

NEWS RELEASE



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Archdiocese of Omaha to launch media campaign

Partnership with Catholics Come Home, Inc. targets fallen away Catholics

December 11, 2009 (OMAHA, NE) – The Archdiocese of Omaha is partnering with Catholics Come Home, Inc. (CCH) to launch a multimedia television and Internet evangelization campaign during the upcoming Christmas season.

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, CCH is a lay Catholic organization whose members underwent a “reversion” experience and who are now happy to be back in the Catholic Church. CCH officials approached the Archdiocese of Omaha about forming a broadcast partnership that would inspire, educate and evangelize inactive Catholics and others to come home to their faith family.

“The media campaign is an invitation to Catholics who have, for whatever reason, drifted away from the Church,” said Archbishop George J. Lucas of the Archdiocese of Omaha. “We are inviting them to return and rediscover the richness of the Catholic faith in their lives.”

Lucas said many Catholics have fallen out of the habit of going to Mass. Others, he said, have left for reasons which they mistakenly presume separate them from the Church. Still others have had negative experiences in the Church involving priests, religious, or other lay Catholics. “Whatever the case, we want to be sure that when they receive the invitation to return to the sacraments and to the fullness of relationship in Christ, that they find a welcoming community,” Lucas said.

The Omaha campaign will get underway December 18 and air through January 31 on local network affiliates and northeast Nebraska cable channels. The media campaign is also supported by parish-based evangelization activities. These activities include training parish staff on how to deal with inquiries from fallen-away Catholics and catechetical and evangelization formational opportunities for the public.

“Our Archdiocesan offices are making a priority of helping parishes prepare for receiving Catholics who may have been away from regular practice of the faith,” Lucas said.

(more)

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Results from initial television campaigns in other dioceses show that the commercials are motivating existing Catholics to share their faith with their friends, relatives and neighbors. Additionally, approximately 25 percent of the CatholicsComeHome.org web visitors are potential converts looking for a faith family and church home.

The CCH international apostolate has already touched millions of souls around the world, welcoming them back home to the Catholic Church. In response to the initial campaign and viral exposure of the website, CatholicsComeHome.org has been visited by nearly 1 million individuals from all fifty states and over eighty countries who were moved by the welcoming messages and website. In addition, CatholicsComeHome.org reaches out to people of other faiths to help them discover the sacraments, beauty, truth and accomplishments of the Catholic Church.

According to Catholic News Service (CNS), parishes in the Diocese of Phoenix reported a 12 percent increase in weekly Mass attendance that still continues long after the commercials aired. The CCH television initiative and web site were directly responsible for bringing nearly 100,000 inactive Catholics and converts home to the Church during Lent 2008.

The Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas, experienced similar success with its 2009 bi-lingual CCH campaign, where initial results show a 17.7 percent increase in weekly Mass attendance throughout 38 surveyed parishes. Hispanics responded at nearly the same rate to the Spanish language commercials and web site.

These consistent results have motivated a dozen other archdioceses and dioceses throughout the United States to partner with CCH to launch campaigns in their areas during the upcoming seasons of Christmas and Lent. These include: the Archdiocese of Chicago, IL; Archdiocese of Atlanta, GA; Archdiocese of Seattle, WA; Diocese of Sacramento, CA; Diocese of Colorado Springs, CO; Diocese of Green Bay, WI; Diocese of Rockford, IL; Diocese of Joliet, IL; Diocese of Lincoln, NE; Diocese of Charlotte, NC; Diocese of Providence, RI and Diocese of Venice, FL.

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Founded as a diocese in 1885, the Archdiocese of Omaha serves spiritual and human needs in a 23-county area of Northeast Nebraska. Through its 148 parishes and missions, the archdiocese reaches out to more than 221,000 Nebraska Catholics. With two Catholic universities, 58 elementary schools, 18 high schools and a parish-based religious education program within its boundaries, Catholic education enriches the lives of some 44,000 young people. The Archdiocese of Omaha is one of the largest private social service providers in the region. Catholic Charities and the Office of Family Life lead a network that ministers to the broadest and most fundamental needs of our community. Generous support to the Annual

Appeal is symbolic of the collective faith that allows the Archdiocese of Omaha to continue the mission of Jesus Christ. www.archomaha.org