Dear brothers and sisters, my fellow Explorers,

God’s Providence leads us in Ways that are so wonderful that if we trust Him we will be led to places that surpass all our dreams and desires and imaginings. Because Christ is our Way and, following the Truth that He teaches us through His Holy Church, we will be led to eternal Life, to “that Camp of rest and joy where Christ has pitched His tent and ours for all Eternity”.

It was through Providence that I first met an FSE Explorer in 2013 when I was a University Chaplain in Edinburgh (Scotland). At that time I was looking for something engaging for young people, especially in their teenage years, that would help them grow in friendship with Jesus Christ. I was so impressed by this young man and what he told me about the FSE that I had to find out more about them. A few months later, God sent four French Explorers to our student parish and one of them asked me if he could start a Wayfarer Explorers group. I agreed to support and help him and from there began an adventure in what Ven. Fr. Jacques Sevin SJ called ‘Scoutisme’: Baden-Powell’s traditional Exploring animated with power of the Gospel of salvation.

The summer of 2014 I was invited to Eurojam in Normandy (France) as a Chaplain to a Camp of about 200 boys, and I was so amazed by what I saw: independent boys and girls who were capable of so much more than society told us children and teenagers could do. They were full of life – the “abundant life” that Jesus came to give us – and full of the joy of the Gospel, ready to do their best and to serve and to build and to create friendships. Baden-Powell was right: if we empower young people and trust them with responsibilities they can achieve great things. This is a profound Christian insight for we know that God loves the little ones, and that he always chooses those whom the world considers weak and small.

Our life in the FNE Movement as Explorers is a preparation for that sublime Camp which we call heaven where He has already pitched a tent for us.
For it is when we’re little and humble that God can act and do great things, as he did for Our Lady. In fact, when God became Man he chose to become one of those little ones; the “Word abbreviated” the Fathers of the Church used to say. I knew after my time with the 14,000 Explorers gathered in France for Eurojam that the FSE Movement was what I was looking for. It offers to young Catholics not just what they need but also what they deserve.

As adults we owe it to our children to make the FSE vision and mission a reality in our countries. And so, when I was sent by my Dominican superiors to Washington D.C. I was so happy to discover that a good few brave people here in the USA and Canada also shared my belief that the FSE is a gift to our Catholic youth. What I have seen so far of the FNE gives me great hope for my own small FSE Movement in the United Kingdom, and I have only admiration and thanks for the first FNE Explorers and leaders of this great Continent. The road ahead and the tasks to be accomplished, even preparing for a single camp, can sometimes seem overwhelming. But Christ leads the Way; He is The Chief and His Providence never fails us. Our life in the FNE Movement as Explorers is a preparation for that sublime Camp which we call Heaven where He has already pitched a tent for us.

While we make our journey and explorations here on earth, and while we learn to work and serve in our homes and in our Patrols and Troops, all will be well if we always look to Him and follow Him. For our Chief, the Strong One, will protect us, the weak and the small and the little ones. He will allow us to lean upon His Patrol Staff, and even upon His breast as St John, the youngest of the apostles, did; He will shelter us in His Sacred Heart. So, let us go forward with courage and faith, being “semper parati” for wherever God’s grace and Providence leads us!

Fr Lawrence Lew, O.P.
National Counsellor
Religious Guides & Scouts of Europe in the United Kingdom.

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We live our Catholic faith through this program and invite you to live the adventure with us. Contact us today for info on our programs for girls and boys!

FNE General Commissioner:
paul.ritchi@gmail.com

FNE President:
cwhasson@verizon.net
Lenten Penance for Explorers

By Brother André Marie, M.I.C.M.

(Brother Black Bear)

Lent, my brother and sister Explorers, is a penitential season of grace. During this season, the Church not only puts penitential thoughts in our minds, but She also has us do works of penance. Right now, let us set aside our aversion to the idea penance, and look it straight in the face, for if we do so in a Catholic way, we will be looking into the Holy Face of Jesus.

