

America's Most-Watched Newscast Reports on the 'Power of Prayer'

Days before ringing in the new year, *NBC Nightly News* with Brian Williams ran a two-part report titled "Power of Prayer"—an overview of medical evidence revealing the positive, even miraculous, outcomes from believers praying.

In the report, investigative correspondent Cynthia McFadden interviews Father John Murray—a Catholic priest who stunned doctors by recovering from severe paralysis. The only remedy he can point to is he and his church community's focused, sustained prayers. "I was paralyzed from my chest down," says Murray. "'You should expect no voluntary movement': that's a direct quote." Since then, he has experienced near-total recovery.

The daily evening program, with more than 9.3 million viewers on average, is America's most watched newscast.

McFadden also speaks with Dr. Harold Koenig, Director of Duke University's Center for Spirituality, Theology and Health. His extensive review of over 4,000 research studies on health and spirituality changed his own mind on the value of prayer. Another featured guest, Dr. Richard Sloan, offers an opposing viewpoint; he urges medical professionals not to encourage prayer.

The report comes as three national church denominations—Assemblies of God, the Southern Baptist Convention and the Church of God in Christ—call for focused periods of prayer, particularly at the start of this year.

In the region surrounding Washington, D.C., an ecumenical prayer gathering called OneVoiceDC will bring together local

churches, pro-life groups and ministries on Wednesday, Jan. 21 for an evening of prayer and worship.

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