

Health

Continued from previous page

"We learned together that the priesthood has its own healing gift."

When the ministry began, it was controversial even within charismatic circles, Father McAlear acknowledged. Now, it has come to be generally accepted within the church.

In recent years, too, "there's been a lot of blurring and confusion between New Age stuff and the Christian gift of healing," he added.

But from the Christian perspective, "healing is not a thing unto itself," he said. "It has to be part of the larger picture of Christian life. When people get into healing ministry as a thing in itself, it becomes a kind of sideshow. It has to be for a purpose. It has to be for the greater glory of God."

Father Swizdor's ministry began in the mid 1970s when he was pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Ranshaw, Pa. He had long been fascinated with Mark 16:18 — "They will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

"I began to think about it: Why isn't it happening now," he recalled. "So I got up in the pulpit (one Sunday) and said we're going to add a healing service to the (weekly) holy hour."

Some 80 to 100 people went to the first service. Thousands have gone to his services in the two decades since.

Katy Metzger of Chaumont, N.Y., is one who claims emotional, spiritual and physical healing through Father Swizdor.

While working in a medical research laboratory in the 1977, Metzger was exposed to hazardous chemicals. The exposure



Matthew Scott/Staff photographer

A man falls into the arms of a "catcher" after being touched by Father Swizdor at the May 23 healing Mass.

led to immune system malfunctions; problems with her heart, vision and balance; loss of muscle control; and a series of mini-strokes and seizures. She was eventually forced to stay in her home near Watertown most of the time, and to rely on an oxygen tank to help her to breathe. By 1986 she was suicidal.

Then she and her husband Don heard that Father Swizdor was scheduled to conduct a healing series in Vernon, N.Y. — some 110 miles away.

Though unfamiliar with the healing ministry, they decided to give it a try, but Katy was too sick to travel. So Don drove to the services for five nights and was prayed over in proxy for Katy.

Katy said in a telephone inter-

view that she experienced spiritual and emotional healing at that time; thoughts of suicide left her. She was not physically healed, but that was not what she needed at that point, she said.

"God chose wisely," Katy said. "The spiritual healing was more important than the physical healing." It enabled her, she added, to "have a personal relationship with God. To have him as God and friend is so much more important than the freedom from physical suffering."

But even as her spiritual life grew, her physical condition deteriorated. In 1989, she began a 10-month stay in Dallas, Texas, for treatment at the Environmental Health Center. She had to return there several other times.

In April 1992, Don drove to two more of Father Swizdor's healing services — this time in Central Square, near Syracuse — while Katy remained at home too ill to travel. Again Father Swizdor prayed over him in her name.

On Wednesday, Katy made the trip — along with her oxygen mask and IVs. She returned on Thursday and again on Friday, April 10.

After she "rested in the Spirit" that last night, Don recalled, "She told me that she was healed. She turned off the oxygen. I had to carry her into the church, and she walked out on her own feet af-

ter."

Katy said she is "totally well" today. "The Lord sustains me and continues to bless me," she said. Her relationship with God helps to keep her in good health, Don said.

"Before the healing, she needed the oxygen and the IVs," he said. "Now, frequent reception of the sacraments and daily Mass and daily prayers, these are her medicines."

The ultimate goal of the healing services is to increase one's faith, acknowledged Judy Shahanah of St. John of Rochester Church, Fairport, who was at the May 22 St. Jude's service.

"I feel my faith is strengthened," she said. "You get a deep desire to do God's will. You become so inflamed with that love, you just want every minute to count for something."

Researcher finds Communion safe

LODI, N.J. (CNS) — People who receive Communion run no more risk of infection than those who don't, according to a study by microbiologist Anne LaGrange Loving.

Health effects do not change if the communicant receives daily or only occasionally, or takes consecrated wine as well as the consecrated bread, she said.

Loving, who teaches microbiology at Felician College, a Catholic college in Lodi, N.J., compared weekly health reports over a 10-week period by 681 New Jersey residents who participated in the study.

She said that in more than 100 years of research and debate over the possible relationship between reception of Communion and communicable diseases, hers was the first recorded study that compared actual churchgoing and Communion practices with the actual health history of a large number of people over a period of time.

Besides standard demographic data and their weekly worship and Communion practices, participants were asked to record any medications taken and any respiratory, intestinal, skin, systemic or general illness problems they experienced.

"There were no differences in reported illness between those who received, those who attended but did not receive, and those who never attended church," Loving reported.

One more reason
Why women
prefer Highland



Because one easy, confidential phone call is all it takes to get in touch with knowledgeable, caring professionals whom you can trust for information, education, services, and referrals for virtually any health issue that's on your mind:

- Pregnancy, childbirth, and breast-feeding
- Parenting skills
- Nutrition, fitness, and exercise
- Eating disorders
- Breast care and breast cancer
- Menopause, gynecology, and urology
- Massage therapy
- And, much more



Put our number to work for you. Call today! 271-4636

HIGHLAND HOSPITAL

Where Caring Still Comes First

Our programs are available to all women, regardless of which hospital they use.



Having a baby?

...GET THE CARE YOU NEED
Prenatal Care and Delivery

Hospital care with a womanly touch.
© Mary Dahl Maher, CNM • (716) 271-2480

Park Avenue Midwifery • 325 Park Avenue • Rochester

Eye Physicians & Surgeons of WNY Webster Ophthalmology Associates

Eye Care for You and Your Family

- Paul Rosenberg, M.D.
- Richard Seeger, M.D.
- Nicholas Stathopoulos, M.D.
- Donald Tingley, M.D.
- Peter Bird, O.D.

Locations in Webster and Greece:

Webster Health Center 60 Barrett Drive 872-1300	Professional Building 1081 Long Pond Road 225-7060
---	--

Full Service Vision Care and Optical Services
Cataract and Laser Surgery
Plastic Surgery of the Eyelids and Tear System
Pediatric Ophthalmology
Excimer Laser Refractive Surgery

"Quality Without Compromise"