

## Scouting out your Catholic faith

Story by Mike Latona  
Photos by Andrea Dixon

As part of the Scout Sunday festivities, hundreds of Scouts from all over the diocese were on hand at Sacred Heart Cathedral to receive emblems and medals from Bishop Matthew H. Clark.

These awards are sure to be proudly displayed by the Scouts on their uniforms. Yet they are also presented to signify what has taken place beneath the surface: namely, how young Catholics are growing in their faith.

Nearly 300 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, ranging from first grade through high school, were honored by Bishop Clark on Feb. 27. According to Ed Winterkorn, co-chair of the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, the Scout Sunday service has been held at Sacred Heart since 1990. The event was originally designated for Boy Scouts only, but began including Girl Scouts in 1993. Scout Sunday is held annually in February, so as to fall near both Boy Scout Sunday (held the first Sunday in February) and Girl Scout Sunday (held the first Sunday in March).

To prepare for their awards, candidates in all eight categories were required to take serious examinations of their faith lives. For instance, Light of Christ recipients (Cub Scouts in grades one-two), with the help of their parents, considered Jesus as a real person and friend. On the other end of the age scale, the Pope Pius XII medal (Boy Scouts and Explorers in grades nine-12) involved extensive study of church-related ministries and vocations. And the Spirit Alive medal (Girl Scouts in grades nine-12) required candidates, in part, to examine Scripture and church documents.

Grace Dudek, representing Troop 521 in Chili, said that preparation for her Spirit Alive award was well worth the effort. "It took a long time, and I had a lot of growth," said Grace, 17,



Becky Kessler, of St. Rita's Parish in Webster, shakes hands with Bishop Matthew H. Clark at the Scout Sunday service held at Sacred Heart Cathedral on Feb. 27.

a parishioner at St. Pius X Church in Chili.

Grace noted that she studied numerous documents from the Second Vatican Council. The council, held in Rome in the 1960s, laid the groundwork for many changes in the church, including celebration of Mass in English in the United States and wider participation of parishioners in parish life.

"I hadn't known how important the Vatican II documents were," remarked Grace, who served as lector for the Feb. 27 Scout Sunday service.

Adam Malinowski, 13, who earned the Pope Pius XII award, said he prepared by having "a lot of discussion and thought about how your religious life interacts with your personal life." Adam added that he learned the value of being firm in his faith both through words and actions.

"You don't have to just go around saying, 'I'm religious.' You can do the little things, helping people out," said Adam, a parishioner at St. Mary's Church and member of Troop 30 in Canandaigua. Adam attended Scout Sunday along with his brother Christopher, 12, who received the Ad Altare Dei emblem (for Boy Scouts in grades seven-

eight).

Adam, for one, puts great value on the religious awards he has received through Scouting.

"I think this is really important," Adam said. "I've worked for a long time on this, and I feel good about getting recognition for it."

In fact, Adam takes Scouting as a whole quite seriously: He has been a Scout since he was 6 years old.

"You get to go on trips and earn merit badges," he said.

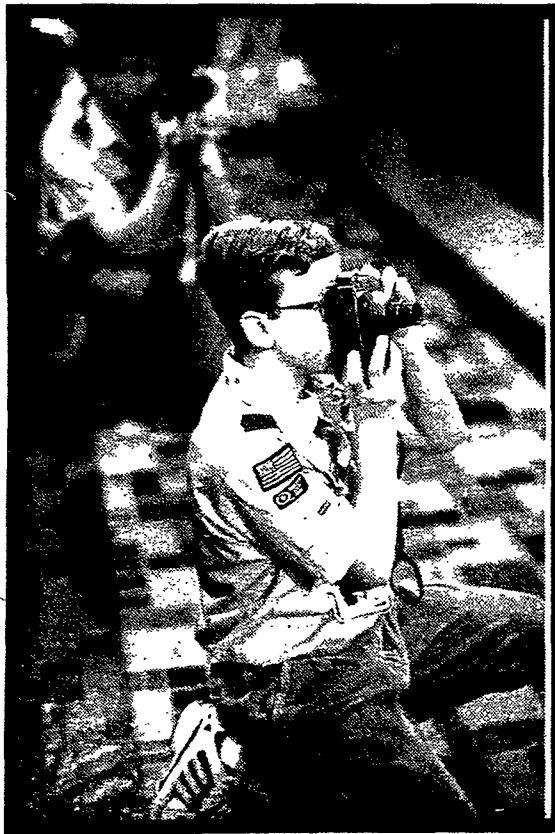
Jennifer Hosenfeld, who received a Spirit Alive Girl Scout medal on Feb. 27, cites service and social opportunities as the main reasons for her 10-year involvement in Scouting.

"You make a lot of new friends and have a chance for a lot of community involvement," said Jennifer, 17, a parishioner at St. Rita's Church in Webster. She belongs to Troop 475 in Webster.

And Grace is so enthusiastic about Scouting that she plans to stay involved in it during, and after, college.

"I just love doing it; it's the biggest thing in my life in terms of activities," she said. "I hope one day to have my own troop."

Coming next week:  
Sweat-shop activist



Chris Perdue, 11, takes a picture of his brother, Adam Perdue, 14, who was receiving his Ad Altare Dei emblem from Bishop Clark during Scout Sunday at Sacred Heart Cathedral. The boys attend St. John of Rochester Parish in Fairport.

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