

# Scouts recognized at Sacred Heart

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

ROCHESTER — In Matthew 22:34-40, Jesus states that the greatest commandment of all is to “love God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” — and, secondly, to “love your neighbor as yourself.”

As far as Father Mickey McGrath is concerned, this edict is being lived out quite admirably by many young Catholics in the Diocese of Rochester who participate in Scouting.

“This is what’s so beautiful about Scouting, because Scouting teaches (young people) to do the very same,” said Father McGrath, who serves as chaplain for the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and is also parochial vicar at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Greece.

Father McGrath explained that Scouting activities guide youths toward a love for God and a love for creation. And, because those projects draw out the youths’ talents and gifts, Scouting “teaches them to love themselves,” Father McGrath said on Saturday, March 8.

The priest made his comments while preaching before a packed congregation at Sacred Heart Cathedral, where numerous Scouts and their families were gathered for the annual diocesan Scout Recognition Service. Nearly 300 Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts from throughout the diocese were honored.

Music, readings and Father McGrath’s homily were followed by a lengthy awards presentation, in which Bishop Matthew H. Clark bestowed emblems and medals upon long lines of boys and girls who approached the altar with family members. The bishop shook hands with

them all and later told the congregation that this segment was the highlight of his day, saying “what a privilege and honor it is” to see big smiles on so many young faces. Following the service, Bishop Clark flashed a big smile of his own as he posed for a colossal group photo with the award recipients.

All people who have qualified for religious awards during the previous year are honored at the Scout Recognition Service, which has taken place at Sacred Heart Cathedral since 1990. This tradition began for Boy Scouts only, with Girl Scouts being added in 1993.

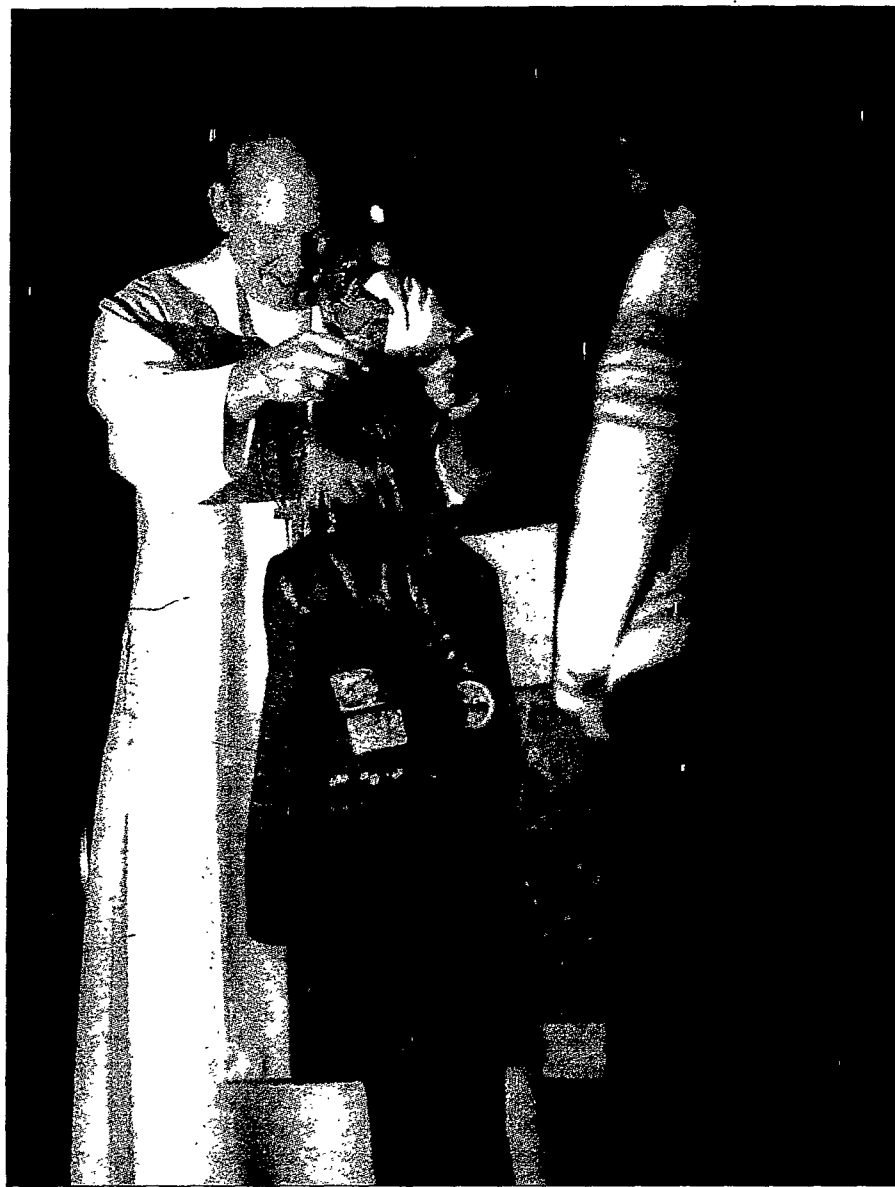
Award opportunities are available for Scouts in first grade right up through their teen years. The honors are broken down into eight categories, four each for boys and girls. To qualify, all candidates are required to seriously examine their faith lives and, in many cases, write papers and perform service projects.

Based on the large number of recipients at the Scout Recognition Service, it’s apparent that Scouts in the diocese value these awards highly. Hannah Osgood said she simply likes being a Girl Scout.

“We do a lot of things, like camping and nature. I like to do the activities,” said Hannah, 9, who earned a Family of God award for girls 7 to 9 years old. Also that day, Hannah’s brother, Keith, 13, along with Sean O’Donnell, 14 — both of whom are Scouts — served as cantors for the recognition service. All three youths attend Holy Ghost Parish in Gates.

Hannah added that she felt “nervous, very shy, excited” at being given her award by Bishop Clark.

Stephen Maloney, 10, from St. Thomas More Parish in Brighton, re-



Rebecca Gossell/Catholic Courier

Bishop Matthew H. Clark presented awards to Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts during a recognition at Rochester’s Sacred Heart Cathedral March 8.

ceived the Parvuli Dei award for boys in grades 3-5. He said that as part of his preparation, he assisted residents of an adult-nursing facility.

“It’s fun to get the patch and it’s fun earning the patch,” Stephen

stated.

Stephen obviously enjoys pursuing other Scouting achievement awards as well. The vest he wore to the recognition service featured a colorful array of patches, emblems and medals — and that’s not even his full collection.

“He could probably fill the (vest’s) inside too,” remarked Stephen’s father, Robert.

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