

The Pilot

Friday, April 24, 2009 • Vol. 180, No. 17 • \$1.00 • www.thebostonpilot.com • America's Oldest Catholic Newspaper

Prayer, song and talks inspire at Catholic Conferences



A woman touches her head to missionary image of Our Lady of Guadalupe at the Boston Catholic Women's Conference held April 19 at Boston College's Conte Forum. Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Women called to 'Trust in the Lord'

BY SARAH BARRETT

CHESTNUT HILL — Thousands of women from across the archdiocese and New England assembled April 19 for a day of faith and inspiration at the 2009 Boston Catholic Women's Conference.

The day-long conference, "Trust in the Lord with All Your Heart," drew 2,500 women to Boston College's Conte Forum for a program that included four keynote addresses as well as liturgical celebrations for Divine Mercy Sunday.

See **Prayer, song and talks...**, page 11

Stirring messages a draw for Men's Conference

BY KENNETH J. SOUZA
THE ANCHOR

CHESTNUT HILL — For many of the estimated 2,000 attendees at the fifth annual Boston Catholic Men's Conference held April 18, it was the second coming of Christ that drew them to Boston College's Conte Forum.

Actually it was the return appearance of actor Jim Caviezel, best known for portraying Jesus Christ in Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," who once again served as

See **Prayer, song and talks...**, page 11

No 'true progress' if embryos sacrificed, Cardinal Rigali says of NIH draft

BY NANCY FRAZIER O'BRIEN

WASHINGTON (CNS) — By proposing to allow the use of federal funds for stem-cell research on embryos created for reproductive purposes at in vitro fertilization clinics and later discarded, the National Institutes of Health opens "a new chapter in divorcing biomedical research from its necessary ethical foundation," said Cardinal Justin Rigali of Philadelphia April 21.

"Without unconditional respect for the life of each and every member of the human race, research involving human subjects does not represent true progress," said the cardinal, chairman of the U.S. bishops' Committee on Pro-Life Activities. "It becomes another way for some human beings to use and mistreat others for their own goals."

Cardinal Rigali was commenting on draft guidelines for embryonic stem-cell research issued April 17 by acting NIH director Dr. Raynard S. Kington during a news briefing by telephone.

Although Kington said he believed the draft guidelines reflect "broad support in the public and in the scientific community," he said he expected much of the public comment on them to focus on ethical concerns. A 30-day period of public comment was to begin with publication of the draft guidelines in the Federal Register, which had not occurred by April 21.

The guidelines drew support from a group of evangelical Christian and Catholic leaders and scholars as "a

See **No 'true progress'...**, page 9



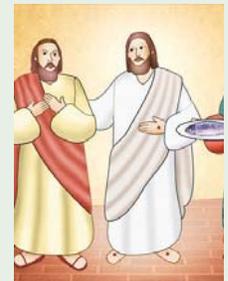
She's got talent! — Priest not surprised by Scottish woman's performance on British TV. Page 6.



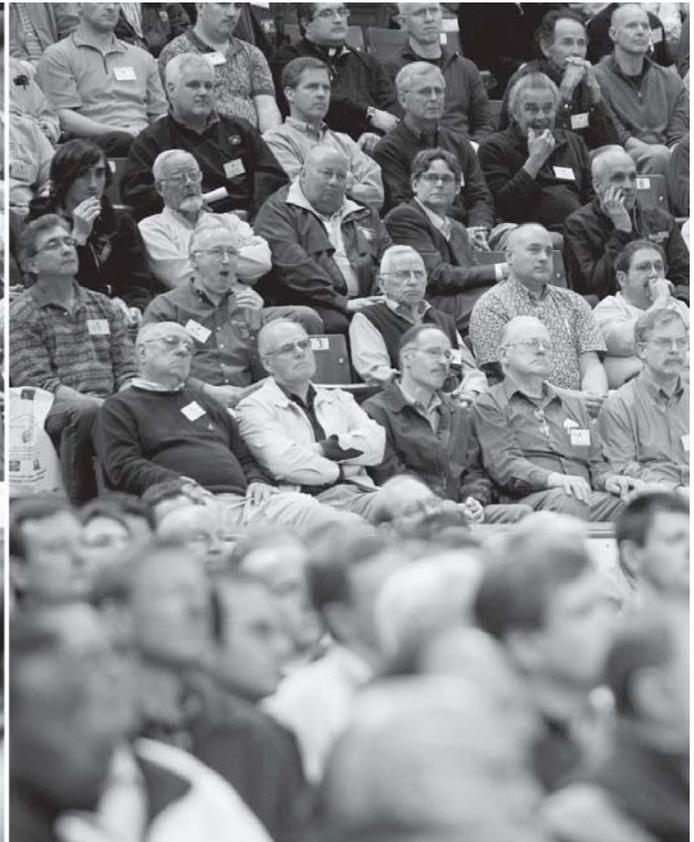
Cardinal's blog — The cardinal blogs on the installation of N.Y. archbishop. Page 7.



