

Scouting out the story of creation

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

"The Story of Creation" was the theme for this year's Catholic Scouting Retreat, and a Mass on Sept. 28 told that story well.

Bright sunshine blazed through towering trees, and Lake Remick sparkled in the background as Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts and adult leaders from around the diocese gathered for the early-afternoon liturgy in an outdoor chapel.

The Mass was celebrated in conjunction with the annual retreat sponsored by the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, held Sept. 27-29 at Camp Dittmer in Phelps, Ontario County. Approximately 75 Scouts, ages 11 and up, participated.

In keeping with the theme of creation, readings were taken from the first two chapters of Genesis. And Basilian Father Joseph Lanzalaco, chaplain of St. John Fisher College, referred to creation frequently as he celebrated Mass.

"The message is very simple: God created everything. He created it out of nothing and it was very good. Everything in nature cries out to the glory of God," Father Lanzalaco told the congregation.

The setting perfectly suited Christina Hauryski, 16, a Senior Girl Scout, who did the second reading.

"From where I was sitting you could see through the middle of the altar and see the lake, the birds, the trees. It was pretty nice, how it related to everything," said Christina, 16, a parishioner at St. Mary's Church in Bath and a junior staff member for the retreat.



Karin von Voigtlander/Catholic Courier

Tessa Farley of Webster's St. Rita Church removes weeds from the fishing pole she made Sept. 28 during a "Sustenance from the Sea" segment of the Catholic Scouting Retreat at Camp Dittmer in Phelps.

Michael Wynne observed that the outdoor Mass added more meaning related to the theme than a church could have offered.

"You're in nature and you're in what God created. Out here is what God made, and in there (a church) is what other people made," said Michael, 13. He's a First Class Boy Scout from St. Rita's in Webster,

which is both his parish and the site of his Scout unit (Troop 163).

The Catholic Scouting Retreat offered several activities connected to creation and nature, such as an exhibit featuring endangered species of birds, and a "scavenger hunt" in which Scouts were required to identify objects connected with the Book of Genesis. All weekend long, Scouts engaged in intense group discussions regarding God's creations and the significance of his actions.

"The hardest question this morning (Saturday) was, where did the water come from? They were like, 'Wasn't it already there?'" Christina remarked.

Most folks, Christina and Michael remarked, probably don't reflect on creation often enough.

"You just take it for granted. You don't realize what was there until it's gone," Christina said.

"We don't stop to think what God has created for us to live on this earth. All we care about is sending out a bill, not thinking of what God did for you," Michael said, referring to people's preoccupation with material goods.

Christina and Michael both say they love outdoor activities. Yet even at that, they admit that being appreciative of creation and nature



As other retreat participants look on, Tessa waits for a fish to bite.

can be a challenge at times — such as on the Catholic Scouting Retreat's opening night, when a heavy rain descended upon Camp Dittmer.

"It was just miserable!" Christina exclaimed.

"My sweater got soaked, my socks were soaked," Michael added. "It's a little hard thinking of nature that way when you can't do anything without getting wet."

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