

# Speakers see Catholic Men's and Women's Conference Keynotes as a Boost to Faith

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Central to living our Catholic faith is Sunday worship at our parishes. But many Catholic leaders recognize the importance of retreats and other gatherings to help people renew, rejuvenate and deepen their faith.

Tuned in to this dynamic are the upcoming Boston Catholic Men's Conference (Saturday, April 18) and Boston Catholic Women's Conference (Sunday, April 19) at Boston College's Conte Forum. Both events boast film and TV personalities among the presenters. But just as importantly, each also features speakers who, while not household names, temper worldwide prestige with down-home credibility.

Keynoter Mary Healy, who received her doctorate in Biblical Theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome, celebrates these gatherings, "Conferences like this can be a tremendous impetus to spiritual growth. Spending a day with thousands of other women who have struggles like yours but share your Catholic faith can be an incredible boost to faith!"

Dr. Healy, who has written works on John Paul II's Theology of the Body and co-edited three books on biblical interpretation, previews the kind of direction she hopes to provide: "I want to share how powerful the word of God can be as a way of growing in fellowship with God and with other women. Catholics are hungry to know the Bible better, and often just need some basic guidance and tools for doing so. The word of God is a powerful weapon against discouragement, fear, hopelessness and depression."

With a similar fusion of scholarly and personal experience, parenting expert James Stenson will address men's deepest concerns. "Everywhere I've spoken about parenting all over the world, I've found a real interest among men to get a 'job description.' Many men who want to be a better father just don't know how. They need to hear that the first apostolate of any father is to give a Christ-like formation to the character and conscience of his children.

"In meetings with fathers and mothers, my emphasis is on partnership, working together for the welfare of the children. When there's a conference solely for men, there's more encouragement to be a leader to one's children, especially as they enter adolescence."

Author of many parenting advice books including "Father, the Family Protector" which he calls his "magnum opus," and a parenting website called ParentLeadership.com, Stenson offers this specific challenge to Saturday conference attendees: "I would encourage men to give very serious consideration to making a really good confession on that day and make a resolution to lead their children to love and revere the sacrament of Reconciliation all their lives and to model that with their own example."

Cardinal Seán O'Malley will celebrate Mass and preach the homily at both conferences with all priests in attendance as concelebrants. Music will once again be provided by recording artist and worship leader Martin Dolan and band. Throughout the day there will time for confession, adoration, break-out sessions, visits to exhibitors and lunch.

Both conferences will feature Jim Caveziel, the actor whose life was changed radically when he played Jesus in "The Passion of the Christ." At the women's event, he and his wife Kerri will discuss defending the faith in hostile environments. Evangelist Johnnette Benkovic, host of EWTN's "The Abundant Life," will trace her return to the Catholic faith. Sister of Charity Nancy Keller will draw from her work with Catholic Charismatic Renewal.

The men's roster has an athletic feel: Jerry York, the NCAA's second all-time winningest hockey coach, will outline "7 Lessons from Sports for Catholic Men of Faith." Curtis Martin, co-host of EWTN's sports-commentary-flavored "Crossing the Goal" and founder of FOCUS campus ministry outreach, will rally men with his call "Made for More."

Complete details, registration and a video preview are available at [www.CatholicBoston.org](http://www.CatholicBoston.org).



*Dr. Mary Healy and James Stenson will be keynote speakers at this year's Catholic Men's and Women's Conference  
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