Special section — A look at issues related to aging and retirement. Pages 18-21.



Kids' Chronicle — Jesus appears to his disciples. Page 24.



Over 2,000 men and 2,500 women attended the Boston Catholic Men's and Women's Conferences.

Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Prayer, song and talks inspire at Catholic Conferences

Women called to 'Trust in the Lord'

Continued from page 1

The women's conference began in 2006, following the success of the first Boston Catholic Men's conference the year prior, as a way to strengthen the Catholic women's community by providing an arena for them to gather together and discuss how to live their faith in today's world.

Scot Landry, the co-founder and co-coordinator of both conferences, said one of the most important aspects of the conference is the opportunity it gives participants to connect with other Catholic women.

"The speakers are important to the program, but it's the total experience of [experiencing] it with thousands of other women, and then praying with thousands of other women," that makes the program so effective, he said.

The first keynote address came from Sister Nancy Keller, a Sister of Charity and a founding member of the Saint Elizabeth Seton House of Prayer in New York. In her address, "Put Your Life in His Hands, Surrender Leads to Hope," Sister Nancy analogized a Catholic's faith in God to an anchor that "grasps the ground of our hearts" and gives us hope.

Hope, she said, carries us through times of purification, moments in the desert and events of suffering and pain in our lives.

"Embracing the Cross and finding our place in the Passion is an integral part of finding peace and faith and trusting our hearts to God," said Sister Nancy.

In the day's second address, Kerri Caviezel, wife of actor Jim Caviezel who portrayed Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ," spoke to the women on "Defending the Faith in Tough Environments." Caviezel centered her discussion on how the pillars of the Catholic Church shape family and married life and are essential to protecting the faith in today's "hostile environment."

"God did not call us to be successful, as the world wants us," said Caviezel. "He called us to be faithful women of Christ."

She exhorted the women to pray to the "huge multitude of saints" when they are in need of prayer and guidance.

"The community of saints is active, ladies," she said. "They are here with us today, walking prayer-partners in our life."

Following Caviezel's address, three women were presented with Catholic of the Year Awards, which were established three years ago to acknowledge the women in the community who have lived the message being relayed by the conference, said Landry. The

See **Prayer, song and talks...**, page 12

Stirring messages a draw for Men's Conference

Continued from page 1

one of the conference's keynote speakers, reprising his role from the inaugural 2005 gathering.

In fact, Caviezel joked about his repeat performance as he was greeted with a standing ovation during the packed afternoon session.

"Don't get too excited, it's pretty much the same speech," he said.

But any similarities to his earlier presentation certainly didn't lessen the impact of Caviezel's stirring message: an impassioned call for all men present to proudly proclaim and defend their faith in Christ.

Citing examples throughout his career where praying the rosary and a devotion to Christ and his Blessed Mother Mary had served him well, Caviezel stressed how important it is today to stand apart from those who choose to shut God out of their lives.

"His talk was a highlight for me because it wasn't anecdotal," said Mike Waxman, an attendee from St. Martha's Parish in Plainville. "It was extremely compassionate and heartfelt. Sometimes you look forward to something and it's a letdown, but this was completely the opposite."

A Jewish man who converted to Catholicism 12 years ago, Waxman decided to attend the conference for the first time this year after going through a "difficult time" recently with the death

of his father.

"Actually, it's been awesome," he said. "I reached a crossroads in my life and this is exactly what the doctor ordered. It's been compelling, compassionate, philanthropic — whatever you want to call it. It was totally unexpected."

"Jim Caviezel gave a very fiery and inspirational speech," agreed Jeff Estano, parishioner from St. Mary's Church in Plymouth. "I heard him back in 2005 and he actually gave a bit of a longer talk this time."

The theme for this year's conference was "In the Footsteps of Christ," a message that was echoed in presentations from other key speakers such as Jerry York, hockey coach for Boston College, which hosted the event for the second time this year; Curtis Martin, founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS); and Jim Stenson, author and one of the Church's foremost experts on Catholic men's issues.

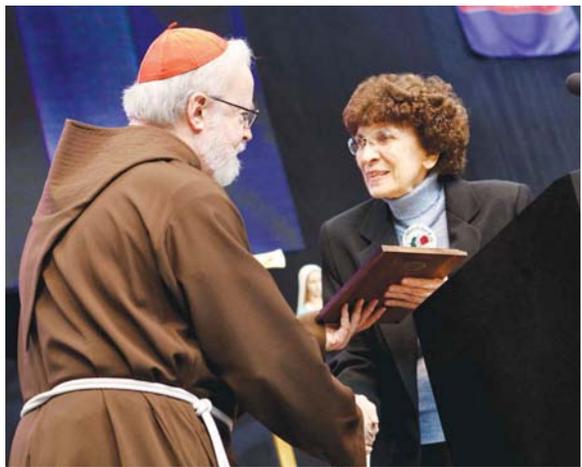
Catholic men of all ages traveled from throughout New England to attend this fifth annual convention to share not only Communion, but also their communal belief in Jesus Christ and his Church.

