Muslim Auntie who tried to convert them.
- They started going to church every morning & serving at each Mass.
- He helped his Muslim brother-in-law at his boutique, but did not live with him for fear he would attempt to convert him.
- He walked 4-5 miles daily to go to Mass & 2 years later, got the call to priesthood that he was discerning.
- God gave him a sign through a guy who appeared drunk saying, "Let him go to the seminary. He will be a wonderful priest."
- Although he got a benefactor, he still needed to supplement the funds to cover all his expenses.
- He applied to the bishop & was accepted twice — once early on & again for 3 more years.
- When a crisis broke out in Cameroon, he escaped from a dangerous guy. His car tumbled many times, but he was unscathed.
- He was sent to a parish with no need, but the children beckoned him to play.
- He was invited to see the bishop. He and his brother were given a mission to the US.
- They arrived in the US 9/1/2017 and were sent to 2 different seminaries.
- He was ordained a deacon 5/2022 and was ordained a priest on 6/2023.
- His uncles ultimately sought forgiveness which was granted.

PRAY

- Always pray "Lord, let your will be done" and "Lord, what do you want me to do"?
- Padre Pio says that prayer is the oxygen of the soul.
- An acronym tells us how to PRAY — **P**raise, **R**epent, **A**sk, **Y**ield to the will of God
- When you are in sin, God cannot answer your prayers. That is why we pray the "Our Father"
- Our Blessed Mother magnifies our prayers as she intercedes for us.
- She teaches us how to meditate on Christ and forms our hearts to trust God.
- Prayer is not merely asking, but it is being with God. Prayer is a relationship.
- St. Padre Pio prayed in silence, in fatigue, in suffering, and in adoration.
- Pray from the heart and not under the lips. Use the rosary as your spiritual weapon.

HOPE

- An acronym for **HOPE** is— **H**ave, **O**nly, **P**ositive, **E**xpectations.
- We can inadvertently undue our prayer if we say, "What if God refuses"?
- If God is not answering, He is walking along with us in silence.
- Mary strengthens our hope as she leads us from fear to trust during hardship. Never give up!
- Stop asking God why and start asking Him how — How do you want me to survive this storm?
- How do you want me to be that better version of who you have created me to be?
- An acronym for **BIBLE** is — **B**asic, **I**nstructions, **B**efore, **L**eaving, **E**arth and go to Heaven. The bible consoles us.
- St. John Paul II exalts us to never ever give up on hope.
- St. Augustine: Hope has 2 daughters: 1) Anger at the way things are and 2) Courage to change it.
- Hebrews 6:19 — Hope is the anchor of the soul. Romans 5:5 — Hope does not disappoint us.
- Saint Augustine — "He who created us without our help will not save us without our consent.
- Hope does not deny the pain. It proclaims God's presence in pain.

DON'T WORRY

- Don't carry your burdens alone, surrender them to God.
- Remember that God can answer our prayers through someone sitting right next to you.
- It is very easy to go to Heaven. Just follow the corporal and spiritual works of mercy
- In order to go to Heaven, you need to go down (humility) before you can go up and enter Heaven.
- Padre Pio says worry is a lack of trust in God's power.
- Mary helps us not to worry because she is our mother. Just as a child who hands a problem to a loving mother is relieved, we can give Mary all of our anxieties & she will bring them to Jesus.
- While worry is believing God will mess it up, trust in God and His goodness replaces worry.
- Matthew 6:34 — Do not worry about tomorrow; tomorrow will take care of itself.
- Philippians 4:6-7 — Have no anxiety at all, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, make your requests known to God. Then the peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.
- It is natural to be worried, but living in worry is spiritual suffocation. Surrender is not weakness, it is powerful trust.
- Pope John XXIII — "It's your Church, Lord. I'm going to bed." — reflects surrender & trust
- Begin each day with "Jesus I trust in you." End each night by handing your burdens to God.
- Romans 5:3-5 — ... affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, ...
- Matthew 28:20 — "And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." Always be hopeful!