Opting for Holiness is Theme of Unity
Breakfast Speaker – Saturday, October 25, 2008

By Mary Donovan, Catholic Free Press, and member of the Commission for Women

Sanctity is within the grasp of every woman, if she can forget the stereotype of saint and picture herself in the role. That’s pretty much the message of Jamie Stuart Wolfe, the speaker at the Commission for Women’s Unity Breakfast held on Saturday, October 25.

Over a hundred women from all over the diocese heard Ms. Wolfe use the stories of four women named Teresa to make her point. She talked about St. Therese of Lisieux, St. Teresa of Avila, Sr. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein), and Mother Teresa of Calcutta. Ms. Wolfe is a speaker, song writer and singer from Lynnfield who is also a columnist for the Boston Pilot.

These four Teresas did not come into the world full-fledged holy women, she said. They were of very different lives and accomplishments who opted for holiness and to let God use their abilities.

She quoted Mother Teresa who said, “I want to be a pencil in His hand.”

Ms. Wolfe told about going to her spiritual director and saying, “I need a saint like me. I’m not the silent, mild-mannered, hands-folded-in-prayer type.”

He answered her with a challenge, “Be the saint you need.,” he said.

Discussion groups after the talk were asked to consider one of four questions: What does a holy person look like? Which of the four “Theresas” do you relate to most and why? Is there a link between personality and sanctity? What would your statue or stained glass window look like? A representative from each table gave the group’s conclusion.

Here are some of the answers. Marcy Wilson, pastoral associate at Our Lady of the Hills in Boylston said the “holy person” would look like the person looking back at you from the mirror.

Mary Brown from East Longmeadow described her group’s stained glass window.

“Our stained glass window would look smashed – it would have every color, but predominant colors are black and blue. God is the smasher,” she said.
Julie O’Connor of St. Paul Parish in Worcester said you can’t tell a saint by the looks. However, after you know a person you get the sense of peace and joy – they are happy with themselves, she said.

The Unity Breakfast is held every other year. It is offered as an opportunity for women from different parishes across the diocese to get together between conferences. The next Diocesan Women’s Conference – Gather Us In, 2009 – will be held at the DCU Center in Worcester on November 7, 2009.