Younger participants like high school student Wyeth Dion, a member of St. Catherine's Parish in Manchester, N.H., who recently experienced a "difficult time" recently with the death

See **Prayer, song and talks...**, page 13

Women called to 'Trust in the Lord'

Prayer, song and talks inspire at Catholic Conferences



Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley presents the Catholic of the Year Culture of Life Award to Nellie Gray, founder of the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C.

Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy



Attendees browse the vendor tables at the Women's Conference.

Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Continued from page 11

Culture of Life Award went to Nellie Gray for her 36 years of work leading the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. The Laywoman of the Year Award was presented to Loretta Gallagher from Newburyport for her leadership of various archdiocesan initiatives and in her own community. The last award, for Religious Sister of the Year, was given to Sister Marian Batho, the archdiocesan Delegate for Religious who serves as the liaison between the cardinal and the 2,800 men and women religious in the archdiocese.

Prior to the afternoon speaker program, attendees had time for lunch, confession, Eucharistic Adoration and opportunities to visit exhibitors from a spectrum of archdiocesan offices and organizations.

The mid-day program also included four breakout sessions: "Building Faith and Character in Families;" "Receive an Ocean of Graces on Divine Mercy Sunday;" "Where you go, I will go" (Ruth 1:16)—Being led by the transforming power of faithful friendship;" and "ARISE Together in Christ: Renewing One's Faith through Small Christian Communities."

One breakout speaker, Dr. Karen Bohlin, head of Montrose School in Medfield, spoke on the significance of fostering faith and Catholic values in the family. In her address, Bohlin emphasized the importance of teaching children by example in today's culture, especially.

"What really matters is how we portray ourselves in our daily lives, day in and day out," she said.

Following the mid-day program, Dr. Mary Healy, an author and associate professor of Scripture at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit, gave a talk on "Becoming Women of Peace" amidst, what she called, the "tremendous turmoil in the world today."

"It is women, in particular, who God calls to be bearers of peace," said Healey.

Amidst a state of war, economic crisis, breakdown of the family, and a society that is drifting away from and at times actively hostile to religion, Healey cautioned the women: "Do not fear," she said. Instead, "Stress your faith deeper than ever before."

"Withdraw into that place of intimacy with the Lord and allow him to renew and remind you of how much he loves you," she said. "Pitch a tent in the heart of Jesus. Do what he tells you (and) listen to him—that is the way to peace."

Johnette Benkovic, the founder of Living His Life Abundantly—a Catholic evangelization communications apostolate—gave the final address of the afternoon, entitled "God's Mercy is for All."

Benkovic gave a personal testimony on her return to Catholicism in 1981 after having been "enticed, totally entranced and bewitched by the voices of the (1970s)."

She spoke of her time at Pennsylvania State University where she paid heed to the voices of the students around her and forgot the truths that had been so carefully indoctrinated into her as a child. "I bought the lie," she said.

On "emerging from the darkness" and her return to the Church, Benkovic said it was scripture and faith in God that brought her hope, healing, solace and direction in life.

"We end up in sin by beginning to make small sacrifices," she said; "If we're not careful and not examining ourselves, we begin to make excuses for the way we adopt those sacrifices and we begin to get comfortable with habitual sin."

"Nothing you can do can eradicate his blessings from you. No sin can take it away from you. He is incapable of loving one of us more than the other; He loves us totally," she said.

At 3 p.m. conference participants celebrated a Divine



A woman smiles during the talk by Kerri Caviezel.

Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Mercy Holy Hour with Exposition and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Veneration of the Divine Mercy Image with a procession and the praying of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and Apostle's Creed. The time of prayer and worship ended with Benediction and a communal singing of "Tantum Ergo."

To conclude the conference, Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley celebrated Mass in honor of Divine Mercy Sunday. In his homily, the cardinal spoke of the events of Holy Week as a love story, and of the tragedy of Judas' suicide and Thomas' unbelief.

He spoke on what constitutes discipleship and the responsibility of all Catholics to bear witness to Christ's resurrection as granting them the opportunity for "a new life, a second chance."

"True happiness is believing in Jesus and being his disciple," he said. "It means being free of enslavement to money, power and pleasure" and being "in genuine solidarity, of one heart and one mind," he said.

In an interview after the conference, a parishioner from Saint Joseph in Kingston and four-year conference attendee, Marie Barry, said the speaker lineup was "fabulous", particularly citing Caviezel's talk.

