



NEWS ARCHIVE:

Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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Participants in the 2011 Bishop's Cup, held Oct. 23 at Bethlehem Catholic high school in Saskatoon.

First JP II Fest in diocese of Saskatoon features youth events: "Inception" youth night and Bishop's Cup basketball

By Kiply Lukan Yaworski

The first feast of Blessed John Paul II was marked with youth events in the Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon, including a youth rally for Grades 6 to 8 Oct. 22, and a basketball competition between youth and clergy Oct. 23.

Announced at the time of his beatification earlier this year, Blessed John Paul's feast day marks the anniversary of the liturgical inauguration of his papacy Oct. 22, 1978.

It seemed most appropriate to commemorate this new feast day in a way that involved youth, said diocesan Youth Ministry coordinator Colm Leyne. "Blessed John Paul II was a visionary leader and great example to many youth around the world," said Leyne, describing the motivation for establishing the diocesan "JP II Fest."

The late pontiff's ability to connect with young people, to express his love and hopes for them, and to challenge them to live fully their Catholic faith had an impact throughout his 27-year papacy. The establishment of World Youth Day under his leadership is just one example of what flowed from his focus on young people, Leyne noted.

In a similar spirit of gathering youth together to share and nourish faith, the "Inception" youth rally was held at Our Lady of Lourdes parish Oct. 22, with guest speaker Michael Chiasson of All Access Ministries in Calgary.

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“During the event, youth were challenged to start living and working for Christ every day – to take up the challenge of what it means to be the hands and feet of Christ,” Leyne described.

As a practical expression of that, youth across the diocese will be encouraged this year to find ways to support Chalice, a Catholic international aid and development organization that helps others have the necessities of life, he said.

Highly rated as an effective charity, Chalice assists some 45,000 children and elderly in 15 developing countries, with 92.5 percent of funds raised going directly to programs. In addition to a sponsorship program, Chalice partners with local people and other organizations on community projects, addressing such needs as a safe water supply, health care and education. Another outreach is Chalice’s “buy a gift” program, which will hopefully capture the imagination of young people, suggested Leyne.

“We will work with their Christmas catalogue and are looking to buy 100 goats for families in need (or 1,000 or whatever we can accomplish),” he said. “A goat costs \$75, and is a great blessing to a family in need in many ways. It provides milk, income, and stability to those just looking for some help to live their life.”

When the annual diocesan Momentum youth rally takes place in the diocese in the spring, youth and parishes will be invited to share the results of this “Chalice Revolution,” Leyne said, stressing that the goal is to follow the love that Christ first modeled to us.

JPII Fest continued Oct. 23 with the Bishop’s Cup basketball competition, held at Bethlehem Catholic High School. Beginning with celebration of the Eucharist, the event involved some 80 youth, youth leaders, parents and clergy playing basketball together, socializing, and sharing pizza.

Leyne noted that this year’s event was blessed to have two bishops playing on the clergy team: Bishop Don Bolen of Saskatoon and Bishop Murray Chatlain of Mackenzie-Fort Smith diocese in the north.

Visiting his home town to speak at a Greater Saskatoon Catholic Schools centennial event, Chatlain was a welcome addition to the clergy contingent in the final game of the evening, said Leyne. The clergy held their own throughout the game, with the youth all-star team finally winning 9-8.

“There was just such a great spirit of fun and friendship at the Bishop’s Cup,” he said. “This is the heart of evangelization and of vocation promotion: to get to know our priests and build relationships among youth, clergy, and families.”

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