

# Men's, Women's Conferences will have separate dates, new venue

Pilot Staff

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Over the last six years, more than 20,000 attendees have taken part in the Boston Catholic Men's and Women's Conferences, which feature nationally recognized Catholic speakers and breakout sessions as well as the Sacrament of Reconciliation, adoration and Mass.

"We've set up these conferences to be great one-day retreats in our annual faith life," said conference organizer Jennifer Schiller. "In 2010, we are making many exciting changes."

For the first time, the Men's and Women's Conferences will be held several weeks apart rather than on the same weekend. This year, the Women's Conference will be on Saturday Feb. 27 while the Men's Conference will be held on Saturday April 17.

The separate dates are made possible by the conferences' new venue: the Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

"The cathedral is the mother church of the Archdiocese of Boston and the surrounding dioceses. It is one of the largest and most beautiful churches in the United States," said organizer Scot Landry.

"Both Cardinal Seán O'Malley and Father Kevin O'Leary, the rector of the Cathedral, are proud of the recent renovations made to the cathedral and thrilled that conference attendees will be able to gather and pray there," he added.

According to Landry, the cathedral also will have significantly lower setup costs than recent venues such as the Boston Convention and Exhibition Center and Boston College's Conte Forum, which required significant audio and video equipment rental and installation.

"We are grateful to Boston College for all they've done to host the Conferences the past few years. They were tremendous to us. But given the economy, we wanted to lower the conference costs so that we can lower our ticket prices for the attendees," he said.

All tickets to the Men's and Women's Conferences will now be \$20 (\$30 if an attendee purchases lunch). Organizers expect that the 1,750 tickets for each Conference will sell out.

Speakers at the Feb. 27 Women's Conference are scheduled to include:

- Patti Mansfield, an international Catholic speaker and author who spoke at the 2007 conference,
- Leah Darrow, a professional model who turned away from the traditional modeling world and partnered with the "Pure Fashion" ministry to teach young women about authentic Catholic fashion and the importance of developing a strong relationship with God,
- Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle, a Catholic author and speaker who was transformed by a decade-long friendship with Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and formed a branch of the lay Missionaries of Charity, and
- Sister Olga of the Eucharist, a religious sister from Iraq, who ministers on the campus of Boston University.

The theme of the 2010 Women's Conference is "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." "Women of all ages and faith backgrounds are encouraged to attend," said Schiller. "There will be wonderful opportunities to be renewed in faith through the speakers, program, reconciliation and Mass."

The Men's Conference will occur two weeks after Easter on Saturday April 17 and feature the team from EWTN's "Crossing the Goal" men's program. The team's members are:

- Danny Abramowicz, a former professional football player, and author of "Spiritual Workout of a Former Saint,"



Attendees listen to a speaker at the first Boston Catholic Women's Conference held at Boston Convention and Exhibition Center. George Martell photo

- Curtis Martin, founder of FOCUS campus ministries, author of “Made for More” and a popular speaker at the 2008 conference,
- Peter Herbeck, board member of the National Fellowship of Catholic Men and the author of “When the Spirit Comes in Power,” and
- Brian Patrick, host of a national Catholic morning radio show.

Conference promotion activities are beginning on Jan. 9 with an annual gathering of parish captains and volunteers at the archdiocese’s Pastoral Center in Braintree.

According to Landry, “these volunteers are the backbone of our conference outreach at all of the parishes. They serve as personal inviters to their fellow parishioners, friends and family members. Most attendees come because of their invitation.” Organizers would welcome additional parish captains this year.

For tickets and more information for the 2010 Boston Catholic Men’s and Women’s conferences, visit [www.CatholicBoston.com](http://www.CatholicBoston.com), call 617-444-9950 or email [info@CatholicBoston.com](mailto:info@CatholicBoston.com).