"She is a very real person and she is speaking the way that we feel," she said of Caviezel.

"I think it is such an inspiration and a joy to see that many Catholic women in one area," said Barry. "Every year you think it can't get any better and it does."

Another conference attendee, Patricia Costello, from Holy Family parish in Duxbury, said that it is so important to get Catholic women together to hear the messages relayed by the day's speakers.

"We need to hear that and get more people to spread the Church's message," she said. "To give resilience, hope and courage to young people."



Actor Jim Caviezel makes a surprise appearance at the Women's Conference, presenting his wife with flowers following her address.

Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Stirring messages a draw for Men's Conference

Prayer, song and talks inspire at Catholic Conferences

Continued from page 11

chester, N.H., returned for his second conference this year and this time brought along his friend, Tom Ciccarello from St. Marie's Parish, also in Manchester.

"I came last year and I thought some of my other friends would want to come to learn more about their Catholic faith," Dion said, adding that Jim Caviezel's speech was a highlight for him.

"Wyeth came last year and I had wanted to go with him, so this year we came together," Ciccarello added. "I love it. I work a lot with the youth ministry in my parish and I love the team involvement and the inspiration that you get from being here is just great."

While Ciccarello agreed Caviezel's talk was a high point, he also cited Curtis Martin's speech as being "terrific."

Robert Durette of Holy Name Parish in Fall River — likely one of the few in attendance who didn't immediately make the connection between Jim Caviezel and his role in Mel Gibson's film — also said his passionate speech was a "highlight" of this year's conference.

"I attended last year's conference and returned again this year," Durette said. "Both years were inspirational."

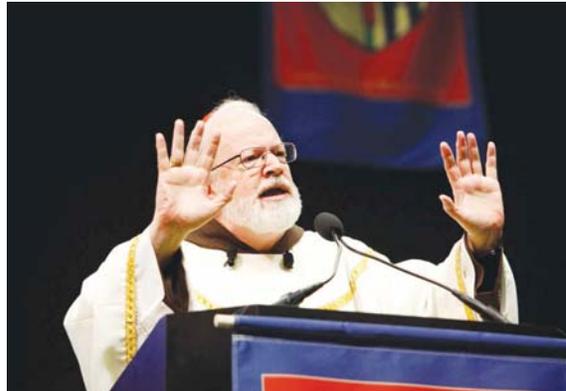
"I also attended last year and I think both years have been equal ... maybe this year was a little better," said Kevin Ward from St. Patrick's Parish in Wareham.



More than 2,000 men pack the stands of the stands of BC's Conte Forum to hear the day's main speaker, Jim Caviezel who portrayed Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ." Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy



Caviezel addresses the Men's Conference. Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy



Cardinal Sean P. O'Malley delivers his homily at the Mass to conclude the day's events. Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

Catholic Men's Group at St. Paul Parish in Cambridge in the fall of 2004 and was established to help then-Archbishop Sean P. O'Malley rebuild the Church in Boston.

Following the format of a day-long retreat, the agenda included the aforementioned keynote speakers along with music and video presentations, exhibitions and group discussions, prayer and worship with confession, the adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and a closing Mass celebrated by Cardinal O'Malley.

"This is my third conference and I think this is the best one yet," Estano said. "As far as the venue goes, this is a very comfortable place and the speakers have been great. I would absolutely come next year and encourage others to attend. It's a great opportunity to grow in your faith and learn something new."



Men join hands in prayer during the closing Mass. Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

along with them. Even this year people have come up to me and told me they heard something at a past conference that changed their life for the better. You don't hear that often — that something you've been involved with has changed someone's life for the better."

In keeping with past tradition, three men this year were honored with Catholic of the Year awards as selected by the conference committee. Father Rodney Copp of St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Waltham was presented with the priest award; Deacon Leo Donoghue, former director of the permanent diaconate office for the Archdiocese of Boston was given the deacon award; and Steve Guillotte, a Knight of Columbus from St. Anthony of Padua Parish in New Bedford, received the layman award.

"The Catholic of the Year award, to me, is the most definitive Catholic moment we have during the conference," Allard said. "It's when you honor guys who never in a million years expect to get an award for anything. They don't do it for an award and it's never something they aspire to. Everything they do is about humility — it's really the humility award — which is ironic when you think about it."

The Boston Catholic Men's Conference — which also included a Catholic Women's Conference counterpart on April 19 — was borne out of a meeting of a



Father Michael Harrington leads the men in eucharistic adoration. Pilot photo/Gregory L. Tracy

"All the speakers were good and it's always a well-run and organized convention."

Although he noted that recent attendance numbers suggest they've "hit a plateau," conference co-founder Bob Allard said he's been consistently pleased with the turnout over the conference's five-year history.

"Overall, I'd say this year's conference met all our expectations," Allard said. "We still get a core group of about 2,000 who come every year and bring others