

Become a spiritual matchmaker this Lent

Scot Landry

Posted: 3/27/2009



Scot Landry is one of the organizers of the Boston Catholic Men's and Women's Conferences. He is also Secretary for Institutional Advancement at the Archdiocese of Boston.

A priest friend often describes his role as that of a "matchmaker" between an individual and God. In his ministry, he helps people encounter God through the sacraments, through scripture, and through acts of heroic and generous sacrifice. "Once I reintroduce an individual to God, God does the rest," he states humbly.

Haven't we all seen God's grace transform someone's life quickly after an encounter with His infinite love? It is a powerful privilege to witness these acts of mercy, love and transformation. Each year at the Men's and Women's Conferences, I hear stories of how God's grace is bestowed upon individuals in unique ways. Most of the time, the Sacrament of Confession is involved and we see the weight of heavy burdens lifted away as individuals are reconciled to God.

Lent is about renewing our relationships with God and with each other. We can renew these relationships by praying more intensely for ourselves and our loved ones, fasting from certain types of food and anything that distances us from God and our vocations, and sacrificing for the sake of others.

As we examine our lives and our relationships this Lent, I encourage all of us to discern to what extent we introduce our friends, family members and colleagues to God. Are we open to discussing our faith with others? Do we share our faith with the joy and energy of having been given a pearl of great price? Do we extend an encouraging invitation to those around us to join us for Mass or for an opportunity to meet the Lord?

Many Catholic writers express that the person who is truly evangelized, evangelizes. If we truly know and love our faith, we want to share it with others so that those we love can also experience God and have what we have. We want to help be a matchmaker between God and others, including everyone God places in our lives.

A great opportunity to reintroduce ourselves and our friends to the beauties of our Catholic faith occurs on April 18-19 at Boston College's Conte Forum. The 2009 Boston Catholic Men's and Women's Conferences will gather thousands of Catholics who choose to come together to deepen their faith or restart their faith journey. It is amazing to see how many ways the Holy Spirit moves to console those that need consoling, strengthen those that need strengthening, and love those that need to experience God's love. And there is strength in numbers that can only be experienced by those in attendance when you worship and pray with thousands of other Catholics.

The Conferences will be great this year. Some attendees are already calling the speakers lineup the best ever. The Men's Conference's theme is "In the Footsteps of Christ." Jim Caviezel, the actor who played Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ," will tell us what he learned literally experiencing Christ's passion. Jerry York, the NCAA's second all-time winningest hockey coach, will share "7 Lessons from Sports for Catholic Men of Faith." Jim Stenson, a worldwide expert and author on Catholic leadership and parenting, will speak on "Successful Fathers in the Eyes of God." And Curtis Martin, founder of the successful FOCUS Campus Ministry programs, will inspire men with an address entitled "A Time for Action in a World of Trouble."

The Women's Conference, with the theme of "Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart," is just as strong. It is headlined by Caviezel and his wife Kerri, who will discuss together the need to stand up for our Catholic faith in hostile environments. Johnnette Benkovic, an EWTN host and organizer of many events for Catholic women, will speak on "God's Mercy is for All." Sister Nancy Keller, a worldwide teacher of the faith and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, will encourage women to "Put Your Life in His Hands: Surrender Leads to Hope." Dr. Mary Healy, a scripture scholar, will share lessons from scripture on "Becoming Women of Peace."

Please consider this your invitation to come and experience the wonders that God will do at this year's Conferences. You may want to make a Lenten resolution to come as a way to deepen your own faith. You may also want to make a resolution to become a spiritual matchmaker this Lent and extend your own invitation to a friend or family member that you've been praying would return to the Church. A generous Easter gift of a Conference ticket might be the gentle and loving step that someone close to us needs.

Please see the Conference website, www.CatholicBoston.com, for more information. I hope to see you, and everyone that you will bring with you, on April 18-19. God bless you.