Men, women evangelization gatherings set for March

By WARD MIELE
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with emphasis on the worldwide Year of Faith celebration, powerful and spiritually uplifting speakers will be featured at next month’s annual Catholic Men’s Conference and Women’s Day of Reflection. Declared by Pope Benedict XVI in his apostolic letter “Porta Fidei” (Door of Faith), the Year of Faith began Oct. 11, 2012 and ends Nov. 24.

Archbishop John J. Myers will celebrate Mass at both Saturday gatherings. The Men’s Conference takes place March 2 and the Women’s Day of Reflection a week later on March 9. Once again, the site for both events is the South Orange campus of Seton Hall University.

Concern over the logistics involved with expansion construction work under way at the field house has prompted organizers to issue a special plea for early online registration. A head count as early as possible is vital to the smooth operation of both events. “We need to know how many men will be attending as soon as possible in order to properly prepare for the flow of people registering on March 2, have the right amount of food on hand and for arranging confessions,” Jorge Repollet, men’s commission chairman, said.

Both events begin at 8 a.m. with the Men’s Conference ending at 4 p.m. and the Day of Reflection at 5 p.m. Registrations begin at 8 a.m. A continental breakfast and lunch are included. Registration cost of both events is $25 for adults, $20 for students and senior citizens (those 65 years old and younger) with free admission for clergy and Religious. In addition to the preferred online registration, an alternative is to call (973) 497-4545.

Repollet made special mention of two changes from previous conferences. The Holy Hour will now take place from 2 to 3 p.m. followed immediately by Mass. Pamela Swartzberg, women’s commission chairperson, noted her group “looks forward to welcoming the women of the Archdiocese of Newark and beyond to our annual Day of Reflection.” Stressing the significance of the Year of Faith, Swartzberg added “we will encourage women to fulfill their unique role in the New Evangelization.” Blessed John Paul II, she noted, said “each believer in Christ has the supreme duty to proclaim Christ to all peoples.”

Fernandez-Sardina is a prolific author of books on Scripture. He is a key characteristics for “fearlessly, faithfully and fruitfully sharing the Word to a world longing for Jesus.”

Taking to the podium at the Spanish track at the Men’s Conference will be Ruben Quezada and Jose Prado Flores. Quezada is director of the Catholic Resource Center and Saint Joseph Communications, Inc. in Southern California. An expert on the persecution of the Catholic Church in Mexico, he is a worldwide speaker and author of “Overcoming Temptations in the Wilderness: Jesus as Model of Faith.” Barber is also a professor of Theology, Scripture and Catholic Thought at John Paul the Great Catholic University San Diego. He is a prolific author of books on Scripture.

A frequent guest on EWTN and Catholic radio, Smith is co-author of “Revelation: The Kingdom Yet to Come.” He is also an international presenter for “The Great Adventur Bible.” Smith does all this against a backdrop of his conversion to Catholicism from the Mormon faith. He will share with his audience the seven key characteristics for “fearlessly, faithfully and fruitfully sharing the Word to a world longing for Jesus.”

Blinded in 1972 on the way home from school in Northern Ireland at the age of 10 by a soldier who fired a rubber bullet at point-blank range, Moore has since forgiven his assailant and they have become good friends. He has received worldwide recognition for his effort at fighting poverty through his founding of Children in Crossfire in 1996.

Speaking at the English track will be Ruben Quezada and Jose Prado Flores. Quezada is director of the Catholic Resource Center and Saint Joseph Communications, Inc. in Southern California. An expert on the persecution of the Catholic Church in Mexico, he is a worldwide speaker and author of “For Greater Glory: The True Story of Cristiada—The Cristiato War and Mexico’s Struggle for Religious Freedom.” Prado Flores is founder of the San Andreas School of Evangelization.

Speakers at the Men’s Conference come from across the Catholic experience. Slated for the English track are Michael Barber, Ph.D., Thomas Smith and Richard Moore. Barber, a Research Fellow for the Paul Center for Biblical Theology in St. Louis, MO will address the topic “Overcoming Temptations in the Wilderness: Jesus as Model of Faith.” Barber is also a professor of Theology, Scripture and Catholic Thought at John Paul the Great Catholic University San Diego. He is a prolific author of books on Scripture.

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English track speakers for the Day of Reflection are LifeNet project director Holly Wright and Kelly Wahlquist, assistant director of the Evangelization and Development Office for Parish Evangelization for the Association of Marian Helpers in Stockbridge, MA.

LifeNet is a Garden State-based non-profit educational organization dedicated to bringing the truth about abortion to the public while promoting chastity as part of a multi-pronged mission of ending abortion and protecting the unborn. Wright spent seven years as a Catechetical Leader and youth minister at Saint Cecilia Parish in Kearny. She currently serves as director of Casa Guadalupe, a house of discernment and healing for women.

Wahlquist writes too for CatholicMom.com. She is pursuing a Masters in Sacred Scripture at the Catholic Biblical Institute and Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Scotch Plains, stated each year he “looks forward to meeting and praying with many great men of faith from our archdiocese and beyond. It is a time to build or rekindle friendships, to affirm one another and pray with and for each other, to support through prayer our families, our parishes, our priests and bishops and our great Archdiocese of Newark.”

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