



Holding girl with cerebral palsy, Father DiOrio asks the more than 10,000 attending a Cleveland diocesan healing service to "pray for the children." Right, he blesses the crowd while a woman who has been "slain in the spirit" lies on the floor of the Cleveland Public Hall. (NC Photo)

The Healing Priest:

"I don't heal anyone. . . It is the love of the Lord That does the healing"

By Sigmund J. Mikolajczyk
Cleveland (NC) — "I don't heal anyone, nor do you," Father Ralph DiOrio, known as "the healing priest," told participants in a healing service in Cleveland. "It is the love of the Lord, the Holy Spirit that does the healing."

Father DiOrio, a 52-year-old priest from Worcester, Mass., has led healing services in parishes throughout the country over the past seven years. He is now director of the the Worcester diocesan Apostolate of Healing.

The sponsor of the services in Cleveland was the Prayer for Healing Ministry of Cleveland, Inc. The sessions took place in the city's Public Hall in early April.

Throughout the services, Father DiOrio called out to people whom he discerned as being healed or needing healing. "Is there a man here whose ear cannot hear? He is here with his wife, and it's his ear on his wife's side," he said at one point. "Think of all his wife's missed conversations. . . Where are you? You are able to hear."

Near the stage, an elderly man shouts, "Here I am. Praise the Lord — I can hear my wife."

Though some came hoping to receive a healing, Irene J. Walker of St. Mary's Parish in the Cleveland suburb of Chardon, Ohio, was a "skeptic." Her left side has been paralyzed from polio since she was five. After arthritis set in, she said, "my hands and everything hurt so badly. I really couldn't walk more than 10 steps -- and only with a walker -- without crying out in pain."

But at the Saturday April 9 service, Mrs. Warner was one of the people whom the healing priest called.

"I was a skeptic, all right," she said in a telephone interview with the Catholic Universe Bulletin, newspaper of the Cleveland diocese. "I made a point of not looking into his eyes. But afterward, I was just trembling."

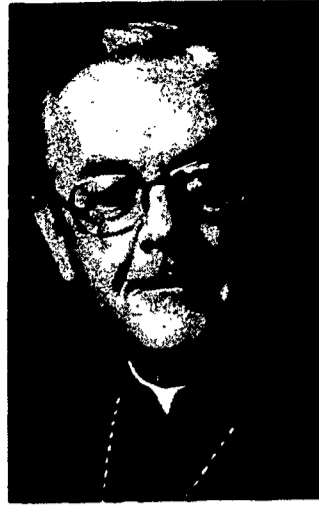
"When Father called me, and I fell — slain in the Spirit — I floated like a feather, like a cloud."

Mrs. Warner said that after she stood up, without assistance, that evening, she felt "wonderful, great. It's hard to find the right words," she said, adding, "Now I have no more pain. I can walk easily. It's just heavenly. It's God."

But not everyone seeking a healing underwent such a dramatic change as Mrs. Warner. As a woman tried to push another, elderly, woman out of a wheelchair, Father DiOrio said to her, "Don't push anybody into healing. They'll know if they're being healed."

Speaking to all participants, he said, "Some of you will never get out of your wheelchairs. God may be asking some to look upon and accept their death in victory." He urged them all to "offer your lives to Jesus."

As did all the people who claimed to receive a healing during the two services, Mrs. Warner agreed to see a physician for verification. Prayer for Healing Ministry is to follow up on all cases.



Main Speaker

Bishop Joseph L. Hogan will be the main speaker at a *multifaith baccalaureate* service at 4:30 p.m., Saturday, May 14, at Nazareth College. The college's 56th commencement will take place at noon, Sunday, May 15. The theme of the baccalaureate will be "Paragon." Music will be presented by the Nazareth College Music Department. The service will be followed by a Mass celebrated by Bishop Hogan with homily by Father William Riegel, chaplain. A Protestant worship service will take place at 2:30 p.m., Saturday.

Anointing Scheduled

St. Lawrence Church, 1000 N. Greece Rd., has scheduled an anointing service for the sick at 2:30 p.m. on Sunday, May 15. For more information, call 227-1602 during the day, and 227-1543 in the evening.

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NFP INFORMATION SESSION — Sponsored by Natural Family Planning Education of Rochester, 7:30-9 p.m., Friday, May 13, main conference room, Rochester General Hospital.

SENIOR MATINEE — "The African Queen," starring Katherine Hepburn and Humphrey Bogart, 1:30 p.m., Thursday, May 5, George Eastman House.

IRISH GALA — Children's Program Benefit, 7 p.m., Saturday, May 7, at Mother of Sorrows Church, corner of Latta Road and Mt. Read Blvd. Tickets are 17.50 and can be ordered by calling Mr. or Mrs. Dennis Hogan at 986-3086.

JAILS DISCUSSION — Former county district attorney Lawrence Kurlander, now State Director of Criminal Justice, will join in a discussion of "Criminal Justice Policies and Jail Overcrowding" from 12-1:30 p.m., on Friday, May 6, at the Downtown United Presbyterian Church, 121 North Fitzhugh St. Open to the public.

ART SHOW OPENING — Local sculptor Lina Marini. Preview and reception 7-8 p.m., Saturday, May 7, Casa Italiana at Nazareth College. Show will be open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. weekdays through May 20. Free.

CHILDREN'S FILM — "Darby O'Gill and the Little People," stars Sean Connery, Nazareth College Arts Center, 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. Tickets are \$.50.

BUCKET DANCE THEATRE — Garth Fagan dancers. 8:30 p.m., Wednesday through Sunday, May 4-8, 11-15. Main Auditorium, Nazareth College Arts Center. Tickets: \$10.50, \$8.50, \$6.50.