

Catholic health conference coming to Baltimore

The teachings of Pope John Paul II will be explored at the Catholic Medical Association's 77th annual Educational Conference, which will be held in Baltimore Oct. 8-11.

The conference's keynote address will be given Oct. 9 by George Weigel, the biographer of Pope John Paul II, whose weekly audiences from 1979-84 were the source for teachings that the CMA will advance with a theme of "Theology of the Body: Modern Challenges to Health, Conscience and Human Development."

Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien will celebrate a "White" Mass for health care professionals Oct. 11 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Baltimore.

A CMA banquet that evening will feature a speech titled "Embryo: A Defense of Human Life," by Dr. Robert P. George, the director of Princeton University's James Madison Program.

The conference is held annually in the hometown of the CMA's president-elect, and Baltimore has been making preparations since Dr. Louis C. Breschi was voted into that position. A semi-retired urologist, Dr. Breschi is a parishioner of Immaculate Conception, Towson.

"Our purpose is to offer to Catholic health workers the opportunity to hear from professionals in areas of moral ethics," Dr. Breschi said. "A lot of us find ourselves in situations where you wonder if you're the only person holding on to ethical and moral positions."

Those conscience rights have come under attack in certain jurisdictions, which have attempted to force doctors to perform abortions and other procedures that conflict with their religious belief.

In addition to conscience rights, other topics of discussion include dealing with

limitations on health and reproduction; raising and healing children; understanding and healing interpersonal relationships; recovering from sexual addictions and trauma; and aging issues.

Other presentations will focus on the Archdiocese of Baltimore and its history, medical miracles, saints and those on the path to canonization, like Mother Mary Lange, O.S.P.

“We’re here to assist those in the profession who also cherish their Catholic faith,” said Dr. Marie-Alberte Boursiquot, the president of the CMA’s Baltimore Guild. “We have assorted levels of membership, and health care professionals can register for the entire conference, or a single day.”

The Hyatt Regency Baltimore will host the conference. Its schedule and registration information can be found at www.cathmed.org.