

Catholic Men's Conference to hear an All-Pro; Event is this Saturday at Holy Cross Cathedral

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By Chris Harding

Thorny theological question: "Would a Boston Catholic be guilty of the sin of vainglory if he rejoiced in the fact his faith was shared by the owner, the coach, and the MVP quarterback of the New Orleans Saints, who just won the most-watched Super Bowl in history?"

Former All-Pro wide receiver and coach, Danny Abramowicz, who once played for the Saints himself, and his fellow hosts on the sports-themed "Crossing the Goal" cable series can answer that question. But they're hoping to address more heartfelt concerns at the sixth annual Boston Catholic Men's Conference (BCMC) at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross this Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

"Crossing the Goal" is a men's spirituality series from the world's largest religious cable network, EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network). The hit series encourages men to get into spiritual shape by using a guy-friendly sports program format. This Saturday's conference will be taped and shared later with a national audience as part of "Crossing the Goal on the Road."

"On this show, we talk to men about the things that are happening in their lives right now and we challenge them to do something about it," explains Abramowicz, who played for the San Francisco 49ers as well as the Saints. "Guys respond to a challenge. The Lord will help them, but they have to admit that something is not right in their life."

Abramowicz – who ranked, in varying years, in the Top 10 for receptions, receiving yards, and touchdowns – admits that he is a former party animal whose life once revolved around his ego and booze.

Among his three co-hosts is Curtis Martin, founder of Fellowship of Catholic University Students, who, after his presentation at last year's BCMC, got the highest approval rating of any speaker in the BCMC's six-year history.

The other "Crossing the Goal" speakers – Peter Herbeck, vice-president of Renewal Ministries, and professional broadcaster Brian Patrick – also do impressive evangelization work outside their TV show.

In addition to individual presentations by the four hosts and Q & A with attendees, the day includes opportunities for Adoration and Reconciliation, rousing and inspirational music by national recording artist Martin Dolman and his band, a gymnasium full of Catholic exhibitors, and a concluding Mass celebrated by Cardinal Sean O'Malley.

Moving the BCMC from its recent venue, Conte Forum at BC, to the South End cathedral has allowed organizers this year to slash tickets to \$20 (\$30 with lunch).

The first BCMC was held in Dorchester at BC High back in 2005. Geoff Fitzgerald of St. Brendan Parish reports the archdiocese's largest men's group, the Early Bird Special, has sold blocks of tickets to men in Dot parishes including Blessed Mother Teresa, St. Ambrose, St. Ann, St. Brendan, and St. Gregory. Fitzgerald will be chauffeuring Abramowicz to his Sunday flight home.

Video previews and full conference details are available on the BCMC website, CatholicBoston.com. The phone number is 617-444-9950.



Members of EWTN's Crossing the Goal program Brian Patrick, Peter Herbeck, Danny Abramowicz and Curtis Martin will be featured speakers at the April 17 Boston Catholic Men's Conference. Courtesy photo