

YOUNG OBSERVER

ROCKing

ministry

Geneva youth work to show Christian caring

YO CALENDAR

It's coming: Diocesan Youth Summit



(Observer file photo)

What: The 2016 Rockford Diocese Catholic Youth Summit packed with music, adoration, confessions, Mass, quality time with Bishop Malloy, food and friends.
When: Oct. 30, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.
Where: Rock Valley College in Rockford
Theme: "Blessed Are the Merciful."
 Watch for more details right here in YO, on Facebook and Twitter.

St. Charles youth earns Eagle rank

Adam Minh-Long Nguyen, a sophomore at St. Charles North High School, has earned the Eagle Rank in Boy Scouting. His parents are Steven and Liza Nguyen and the family belongs to St. Patrick Parish in St. Charles, where Adam is a member of Boy Scout Troop 10. His Eagle Court of Honor was June 5.



Nguyen

Adam has earned 28 merit badges and the Ad Altari Dei religious award. Among his many positions within the troop, he has served as Chaplain's Aide, Assistant Senior Patrol Leader and Senior Patrol Leader.

Adam's Eagle project involved landscape work for St. Patrick Parish's downtown convent, preschool and parking lot. With mentor Charity Davis, he designed gardens. He also built a bird house for the garden. He had to develop the project, procure donations for materials, raising more than \$500. More than 25 volunteers, including scouts, leaders, friends and family, helped with the Eagle project. Msgr. Steven Knox, St. Patrick pastor, blessed the completed project and the Sisters of St. Francis sang a blessing, too.

Spring break 2016 found 19 high school teens and seven adult chaperones from St. Peter Parish in Geneva on a mountain top in Rutledge, Tenn., serving the poor alongside the Glenmary Home Missioners.

The visit was a perfect outlet for The ROCK — Reaching Out in Christian Kindness — Mission Team to show their love for Christ by serving the poor.

Four work groups went out to different locations each day. Just being there — a ministry

of presence — helped residents at a local nursing home. But doing things also made a difference.

The team helped a middle-aged widow move her belongings out of her subsidized housing apartment following a painful eviction that essentially left her homeless.

They also repaired a roof and ran plumbing to the home of a disabled couple who had no running water in their dilapidated house.

For team members, it was an eye opening and humbling experience to see how others

live with so little since there is so much abundance within the Geneva community.

The team also helped with grounds keeping at a residential facility for children who have been abused, neglected or abandoned. At Glenmary's property, team members felled trees and chopped wood to supply locals with firewood to heat their homes next winter.

As part of this immersion program, everyone was encouraged to delve into the local culture by living simply. It was a loving sacrifice for this

group of teens to be without cell phones during the trip. But the lack allowed everyone to focus on each other and the people they were serving.

They also overcame difficulties such as sharing three toilets, planning meals and buying food using average food stamp amounts.

Having a glimpse into the challenges the needy face also allowed the group to better understand the daily crosses of the poor while bringing Christ to others through service.



Maura Jacowiec splits wood on the mission trip to Rutledge, Tenn.



RIGHT: John Herrera tidies up the grounds at a residential children's facility.



(Photos provided)
 Matt Will cleans up some old bricks for reuse.



RIGHT: Hudson Germann, David Easton, and Cole Olson run PVC pipe for indoor plumbing.

FATHER

Q A friend of mine who has to go live with his other parent in the summer never gets to Mass while he's gone. He doesn't have a driver's license and there's no church close to his parent's house. I think he misses Mass, but he doesn't know how to bring the subject up to his non-Catholic parent. What can I tell him?

A The first thing that you can tell him is that it is awesome that this topic is important to him and that he has a desire to go to Mass!

After that you can encourage him that even when things in life get hard, that doesn't mean that they aren't worth doing! Jesus never said that following Him would be easy, but He did promise that it would be worthwhile!

Since your friend's difficulty surrounds not knowing how to bring the subject up that's where I'll start my answer, but I also want to get into why it is so important to get to Mass each Sunday in the first place!

I would say that very frequently in life when we

have situations in which we don't know how to bring up a subject, the best thing to do is to pray first to ask God to guide the conversation, and then go up to the person and just start talking.

More often than not our fears of how the conversation will go are exaggerated. That being said, my hope would be that if your friend is able to state that Mass is important to him that his parent would respect this and see it as a good thing and a great sign that his or her child wants to live his life the right way.

Perhaps if your friend would invite the parent to attend with him, then even though the parent isn't Catholic, it would be a great way to spend time together and even possibly develop into having a discussion over the homily after Mass each week.

If it is proposed in this way, as an opportunity to spend time together, then hopefully the parent will see the value in this even if he or she isn't that keen on the idea of going to Mass.

If however, your friend is met with resistance

then he still shouldn't give up hope. Perhaps the parent would be willing to drive him just one time to a youth event at the parish and while there he could hopefully make friends and see if there is some way that he could get a ride to Mass from someone there.

The important thing is doing whatever possible to get to the sacrifice of the Mass each week because Jesus worked very hard in making His sacrifice possible upon the cross!

Sometimes when faced with similar situations as your friend is in, people might consider that these circumstances give them a good excuse to miss Mass. However, no excuse is a good excuse!

The reason why God invites us to Mass every Sunday and holy day of obligation and why the Church expects this of us isn't because God wants to hold us down or limit our freedom.

It's because He knows that the Mass is the best and greatest way for us to be in union

with Him and He knows that this is what is best for us! He wants for us to be united with Him and He knows that if we place other things before Him on Sunday that this will place distance between Him and us.

We should look forward to Mass (even if we sometimes think it's boring) because Mass isn't about entertainment. Rather, it is about appreciating what God has done for us and in particular what Christ did for us by dying for our sins.

My suggestion to anyone who doesn't enjoy Mass would be to pick up a book that can teach you more about it so that you can learn to appreciate it more! One suggestion would be "The Lamb's Supper" by Scott Hahn.

So encourage your friend to talk to his parent and to invite him or her to come along so that together they might grow both in their relationship with each other as well as in their relationships with God this summer.

This month's YO Father is answered by Father Keith Romke. Send your questions to youngobserver@rockforddiocese.org.

VOCATION CORNER

Say 'yes' and don't be afraid to commit

One issue that I see present in the lives of many teenagers today (although we're all susceptible!) is the difficulty to say yes and to commit to something.

For example, one of them might receive an invitation to go to a party on a Friday night about a week away, and even though they are 100 percent open and available on that evening, they say "maybe" rather than saying yes. The reason is they want to keep their options open in case a better offer comes along!

This happens all the time, and again I think this sometimes happens to all of us. We can see a good opportunity arise, but we're hesitant to embrace it because we'd rather do something great.

I think that the biggest place where this plagues individuals comes when trying to discern one's vocation, especially the question of what God might

be calling one to dedicate their entire life to!

Even if we feel called to something, we can be hesitant to take the leap of faith and enter into it because we don't know if something better might be on the horizon.

What we have to trust is that if God is calling us and we sense this, it will be what is best for us. So too, if we assess things by our standards, chances are that we'll think that something else will fulfill us more than what God is calling us to. But more often than not the value of our vocation and the difference that we can make in the world will not be immediately apparent. So if God calls say **yes** and prepare yourself for the time of your life!

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations
 Write to him at kromke@rockforddiocese.org.