

Women's Conference Speaker to Reflect on Being Mentored by Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta

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Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle will speak at the 2010 Boston Catholic Women's Conference on February 27, 2010.

"What struck me the most about Mother Teresa when I saw her for the first time was her diminutive size," recalls nationally known speaker and author Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle. "There stood the world renowned peacemaker, lover of the world's poor and a Nobel Peace Prize recipient — a giant — but in the body of someone not much taller than my young daughter!"

O'Boyle will describe her decade-long relationship with the most admired woman of the 20th century at the upcoming 5th annual Boston Catholic Women's Conference (BCWC), scheduled for Saturday, February 27 at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Boston.

O'Boyle's presentation will draw from her latest book, "Mother Teresa and Me: Ten Years of Friendship." The humble nun always encouraged O'Boyle to keep writing, speaking and taping TV spots about mothers, women, and families. She wrote the foreword to O'Boyle's book "Prayerfully Expecting: A Nine Month Novena for Mothers-To-Be" as well as back-cover endorsements for her other works.

While Mother Teresa was alive the two women communicated through the telephone, letters and personal meetings, but even after her mentor's passing, O'Boyle senses that they're still connected. "I do feel that Mother Teresa is watching over me and my family and that we are in communication with each other. Our Church tells us that we should invoke the saints for intercession, and I certainly invoke Mother Teresa many times a day."

Among the "lessons of love," Mother Teresa taught O'Boyle was that "we should view each person put in our lives, whether in our own families or those we meet as 'Jesus in the distressing disguise of the poorest of the poor.'" Each person that we minister to in any way becomes our focus. Mother Teresa didn't seek to reach the masses of people, even though her love made it all around the globe. She loved one person at a time, whoever was within her reach."

Just as her blessed friend inspired her to found a lay branch of the Missionaries of Charity, O'Boyle hopes to inspire and empower other women by her appearances at events like the Catholic Women's Conference.

"Women benefit immensely from taking the time to pause from their overly packed busy lives to rest a while and nourish their hearts and souls at events such as the Boston Catholic Women's Conference. There they can get that pat on the back and the shot in the arm they absolutely need to strengthen them for the journey ahead. Women can be an amazing and transforming light to this darkened world when they offer their lives to God and ask to be His instrument."

Jennifer Schiller, co-founder and organizer of the BCWC, thinks attendees will be moved by O'Boyle witness, in sharing "personal stories which will encourage us to turn to God for strength in every situation."

Rafaela Sanchez of Blessed Mother Teresa Parish in Dorchester is among those looking forward to O'Boyle's talk: "My friends and I are very curious to hear the details of Donna-Marie's friendship with the patroness of our parish. We're always seeking ways to grow in our faith. What better way than worshiping with thousands of other women, through Adoration, Reconciliation and especially the Mass that Cardinal O'Malley celebrates!"

Along with O'Boyle, the 2010 BCWC will feature three other extraordinary women of faith as keynoters.

Leah Darrow, a self-proclaimed "prodigal daughter" will share lessons from her journey from contestant on "America's Next Top Model" to a tireless advocate of chastity, modesty and pro-life issues with "Pure Fashion." Patti Mansfield, one of the foremost figures in the American Catholic Charismatic movement, returns to the BCWC podium. Back too is Iraqi-born Sister Olga of the Eucharist, whose work as a chaplain at Boston University endows her with practical insights into the faith struggles of young people.

Only 1,750 tickets are being sold for the Women's Conference on February 27, and the same number for the Boston Catholic Men's Conference on April 17, 2010. To purchase tickets for either Conference and for more information, visit www.CatholicBoston.com or call 617-444-9950.