

YOUNG OBSERVER

VOCATION CORNER

Appreciate the gifts you receive

During the summer I was on vacation with a priest friend of mine, and as we walked through the lobby of a hotel we passed by a set of parents and their three kids.

The parents and two of the kids were happily carrying their luggage. However the youngest, who was pouting and dragging the luggage behind her, cried out "I'm tired of this vacation!"

I was shocked at her response and her lack of appreciation. Yet, sometimes I think we can act childish like this in how we carry out our vocations.

You see, God has given all of us so much and He has provided for us in such amazing ways — just like those parents had given their daughter a great gift of a nice vacation. The thing that we all have to understand is that good things come with responsibility and that it's worth it when we keep the goal and the gift in mind.

The two older kids did what they had to do and what was expected of them, because they appreciated that carrying out their duties was what would enable them to go forward and continue their amazing adventure.

The little girl on the other hand became overwhelmed at what she was being asked to do and in light of this she was sick of the gift. She undervalued what she was given because she focused too hard on the effort that she had to put in.

Daily God asks us to accept responsibility and to take up our own crosses, but the payoff is eternal life and peace and joy in His presence.

So stay focused on the gift so that you don't get tired of all that God wants to give you!

— Father Keith Romke, Diocesan Director of Vocations, kromke@rockforddiocese.org.



(Observer photos/Louise Brass) Masses were held at Marmion Abbey as part of the Cathoree weekend with scouts and American Heritage Girls gathering for the camp out.

Light my faith

Cathoree camping weekend still needed when it's 64

By Louise Brass | Observer Correspondent

Camping and Catholicism combined to provide challenges and blessings at the 64th Cathoree Weekend in Aurora recently for 50 young people from the



Sabrina Lau of North Aurora is a Venture Crew 21 member who is also dedicated to American Heritage Girls Troop 0224, where she is a leader. AHG is a girls' variation on scouting, she said.



Peter Mertka of Geneva, a member of BSA Troop 21, said, "I am surprised that everything went fine, with all the heavy rains (Friday). My tent stayed dry."

Rockford Diocese.

Campers took part in service projects, prayer sessions and games.

With skits and singing around a campfire as darkness falls, with challenging service projects like clearing overgrown brush on a hot afternoon, and saying the Divine Mercy Chaplet before a statue of Our Lady, it was all certain to add up to a weekend to remember.

But whatever a camping weekend brings, it's important to remember that "God is good," said Samuel Peters, 14, a scout with Troop 33 in St. Charles. He's been a scout since the third grade.

And, when it's a Cathoree Weekend — for the first time at

Marmion Academy in Aurora this year — there are plenty of opportunities to find God, Peters said.

"I really like Cathoree. I like having it here. It's really fun. You can combine camping with your Catholic faith and merge



Samuel Peters, 14, a scout with Troop 33 in St. Charles, contemplates aspects of the faith.



Jessica Peters, 16, of North Aurora is a member of American Heritage Girls Troop 0224. She believes the organization helps girls feel closer to God while enjoying scouting-type activities.

them together. It's amazing to see how close you can come to God," he said.

Members from Boy Scouts of America troops 10, 13, 33 and 46, BSA Venture and American Heritage Girls attended the 64th Cathoree at Marmion Academy on Aug. 26-28.

"It's nice to have facilities to use for both Mass, adoration and confession," said Peter Mertka, of Geneva, a member of BSA Troop 21 at Holy Cross Church in Batavia.

"The monks have been very nice and very helpful. They invited us to come back next year as well," Mertka said. "I am surprised that everything went fine, with all the heavy rains (Friday). My tent stayed dry," he said.

"Scouting is really a way for me to do pretty unique things, and have a lot of unique skills



"I like this," said Austin Kornerup, of Troop 21, after participating in a matching game to help scouts locate good causes to volunteer for, including homeless shelters and food pantries.



Co-ed group Venture Crew 21 leader, Sarah Schreiber (left), helps her crew clear brush for a service project.

and leadership opportunities I won't really get anywhere else," he added.

The troops set up tents on the grounds of the academy Friday and withstood the night of rain.

