

The Source and Summit • A E

Catholic Youth Fest 2003

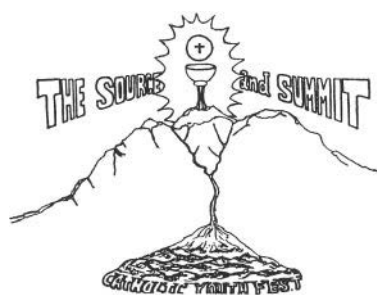
Submitted by Danielle Suttie, Holy Spirit Parish and Joanne Pollock, St. Michael's, Black Diamond

More than 100 youths from the Diocese of Calgary gathered together to deepen their relationships with Jesus and each other making Youth Fest 2003 a great success!

Catholic Youth Fest 2003 centered on the Eucharist. The young people listened intently to tales and testimonies about Priesthood, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, Reconciliation, and Mary. As we engaged with the various speakers over the weekend we gained a deeper understanding of the Eucharist and renewed our faith and direction under God.

Despite the snow and wintery conditions, the lively music, prayer and worship sessions created the spiritual atmosphere during the three days kept everyone's spirits up.

The Diocesan Youth Retreat Team encouraged the youth to share their thoughts and experiences about the retreat, and to come together as a community. The faithful retreatants said they enjoyed the weekend and that they cannot wait for Catholic Youth Fest 2004! For more information please call the Diocesan Office of Youth Ministry, 218-5503.



The freshly falling snow did little to dampen the singing that accompanied our pilgrimage.

Eucharistic Conference for Youth

A Weekend of Faith Enrichment

by Susan Suttie, Youth Ministry Coordinator, RC Diocese of Calgary

Ten months of planning for Catholic Youth Fest 2003 came to fruition in the gathering of 100 young people at St. Mary's high school on May 2, 3 and 4. The planning and input from youth and adult committee members called for a three-day coming together of the faithful to enrich their Catholic beliefs. We often offer activities for youth and young adults for fun and community building—

however, the intent of Catholic Youth Fest is to offer a richer, deeper experience of Church.

Beginning with praying and building rosaries on Friday evening, the weekend was centered on the Eucharist. Fr. Myles Gaffney celebrated the opening Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral and was present throughout the weekend. We were blessed with an inspirational homily from Bishop Henry at the Saturday mass

and presentations were delivered by our newly ordained priests and Deacon Avinash Colaco [who will be ordained on June 28].



It was inspiring to see so many young people willing to commit to a weekend-long event, to pray together, share together, build community and even play together!

Fr. Wojciech Jarzecki set the tone for the weekend in his personal reflection, *I am the Bread of Life. Who is Jesus Christ to me?* was a very personal testimony on his journey to the priesthood by Fr. Mario Basque. Fr. Huy Nguyen lead participants through an examination of conscience in a presentation entitled, *I will not reject anyone who comes to me.* The Saturday afternoon session facilitated by Fr.

Malcolm d'Souza dealt with the topic, *No one comes to me except by the gift of the Father* and Deacon Avinash Colaco offered thoughts on the Holy Spirit in his talk, *It is the spirit that gives life, the flesh has nothing to offer.* Our diocesan Vocations Director, Fr. Myles Gaffney spoke on *Mary, Star of the New Evangelization* prior to the Crowning of Mary in the Grotto at the FCJ Christian Life Centre. The freshly falling snow did little to dampen the singing that accompanied our pilgrimage.

We have many young people searching for something more in their faith life, something more meaningful and deeper than attending mass just on Sunday. The enrichment opportunities, the joy during the times of prayer and worship, and the energy and excitement during the presentations on prayer by the Diocesan Youth Retreat Team were all part of bringing those present to a deeper understanding of the importance of Jesus in their lives.

The Catholic Youth Fest was a joint venture with the Office of Youth Ministry and Vocations Awareness. Plans are already in place to develop Catholic Youth Fest 2004.

