

SCOUTING

On my part I will do my best to do my duty to God and to my Country and to obey the Scout Law. To help other people at all times. To keep myself physically strong, mentally, and morally straight.

A scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent.

Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent.

These are the scout oath and the scout law. My first contact with the Boy Scouts happened in Saskatchewan when I was training for the priesthood. A classmate of mine was camping close to our summer camp with his troop. I was impressed by the cleanliness, cooperation and order of the troop. Some years later, at Greenville, I was invited to the scout troop meetings and again I liked what I saw. Coming to Eagle Lake, Me., in 1957, I was appointed assistant scout master. Three years later when I moved to Stratton, Yaro Koneckny, a veteran scout leader, got me involved on the District Level as Chaplain and later as Unit Commissioner. Our Field Executive was John Eachus and after him, John Cederstrom. I helped the people in town to help our Scout Master who had worked for five years single-handedly to keep the troop alive and active. Practically every summer, I spent a week in summer camp with the troop; the scout master was too busy and too poor to gratify himself that much. We would go to Bomazeen near Waterville on the Belgrade Lakes and one year, I went to Camp Hinds with the Rangeley Troop. I saw to it that they had Mass at the Fall and Spring Camporees. Nothing, not cold, nor rain, nor wind stopped me. I kept contact with the leaders at the monthly round tables and district meetings. We also had a cub scout pack in Stratton and I did my best to help them too. In recognition for my good will I was given the Scouter's Key and even the Silver Beaver. Coming back to northern Maine in 1967, I was named Unit Commissioner and Council Chaplain. I am still Council Chaplain and I see to it that the boys have their Mass at the Spring and Fall Camporees. I also join them on outings when I can on weekends and take care of their spiritual needs.

In my opinion, scouting is one of the best educational organizations we have. A boy reaching Eagle rank has the equivalent of two years in college in general knowledge. He has leadership, he can take care of himself and others in any circumstances. He is a real asset in any position he may

work. He sincerely tries to live up to the ideals of the scout oath and the scout law which represents the best of our civilization. As an old college professor and a priest, I consider myself as friend of the young and I sincerely wish that all the boys and girls go through the scout program. After nearly 100 years of activity in our country, it has proven its value. Fifty-one percent of the officers in our armed forces have been through scouting. And so it is with the majority of our clergy. The list of our young heroes who have saved lives sometimes at the risk of their own is too long to enter here. As for taking care of himself, some years ago, a young scout lost in Baxter Park came out on his own after eight days alone in the woods. He knew what to do. The boys who join profit by it and their friends who are not so wise do get something indirectly but truly. Moreover, it is a real blessing to the leaders who open their hearts to the boys of their hometown. It is among them that I have met some of the best people I have known in my 70 years of life. I think of John Sinclair, who has used his influence and knowledge to implement some of our national scout programs, and there is J05 Richardson of Livermore, who turned his back on a check for \$200 to be with his little scout friends and their leaders on a weekend camporee. I think of my cousin, Barney Marquis, scout master of the Rangeley Troop, who week after week would drive 80 miles after his day's work with his boys so that they could qualify for a swimming badge. I think of the scout master who left Rumford after his day's work at the paper mill with a load of boys in his beachwagon and drove 65 miles to Stratton for the camporee. After half an hour of quiet in a crowded car, you know boys get restless. And he had to keep them quiet for at least an hour and a half even if he was tired from his day's work. Result: he got a ticket for speeding less than five miles from the end of the trip. That picture of the scout master by Rockwell is one of my favorites. I can read so much dedication, so much self-forgetfulness, so much love for his hometown and its boys. I can see all that in his tired but courageous face and it brings to my mind the words of the Holy Bible: "Those who guide the many on the way of righteousness will shine like stars in the Heaven." Amen, indeed...