On Saturday morning, Deacon Ken Ramsey addressed the group, followed by Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and confession, then Benediction.

Sabrina Lau of North Aurora is with Venture Crew 21 and is a junior leader for American Heritage Girls, Troop 0224, at Holy Cross Parish in Batavia.

"This is my fifth year with American Heritage Girls. It's ... for ages kindergarten through 18," she explained.

Lau said she joined because she was looking for a faith element in scouting, and she found that with AHG. "We have religious awards. We have Marian Medals for older girls. We also have the Holy Spirit Medals.



Michael Tandy, from St. Thomas Moore Parish in Elgin, a member of Venturing Crew 654, prepares to lead a sing-a-long. Venturing is a youth development program of the BSA for young men and women ages 14-21.

"I like to think of us as the girls' version of boy scouts," Lau said. "I have made so many life-long friends. It's very character-forming. It's great. I've camped in all kinds of weather, and I will have stories to tell for the rest of my life."

Jessica Peters of North Aurora is also a member of AHG Troop 0224, and has reached Patriot Level, the top AHG achievement.

"I have made some good friends and done a lot of service stuff. It helps you feel closer to God. It makes you feel really good, especially when you are with your friends who are also Catholics," she said.

Sunday included a flag ceremony and Mass before

breaking camp at noon and heading home with memories of a successful Cathoree to keep for a lifetime.



Eagle Scout Jacob Kadolph of BSA Troop 10, said it was worth attending the Cathoree weekend at Marmion.



Freeport scout earns Eagle honors

Greg Williams congratulates his son Danny Williams (right) of Boy Scout Troup 7 in Freeport for the completion of his Eagle Scout project. Danny lead the project with a plan to rebuild and update the "Mary Hill" at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish in Freeport. He collected contributions to add a landing and four benches to establish a place to sit and pray in this peaceful setting. His family, donors and helpers from the parish supported him in getting his project completed.

Q FATHER

Q What is purgatory? What does the Bible say about purgatory?

A I'm really glad that you asked, because I think that purgatory is something that is made fun of by a lot of non-Catholics and that is, at the same time, misunderstood by a lot of Catholics.

My hope is that by the end of my answer you'll understand that purgatory is a gift from God and something that we should all be very grateful for!

Let me begin by saying that I think that most people understand and believe in heaven or hell. The idea is that if you've lived a good life, followed and believed in God, and have repented and been forgiven from your sins, then at the end of your life you'll go right up to heaven.

On the other hand if you're an evil person who's done a lot of bad in your life without remorse, then hell is where you'll head for all eternity.

That seems to make sense on the surface, so how does purgatory fit in?

Well, as a place to start,

I'll say that purgatory is nothing more than a place of preparation for heaven. Within this it is important for you to understand that purgatory is **not** a place where someone who is unrepentant and who is hardened in their sin will ever be.

Rather, purgatory is a pit-stop on the way to heaven, meaning that if you manage to get into purgatory, you are in good shape, because you will get into heaven eventually. That is a guarantee.

So what is it? Let me explain by using an analogy.

Imagine that you have a nice piece of wood that represents your soul. As you sin (which we all do, unfortunately) you put nails into your nice little soul.

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Students Take Chaperones to Steubenville on the Lake

Teens (and adult chaperones) from St. Mary parishes in DeKalb, Huntley and Sycamore attended the 2016 Steubenville on the Lake Conference, in Kenosha, Wis., July 22-24. The theme for Steubenville conferences this year was, "Thirst." Sonar performed upbeat, high energy Christian and devotional music throughout the conference. Speakers included Paul George (emcee), Father Mike Schmitz, Sister Miriam Heidland, Sean Forrest and Nic Frank (a Rockford Diocese native). All the speakers presented powerful messages of how

Jesus thirsts for our friendship, and how we try to fill our thirst for Him with everything our society has to offer, except Him. They offered concrete ways the teens (and adults) could start making changes in how they try to satisfy their thirst for God. There were also break-out sessions for boys and girls addressing challenges specific to their lives. There was Mass every day, and confession was available throughout the weekend. The crowning jewels of the conference were Adoration and a eucharistic procession.

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