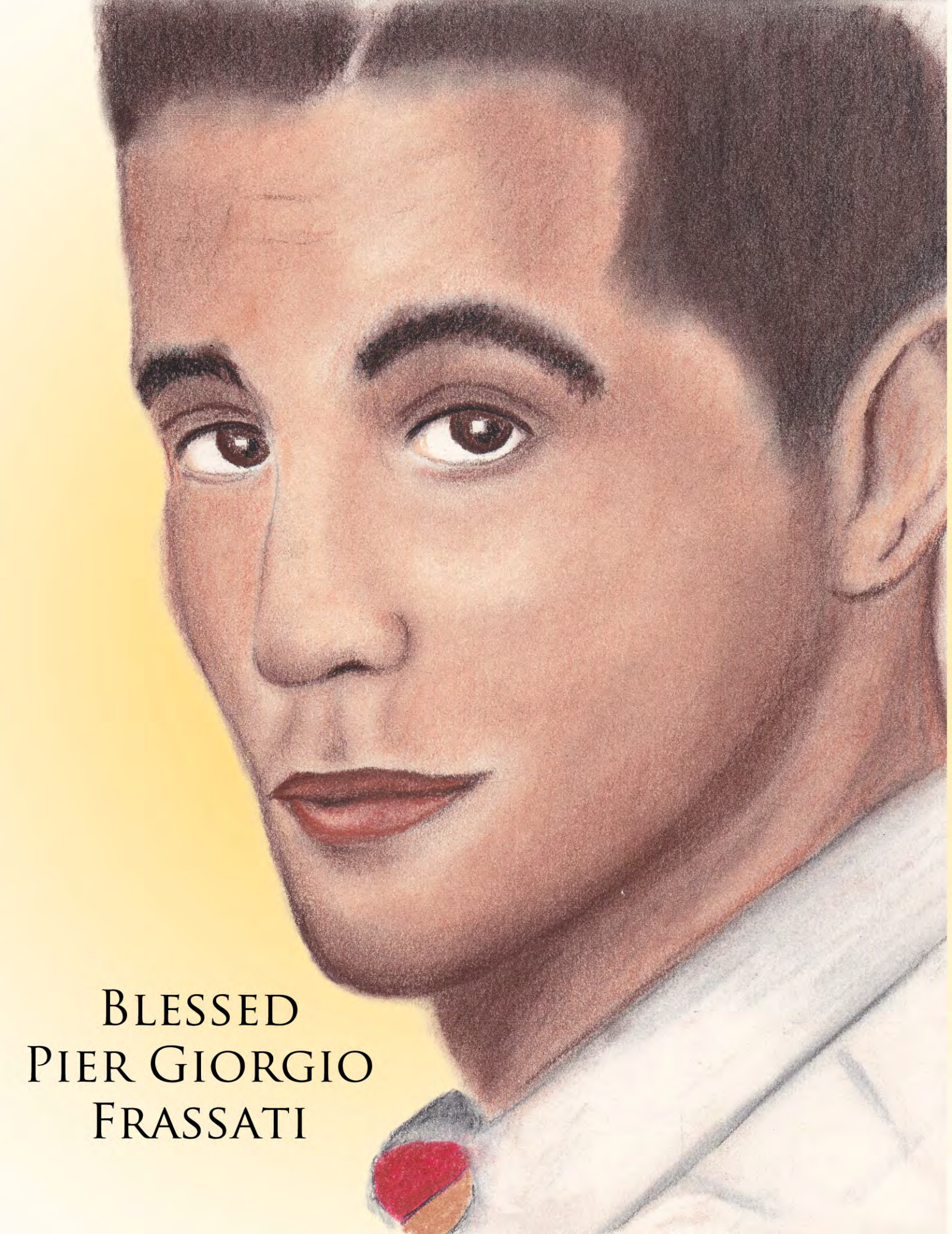




BLESSED
PIER GIORGIO
FRASSATI

COMMITTED SINGLE LIFE

*Blessed
Pier Giorgio
Frassati*



Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati was born on April 6, 1901 in Turin, Italy. He came from a prominent family. His mother, Adelaide Ametis, was a painter. His father, Alfredo, was the founder and owner of a famous newspaper called La Stampa. Alfredo was also an influential man in politics, serving in the Italian Senate and then later as his country's Ambassador to Germany.

Even as a young boy, Pier Giorgio became known among his peers for his faith and devotion. He joined various prayer groups and openly shared his faith with his classmates. He deeply loved the Holy Eucharist and obtained permission to receive Communion daily (which was uncommon at that time). He also had a deep devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary. At the age of 17, in 1918, Pier Giorgio joined the Saint Vincent de Paul Society, which works with the poor and the sick.

He gave much of his free time to serving the needy, including caring for orphans and helping the veterans returning from World War I.

Pier Giorgio decided to become a mining engineer so he could "serve Christ better among the miners." He was always looking to see how he might serve others and work for justice. Although he considered his studies his first duty, he was active in political and social movements. He worked hard to uphold the Church's teaching in the political arena. His strong beliefs even got him into fights at times, because he wanted to remain true to what he believed and the Church taught.

Pier Giorgio's father was frugal and did not give him much spending money, but Pier Giorgio often gave the little he had to help the poor. At times, he even gave his bus fare to help someone in need, and he would have to run home to be on time for meals. Other times, he would return home without his sweater

or his coat, having given it to someone in need. He thought of others before he thought of himself. Pier Giorgio, however, did not only give what he had. He also gave of himself. Pier Giorgio often sacrificed vacations at the Frassati summer home in Pol-lone because, as he said, "If everybody leaves Turin, who will take care of the poor?"

