



NEWS ARCHIVE:

## Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon

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# ***Rock the Mount annual Catholic youth rally held Aug. 22, 2009***

BY KIPLY LUKAN YAWORSKI

The eighth annual Rock the Mount Catholic youth rally brought together some 1,000 pilgrims Aug. 22 for a joyful all-day celebration of faith under sunny skies at the Shrine of Our Lady of Mount Carmel. The theme of the 2009 rally was “the power in the Word,” a reflection taken from Isaiah 55:10-11.

The Rock the Mount program included praise and worship music by the Catholic bands Roadside Cry and Frails As Breath. Members of the Diocesan Youth Retreat Team led the rosary, and Catholic Christian Outreach leaders organized games and icebreakers. A children’s program was offered in a tent at the bottom of the hill, which also housed displays by Catholic organizations.

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A penitential celebration was led by Fr. Modestus Igwu, associate pastor of St. Augustine's parish in Humboldt, with a number of area priests available at stations throughout the pilgrimage site for the sacrament of reconciliation.



Saskatoon Bishop Albert LeGatt presided at 5 p.m. Mass, as well as during an hour of Eucharistic adoration later in the evening.

During the homily, LeGatt reflected on Peter's words in the gospel: "Lord to whom could we go? You have the words of everlasting life." The bishop stressed that in choosing Jesus, we must recognize that this choice is not primarily about us and our holiness – rather it is about receiving all that God offers, and responding in grateful love and service.



"Yes, you as young people absolutely need to say yes to the Lord and choose to have a personal relationship with Jesus, and read the gospel, and pray, and gather together as friends, gather for retreats, and for that Sunday Eucharist. You need to do that, but not as obligation, but rather as a grateful response from your heart to all that you have received from the Lord," LeGatt said.

"The more we receive the Lord, the more the Lord opens our hearts wider in love.," he said. "It is so essential to have that sense of what the Lord wants to do in our lives, otherwise our lives are about us and about our efforts, and that leads us nowhere."

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Three talks were also presented during the day by guest speaker Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers of Portland, Oregon, exploring the beatitudes as they relate to the joyful mysteries of the rosary; stressing the importance of conversion and of the sacrament of reconciliation; and outlining the pursuit of true happiness.

The founder of an evangelization and apologetics ministry called “Aurem Cordis,” Burke-Sivers is a permanent deacon, who is married and the father of four children. He is the host of “Made in His Image: Family Life Today” and of “Behold the Man,” a series on male spirituality, both of which appear on the Catholic EWTN (Eternal Word Television Network).



**Deacon Harold Burke-Sivers of Portland, Oregon was the keynote speaker at this year’s Rock the Mount.**

His high-energy presentations at Rock the Mount included stories and examples from his own life and ministry, including his mother’s conversion to Catholicism as a child in



Barbados, family struggles when he was growing up, and how his non-believing father eventually found the truth of Jesus. It’s a truth that every Christian is called to share with love, he stressed.

“Proclaim boldly and without fear that every person is created in the image of God and that each person’s life and dignity must be respected, whether that person is an innocent unborn child in a mother’s womb, whether that person is a sex slave in Thailand, whether that person is homeless in Saskatoon, or even an inmate on death row,” Burke-Sivers thundered, urging his listeners to seek the truth of the gospel and the Catholic Church’s teachings and then live out that truth.

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“What we do in the four walls of the Church is meaningless unless we take what God has given to us and go out there and not be afraid to be living witnesses to the world,” he said, describing how all are called to be saints and “to live life with courage and conviction in this time and this place, and to put all of our trust in God.”

The idea of caring for and loving one’s neighbour takes on global dimensions in today’s



**John Hickey of CCO led activities during Rock the Mount.**

world, he said. “We have an opportunity to show the world that today’s youth are not just out for themselves,” Burke-Sivers said. “Faith without works is dead. Are you ready to use the talents that God has given you?”

In his final talk about the pursuit of happiness, Burke-Sivers reflected on the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, relating them to temptations today to live for our own desires and agendas. He encouraged his listeners to instead seek the “love that sustains.”

“If you want to have that deep down spiritual joy, then seek the truth,” he said, urging those struggling with the Church’s teachings to pray: “Lord, help me to see what is true.” He also stressed the importance of taking time in silence to listen to God in prayer and in Eucharistic adoration. “You can’t listen to God with an iPod on; you can’t listen to God with a game cube in your hand.”

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**Members of the Diocesan Youth Retreat Team led decades of the rosary throughout the day.**

Earlier in the week, Burke-Sivers also spoke at “Ignite,” a Catholic teen camp offered at St. Therese Institute of Faith and Mission in Bruno by Face II Face Ministries. Rock the Mount was the final event for the Ignite camp, which involved some 140 high school students. Burke-Sivers commented on what he witnessed during his time in Saskatchewan at the Catholic teen camp and at Rock the Mount, as well as what he heard in the bishop’s homily. “There is something special happening here in Saskatchewan,” Burke-Sivers said.

Organizers expressed appreciation for the many volunteers, supporters, and donors who again helped to make Rock the Mount a success.

“One thing I noticed this year, is that there were more people from out of province,” said John Boskill, who coordinates the organizing committee with his wife Elaine. “Again, (there were) calls and emails from Winnipeg, Brandon, Taber, Brooks, St. Albert, Sherwood Park, etc. There was a bus from Yorkton, and even the Humboldt Group Homes brought out two van loads of people.”

Those attending Rock the Mount were also bidding farewell this year to Bishop Albert LeGatt, who has been appointed archbishop of St. Boniface.

“Bishop Albert has been a joy to work with over the last eight years,” said John Boskill. “He has been very supportive of Rock the Mount in particular, and attended each one except when he was in Europe one year.”

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Approached with ideas for youth ministry, the bishop was always encouraging and sometimes challenging, said Boskill. “He was very strong on looking at the fruits of an activity, encouraging co-operation and cohesiveness. It was through this type of encouragement, for example, that Rock the Mount evolved to include a number of ministries working together: the Diocesan Youth Retreat Team, Catholic Christian Outreach, Face II Face, the diocesan office for Youth Ministry and parishes, with the prayer and financial support of the diocese, religious orders, Knights of Columbus councils, CWL councils and many individuals and other organizations over the years,” he added.

“We have been very blessed to have a such a holy, insightful man as Bishop LeGatt as the chief shepherd of our diocese, and wish him many blessings in his new appointment as archbishop of St. Boniface.”