

Young adults inspired to be holy warriors at Calgary's One Rock festival

Maddie Catling is ready to be a Catholic warrior for the Church.

After attending One Rock 2.0, she felt a new sense of mission for her faith.

"I need to keep going strong. I need to get better at doing my daily prayers so that I can become this Catholic warrior," said the 18-year-old.

"The Catholic faith is always a struggle. There's dark periods, there's times where people are doubting us ... and it is our job to stay in the right frame of mind."



Katherine Szojka

A dark cloud loomed over the youth festival Sept. 29 in the [Diocese of Calgary](#), and it wasn't just because of the early snowfall. Nearly 600 young adults gathered together with their peers to be "inspired, challenged, and equipped as

protagonists of the New Evangelization,” even as the Church weathers the storm of the sex abuse crisis.

As part of the day’s sessions at [St. Michael Catholic Community Parish](#), young people had the opportunity to ask questions of a panel comprised of Edmonton Archbishop Richard Smith, Grouard-McLennan Archbishop Gérard Pettipas and Calgary Bishop William McGrattan.

There were several questions about the sex abuse crisis in the global Church. The bishops suggested that the situation in the Church today is contributing to a larger identity crisis among young people. They said bishops and clergy, now more than ever, must exemplify their fatherly role in the Church and not shy away from truth.

“The bishops there helped give the sense of support because we are supposed to look to the Magisterium of the Church and we do need to look to our leadership and authority,” said Rebekah DeMong, 22.

Calgary’s annual youth festival was revamped this year to focus its ministry on Catholics aged 18 to 35 rather than young families. Diocesan vocations director Father Cristino Bouvette said part of the revamp came from a reflection of the [Synod on Young People](#) taking place Oct. 3-28 in Rome.

“We think it is very important to have in the life of our diocese because it shows an investment in this demographic,” he said. “The diocese wants to make sure that there is a sign that we are trying our best to reach out to that demographic through something that is customized just for them.”

The event started Sept. 28 with a social program and beer tasting at the Sheraton hotel. The next day’s program included keynote speeches from Lizzie Reezay, Brian Holdsworth and Patrick Coffin, as well as a live band. The session with the Alberta bishops was followed by Mass.

“There’s a lot of important stuff we need to know about as far as what’s going on in the Church and stuff and how to really respond especially to people who aren’t apart of the Church,” said 17-year-old Teresa Serafini, reflecting on the day’s sessions. “I have a lot of friends that aren’t Catholic.”

Concluding the day, Bouvette announced the diocesan launch of the St. Francis Xavier chaplaincy centre for youth.

“One Rock 2.0 is the first glimpse at that effort. A first taste of the investment of what we intend to make in you. Because of the investment you have already begun to make in Christ,” he said.

– *Katherine Szojka, 17, is a Grade 12 student at St. Gabriel Online School in St. Albert and a Youth Speak News columnist. This column was originally published by [The Catholic Register](#).*