Pier Giorgio often went to the theater, to the opera, and to museums. He loved art and music, and could quote whole passages of the poet Dante. Mountain climbing was one of his favorite sports. Trips to the mountains, which he organized, also served as opportunities to make God known, loved, and served among his friends. He never passed up the chance to lead his friends to Mass, to the reading of Scripture, and to pray the Rosary. If they were going to spend time together hanging out, Pier Giorgio also believed they should spend time together serving those in need and praying to God.

In 1922, Pier Giorgio joined the Third Order of Saint Dominic, which is a way for lay people to live out the spirituality of the Dominicans. He chose the name Girolamo after his hero, Savonarola, who was a Dominican priest who called for Christian renewal in Florence. "I am a fervent admirer of this friar, who died as a saint at the stake," he wrote to a friend.

Pier Giorgio contracted poliomyelitis just before receiving his university degree. Doctors believed that he probably caught the disease from the sick for whom he cared. Even in his final days Pier Giorgio thought of others, particularly his grandmother who was also dying. After six days of terrible suffering, he died on July 4, 1925, at the age of 24.

Pier Giorgio's dying preoccupation was for the poor and the needy. The day before he died, he scribbled a message to a friend with a paralyzed hand, asking him to take the medicine needed for injections to a poor sick man he had been visiting. It

was clear that Pier Giorgio saw as his family the poor, the sick, and the suffering of Turin.

From Pier Giorgio's funeral, it was clear that those in need in Turin saw him as family too. The streets of the city were lined with many people who were unknown to his family but came to mourn his death. They were the poor and the needy who Pier Giorgio had served so unselfishly for seven years. Many of them, in turn, were surprised to learn that Pier Giorgio was from the Frassati family. They never had suspected that such a saintly young man had come from such an influential family.



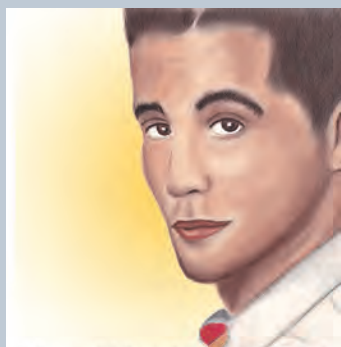
**"If everybody leaves Turin,
who will take care of the
poor?"**

- Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



Supplemental Materials on Sainly Models

Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati



Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati

Born: April 6, 1901

Died: July 4, 1925

Beatified by
Pope John Paul II
May 20, 1990

Interesting Facts

- Although Blessed Pier Giorgio was a serious student, he was not a “straight- A” student. He sometimes struggled in school and needed to even switch schools at one point because of his struggles.
- He loved his family’s dogs.
- So widely recognized was his holiness that the cause for his canonization was opened in 1932, only seven years after his death.

Likely Student Questions:

Did Blessed Pier Giorgio really get into fights? Like fist fights?

They were more like skirmishes. During one “church-organized demonstration” against Fascism, there was some violence from the authorities. Blessed Pier Giorgio came to the aid of a fellow protester and was able to fend off the blows from the police with the banner they were carrying.

What is the deal with the “Third Order” and the “Tertiary Order”?

The term “third order” is in reference to religious orders. Usually the first order are professed men and women (depending upon the order) who have taken vows and become religious priests, religious brothers, or religious sisters. The second order is composed usually of contemplatives who are associated with the first order. The third order is composed of lay men and women who do not take religious vows but have a special relationship with the order, seeking to live out its spirituality and charism in their own daily lives and vocations.

What other ways was Blessed Pier Giorgio involved in the Church?

How else did he try to serve those in need?

Blessed Pier Giorgio was also a part of Catholic Action, which was a group of Catholics that came together to work in society and politics on issues of social justice. It was a group guided by the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church. It sought not just to alleviate poverty, but make wider structural changes as well that would help end poverty and other injustices. He was also a part of Pax Romana, which sought to bring students together to promote peace.

What is Poliomyelitis?

Poliomyelitis is more commonly known as polio or infantile paralysis. It is an acute viral disease that is spread from person to person. As in the case of Blessed Pier Giorgio, it can be a deadly disease, but vaccines developed in the 1950s have almost eradicated the disease.

(Continued ...)

Interesting Facts Continued

- Fifty-six years after his death and burial, his remains were “exhumed and found to be perfectly intact and incorrupt.”

Discussion Questions:

Blessed Pier Giorgio seemed like he was loved by his family, he had friends, he was an active person, and he really spoke freely about his faith and acted upon it. What do you think prevents us from really speaking freely about our faith? Or acting on it?

There might be many reasons why, including peer pressure and societal norms. We don't see others speaking freely about their faith, so it may be strange for us. We are taught by the world around us that faith is something to be kept personal, not something to be shared so that God might be known, loved, and served by others.

The time he spent doing works of charity and acts of service, Blessed Pier Giorgio could have been doing other things. What are some things we consider to be more important to do apart from service? What are some things that we could choose not to do so that we could spend a little bit of time in service of others?

There again might be many things that we do that for ourselves, like playing video games, listening to music, surfing the Internet, and watching TV. It is not that we cannot spend time enjoying life, as Blessed Pier Giorgio showed, as he had many favorite free time activities. The key is also to find time to devote to know, love, and serve God, especially in the poor.

Blessed Pier Giorgio died at such a young age, so what sort of impact do you think his life can have?

Even though he died young, Blessed Pier Giorgio already had made a big impact in his short life. He is only one of many canonized saints who died very young, such as Blessed Laura Vicuna and St. Francis Xavier. They remind us that it does not take a lot of time to become a saint; we just have to do each day what God is asking us to do right now. In fact, there are Frassati Societies around the world now in which young people take their inspiration from Blessed Pier Giorgio to try to be the saints of today.
