

Dynamic faith duo to bring to diocese mission of healing, prayer for priests, love for Eucharist

By Dave Jolivet, Anchor Editor

NEW BEDFORD, Mass. — In chapter 10 of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus sends out 72 disciples “in pairs ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come. And He was saying to them, ‘The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go; behold, I send you out as lambs in the midst of wolves.’”



Father Kevin Scallon, C.M., and Sister Brige McKenna, O.S.C., will be directing a mission from May 4-7 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in New Bedford.

More than 2,000 years later Jesus’ Church on earth has grown exponentially, yet still, “the harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.”



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Following the lead of their predecessors two millennium earlier, a dynamic faith duo has been traveling the world as a pair, spreading the Good News of the healing power of the Eucharist, the importance of the priesthood, and refueling priests to carry on the mission they professed when they answered God's call to serve Him.

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For 30 years Vincentian Father Kevin Scallon and St. Clare Sister Briege McKenna, both natives of Ireland, have paired to minister to priests and bring messages of hope and healing to countless people across the globe.

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Father Scallon and Sister Briege will be conducting a parish mission May 4 through 7 at St. Anthony of Padua Church in New Bedford. For four days, there will be two sessions daily, at noon and at 7 p.m.

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"We wanted to provide times that many people could attend," said St. Anthony's pastor Father Edward A. Murphy. "The noon session will give older folks, who don't like to go out at night, the chance to hear and benefit from these two remarkable people."

One session, on May 5 at 3 p.m., at the church will be for priests only.

A large part of the pair's mission is to reaffirm the priesthood and provide bishops and priests a boost to the great work they are doing in their ministries.

"Bishops and priests come away renewed and refreshed after a session with Father Scallon and Sister Briege," said Father Murphy. "Sometimes priests can feel undervalued and lose confidence, but through the Eucharistic powers and their dynamic message, priests regain that confidence and are reinvigorated."

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For the last nearly 40 years, Father Scallon has hosted a month-long retreat for priests at All Hallows Seminary in Dublin, Ireland, in August to pray for the Spiritual renewal of the priesthood — theirs and their peers.

"Priests are free to come and go as they please during the retreat," explained Father Murphy. "I've attended for the last 17 years. It's a great boost to my ministry."

In 1974 Sister Briege, while in intense prayer, was given deep insight into the mystery of the call to the priesthood. Since then she has shared that insight with priests and bishops in missions and retreats.

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But it isn't only the ordained who are lifted by the pair's messages. Father Scallon and Sister Briega share a deep devotion to the Eucharist and share that devotion and the Eucharist's healing powers with all faithful.

The daily mission schedule at St. Anthony's is: Monday — Reconciliation (Confession); Tuesday — the Priesthood and the Eucharist; Wednesday — the Lord, the Giver of Life; and Thursday — Healing and Anointing of the Sick.

"We are so blessed to have a church that holds nearly 2,000 people, so this wonderful mission is open to everyone," said Father Murphy. "We are privileged to have Father Scallon and Sister Briega in our diocese."

Sister Briega was last in the diocese in 2000 during the Diocese of Fall River's Eucharistic Congress for the Jubilee Year 2000.

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In an interview with *The Anchor* then, she said that Christ in the Flesh is available to everyone every day in the Eucharist and Eucharistic Adoration. "Go to Him, talk to Him, love Him," she said.

Sister Briega's book on the Eucharist, "Miracles Do Happen," written in 1987, has since been translated into many languages throughout the world.

The book tells of her personal encounter with the healing power of the Eucharist; her healing of crippling arthritis at the age of 24; and her insights about the faith, the power of the Eucharist, the importance of prayer and the ministry of vocations.

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In 2000, she spoke to a filled St. Anthony's Church in Taunton, with many more watching on closed-circuit TV in the hall.

She told those gathered there, as she has to millions of others through her missions, retreats and book, sometimes Jesus heals in a way we are not expecting. "Go to Jesus," she said. "Nobody is ever disappointed who turns to Jesus."

For more information about Sister Briega, visit her website at www.sisterbriega.com. For more information about the St. Anthony's mission or for directions, contact the parish at 508-993-1691 or visit www.saintanthonynewbedford.com, or Father Murphy at 508-496-9080.