

# Mount event draws more than 200 youths

EMMITSBURG - Father Brian Nolan tossed a Frisbee that floated above the grass of Echo Field on the campus of Mount St. Mary's University June 30. A group of teens grasped for the disc with a fervor that matched the atmosphere of the day.

The campus was hosting "Catholic Live!" The one-day conference for teens mixed faith lessons with popular culture for talk sessions. The theme for the day was "Set The World Ablaze!" and more than 200 teens interacted with priests, seminarians, youth ministers and volunteers.

"Catholic Live!" was held for the second consecutive year, organized under the vision of Father Nolan, the Mount's campus chaplain, and Sister Elizabeth Sjoberg, a Daughter of Charity who serves as a campus ministry associate at the Mount.

They wanted to use the spacious and historic campus to provide a quality summer retreat experience for teens from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C.

Father Nolan said: "God can do anything. We're hoping to allow the Holy Spirit to re-ignite in them in a fuller and deeper way, for them to have a call to conversation, a call to be a disciple and to be a witness."

The young people attending participated in talks about relevant topics in their lives.

"It's kind of got a big conference feel," Sister Elizabeth said, "but we touch on the different aspects of the teenagers' lives to say 'You can live your faith in this world and still love the things you love to do.' You can be a big jock on the sports field and still have a heart for Christ. There's been a great response from people."

Mana Hamscher and Catherine Rogers, both 15 and parishioners of St. Timothy in Walkersville, reveled in the bonding that took place.

“I liked when they broke us up into small groups and we had talks,” said Hamscher, who attended last year as well. “I’m a peer minister in my church. What I take from here, I take back to the younger kids there.”

Catherine said she enjoyed the relaxed approach to ministering.

“This is more for teens and, like, youth group,” Rogers said. “It’s really interesting. They’ve made it really relatable for us.”

Midway through the day, Auxiliary Bishop Mitchell T. Rozanski celebrated Mass at the nearby National Shrine Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes. June 30 serves as the feast of the First Holy Martyrs of the Holy Roman Church, and Bishop Rozanski told attendees they follow in the long line of selfless believers willing to risk their lives.

He said that following Jesus’ lead is often difficult.

“Those who believe differently really do stand apart, just as those first martyrs of Rome,” Bishop Rozanski said. “They do stand outside of what perhaps the majority believe. What does Jesus tell us? He says ‘Do not give up. Persevere.’”