

# Monthly healing Masses assist mind, body, spirit

Fraternity of Priests give and receive spiritual support

By JOHN FRANKO  
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Members of the Fraternity of Priests gather frequently to support one another and ask the Holy Spirit to guide them in their ministry. But they also work to empower God's people in the Holy Spirit and to help them understand the gifts they receive from it.

As part of their outreach the fraternity sponsors monthly healing Masses.

"We are trying to help make them aware that the real healing comes through the Eucharist, through our entering into Christ and Christ entering into us," said Father Tom Galvin, administrator of St. Patrick Parish in McKeesport.

Members of the fraternity spend an hour before the Blessed Sacrament earlier in the day to prepare for the Mass. They also spend a half-hour before the Mass in prayer, asking God to help them

discern what he wants them to tell the people and how he wants to be revealed to them.

Father Galvin pointed out that the liturgies involve more than just physical healing. He noted that they ask for spiritual healing and for the Holy Spirit to help redirect lives. Following the Mass, the faithful have an opportunity to come up and pray one-on-one with the priests.

"It's an awakening of the graces that are already there," Father Galvin said.

More than 300 people attended this month's liturgy at St. Patrick. The next healing Mass will be May 16 at Holy Trinity Parish in Robinson Township, followed by June 13 at St. Alexis Parish in Wexford. Both Masses will begin at 7 p.m.

The Fraternity of Priests includes some two dozen members. They meet every Wednesday at The Ark and The Dove in Gibsonia. The location reflects the charismatic roots of the fraternity in that it was where the worldwide Catholic Charismatic Renewal movement was founded in 1967.

"The church has to move in the

Spirit," Father Galvin said.

That doesn't mean that the members "fly by the seat of their pants" when it comes to spiritual reflection, he said, but find it through solid prayer and by truly opening themselves to the will of the Father.

Father John Sweeney, pastor of St. Bonaventure Parish in Glenshaw, is a longtime member of the fraternity.

"It's been the greatest spiritual support for me for the past 25 or 30 years," he said. He mentioned how the gifts of the Spirit are now explained in teaching segments before the healing Masses.

When it comes to thoughts of being "charismatic," Father Galvin noted, people often focus on the external movements, such as the waving of hands or speaking in tongues, but it is basically just the reality of God's presence.

"God is going to work the way God wants to work," he said.

Father Galvin noted the importance of people recognizing the gifts they have as the Diocese of Pittsburgh moves forward with its On Mission for The Church Alive! initiative.

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The Spirit is manifesting itself in so many ways in the diocese, he said. He pointed to the Unbound program and the festivals of praise that are held throughout the diocese. Other groups such as Cursillo are further signs of the grassroots efforts that are taking place.

"God is working," he said. "God always will work."

Both Father Sweeney and Father Galvin spoke of being encouraged by the number of younger priests who are part of the fraternity. Among them is Father Jeremy

Mohler, parochial vicar at St. Katharine Drexel Parish in Bentleyville.

Father Mohler said that while people come to the healing Masses for many reasons, they can all have a real encounter with the Holy Spirit. As the diocese moves ahead with On Mission for The Church Alive!, he noted, they can use the gifts of the Spirit to help alleviate the fear and anxiety that will come with changes in the church.

"It's an opportunity to open ourselves in a deeper way to the Holy Spirit and see how powerful the Holy Spirit is," he said of the liturgies.

The Fraternity of Priests is an international body that exists to evangelize, form and train priests to respond to God's gifts through the Holy Spirit. In supporting its members, it prepares them to serve God's people. The 2018 Annual International Fraternity Conference is set for Aug. 5-10 at St. Paul of the Cross Retreat Center on Pittsburgh's South Side.

For a schedule of the local fraternity's Masses, go to [magnificat-pittsburgh.org](http://magnificat-pittsburgh.org) and click on "Local Events."