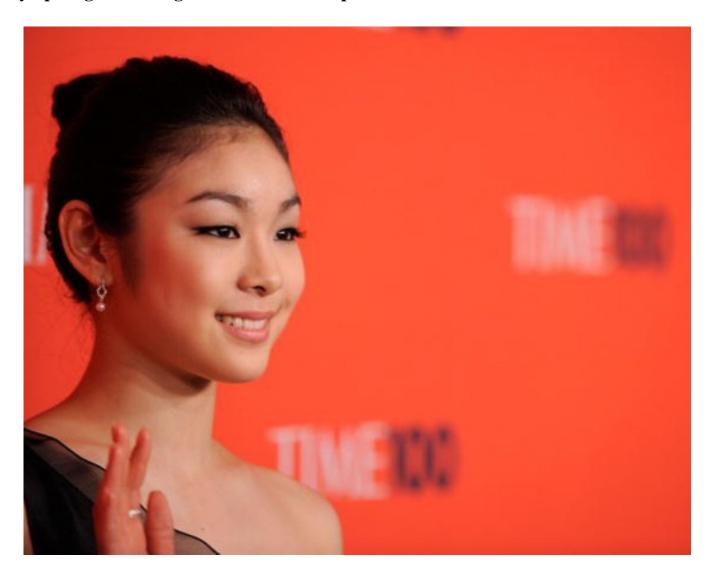
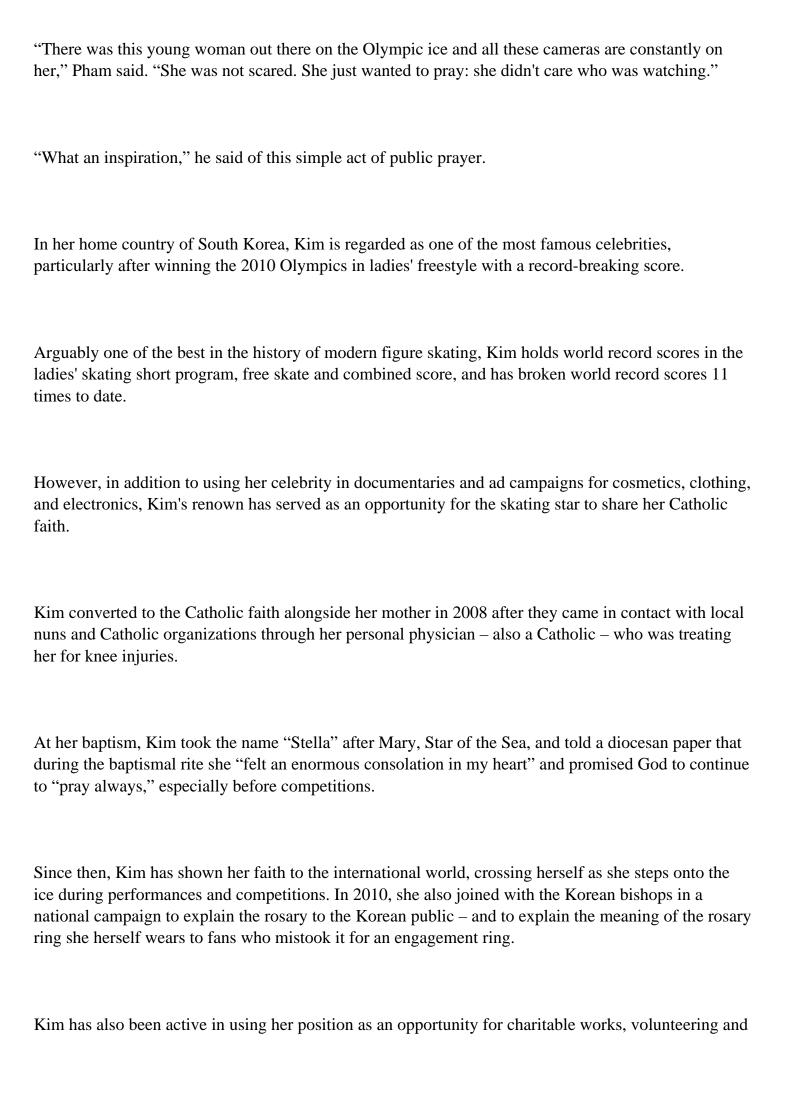
Olympic figure skating star hailed as example for Catholics



Washington D.C., Feb 16, 2014 / 04:01 pm (CNA/EWTN News).- Catholic Olympian and international skating superstar Kim Yuna is a role model not only of dedication and athleticism but also an example of how to live the faith publicly, a fan says.

Seminarian for the Archdiocese of Detroit and blog writer Evan Pham told CNA on Feb. 11 that he was struck by Kim's simple act of praying on ice during the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver.

He said that he was inspired when he and his family saw "a clip of her doing the sign of the cross" and bowing her head immediately before competing the finals for the ladies' skating title, which she won.



donating funds to Catholic Hospitals, Universities, and other charitable organizations, and working alongside the Catholic bishops in Korea as a spokeswoman for Catholic charities in Seoul.
Additionally, in 2012, Kim donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to Salesian of Don Bosco to help support the missionary brothers in South Sudan and to establish Catholic Schools throughout the war-torn country, meeting with Salesian brothers in Seoul to personally deliver the gift.
She told Korean press that while visiting Africa in 2011 she "felt the need to help out children there," and wanted "to offer what little support I can" to those in Africa.
This public witness, Pham said, has inspired him to be more open with sharing his own beliefs.
He explained that growing up, he was "very anxious about my faith" especially praying in public. "I didn't want them to think I was strange," he said, adding that in some ways publicly expressing one's beliefs is "basically painting a target on your forehead" for negative comments, jokes and even persecution.
When he saw Kim praying on the ice, however, his fear was challenged.
"It's a regular thing for her," he said of her pre-skating prayers. "Wow. What a way of witness," Pham said, noting that her actions made him ask himself, "If she can do this, why can't I do this?"
Yuna Kim taught him about "the chances we have of manifesting" the Catholic faith to the public, Pham said.
"What would I choose," he continued, "being afraid or not afraid? Being not afraid is so much more beautiful."

Now, Pham said, he is much more open to praying in public and sharing his faith with strangers-including on his blog, but the skating star's example still comes back to him.
"If I'm ever second thinking about making a sign of the cross, I think about what I saw."
Pham said that Kim is often in his prayers, and has inspired him to "take the time to pray" for other public figures who have "so much potential to do good."
"I really hope that she continues to use her influence in a good way: to be an evangelist."
For the 2014 Olympics, Kim will compete in the ladies' freestyle skate, beginning on Feb. 19.
Addie Mena - CNA