

Former 'Top Model' contestant to speak at Women's Conference

Christopher Harding, Special to the Pilot
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She went from "America's Next Top Model" to role model. She's a reality TV star who now points to the real Truth.

"For years my faith took a back seat until it all came to a soulful boiling point during a high power photo shoot, where I turned back to God and my faith," confesses nationally known Catholic speaker Leah Darrow.

"Ever heard that prodigal son story? I'm his sister," she said.

Darrow will describe the importance of living a life rooted in God, not the world. Her story will include how she abandoned the world of New York modeling to become a leader in the "Pure Fashion" movement, which encourages young women to become confident, competent leaders who live the virtues of modesty and purity. She also shares her story throughout the country at gatherings of women, often with young adults and teens. Darrow will be one of the featured speakers at the upcoming 5th annual Boston Catholic Women's Conference (BCWC) on Feb. 27 at Boston's Cathedral of the Holy Cross.

Darrow has continued with modeling engagements, but with a different approach. "I bring each modeling opportunity to Our Blessed Mother; if I feel that I can participate in it with her by my side, then I know Jesus will be happy with it," she said.

Like many young adults, Darrow witnesses to her faith in many ways. "With my Facebook page, my tweets on Twitter, and my blog, all through my iPhone -- I am always connecting with people. It is almost a necessity in Western culture to use social media, but it is not the only way. In contrast, nothing compares to sitting with someone, having her share her story of 'been there, done that' and hearing firsthand that changing your life is possible. Women need to know that 'real people' exist who have made it back from the other side and are talking about it."

Jennifer Schiller, coordinator of the Women's Conference, said, "We are thrilled that Leah will share her story at the conference. Today's society poses daily challenges to women of all ages who are seeking to live a life of faith. The key to overcoming these challenges is turning to God in all circumstances. Once we turn to him, we begin to understand what it means to trust. Trust then leads to prayer, and prayer leads to an awareness of God's presence."

"Leah's personal testimony will describe how awareness of God's presence in her life has allowed her to live a life of faith. She will provide an encouragement to all conference attendees that they can live a life of peace in the midst of this chaotic world, if they turn to Christ," she added.

Along with Darrow, the 2010 BCWC boasts three other inspiring women of faith as keynotes.

Author/EWTN host Donna-Marie Cooper O'Boyle will share the life lessons learned from her 10 year friendship with Blessed Mother Teresa. Patti Mansfield, a pioneer in the American Catholic Charismatic movement, will be welcomed back to the BCWC podium by popular demand. Also returning to this year's conference is Iraqi-born Sister Olga of the Eucharist, who founded her own order before joining the chaplaincy at Boston University.

The BCWC will also offer live music, adoration, reconciliation, a gymnasium full of Catholic exhibitors, and a concluding Mass celebrated by Cardinal Seán O'Malley.

Only a few hundred tickets remain for the Women's Conference on Feb. 27 and about 1,000 are left for the Boston Catholic Men's Conference on April 17. To purchase tickets for either conference and for more information, visit www.CatholicBoston.com or call 617-444-9950.



Leah Darrow, a former contestant on 'America's Next Top Model' and a leader of the 'Pure Fashion' movement will speak at the Feb. 27 Boston Catholic Women's Conference.