The life of penance is a life of conversion. By penance, we have a change of heart (the Greek word for penance used in the New Testament means a “change of mind”). This change of heart is a “conversion” (literally a turning around) because it turns us from mortal and venial sin, and from constantly wanting our own way, not God’s. When we convert, we turn away from those things toward God and His holy will.

All of us Explorers should be mindful of our own personal need of penance this Lent, and of the impact that our penance can have on ourselves and those whom we love. By practicing penance, we please God, we bring His blessings on ourselves and our families, and we work for the conversion of our land. By doing penance, we are working for a Catholic America — and by that, I mean the two nations where our FNE family has spread: Canada and the United States.

From here out, I will summarize the subject of penance, relying very heavily on the book, The Spiritual Life, by Father Adolphe Tanqueray, and showing along the way how observing the Explorer Law provides us with wonderful opportunities of practicing penance.

The virtue of penance inclines us to detest our sins because they offend God. It further directs us to avoid sin in the future, and to atone now for our past sins. (Hint: These two sentences are really important.) However difficult it might seem to us to do “works of penance,” we should remind ourselves that if we have committed mortal sin, we have deserved hell, and if we have committed venial sin, we have merited punishments in purgatory. Here in this life, we can hope to avoid these punishments by “doing penance,” which is done chiefly in three ways:

I. The submissive, willing, and joyful acceptance of all the crosses God sends our way is the first way of penance. The Council of Trent teaches us that God accepts our patient endurance of life’s difficulties as satisfaction for our sins. Is that not beautiful? We can unite our little daily crosses to the Cross of Our Lord and to the sufferings of the Sorrowful Mother. In order to do so, we have to suffer well, which is to say that we have to be patient in our trials. It is not easy, and it is not the way of the world, but it is very rewarding. Instead of whining, griping and grumbling, as our natural inclinations would have us do, willingly embracing our troubles for the love of God is a powerful means of penance. If we cannot do it, our other penances will be of less value, because we lack the spirit of penance.

I have good news for you! Point eight of our Explorer Law helps us out here: “An Explorer controls himself: he smiles and sings under all difficulties.” The smiling and singing are external manifestations of our internal control, and our internal willingness to suffer some bit of pain for the love of God.
II. The second way of penance is the faithful discharge of our daily duties in a spirit of penance and reparation. Your Father and Mother have duties as Christian parents. These are not easy, especially today, when so many forces are attacking the institution of the Christian family. A lot goes into providing all that is necessary for children, including food and shelter, education, a stable home life, etc. This is not easy — and yes, you should be grateful to them, in case you were wondering! But the work your parents to do provide for you is a major part of how they sanctify themselves as married Christians. The priest has his difficult duties, too, and so do religious brothers and sisters. Many saints became saints by simply, quietly, and consistently observing their daily obligations as priests, religious, married people, or single people in the world. This, again, is something that the world fights against. Instead of “putting up” with these difficulties, the world tells us to get divorced when marriage and family obligations become difficult, or to abandon the sacred vows and oaths we made to God when religious life or the priesthood becomes hard.

Again, our Explorer Law is a great help here. Point one (“An Explorer’s honor is to be trusted”) makes us value what is good and virtuous over our petty little preferences. Point two (“An Explorer is loyal to his country, leaders, parents, and subordinates”) makes us mindful of our duties to those around us, so that we combat the sinful tendency to selfishness. Point seven (“An Explorer obeys proper orders and leaves nothing half-finished”) focuses us directly on our “duties of state” as Explorers. God has shown in Holy Scripture and the lives of the saints how very pleased He is by obedience. “For obedience is better than sacrifices: and to hearken rather than to offer the fat of rams” (1 Kings 15:22). All these points of the Law I just cited provide plenty of good opportunities for wholesome penance.

III. Fasting and almsgiving are two forms of penance that are found in the Bible and that the Church has always blessed. Tother, they are our third way.

A) The Church’s traditional Lenten fast and abstinence program used to be this: Every day of Lent (excluding Sundays) was a fast day, defined as having only one meal, with two “light collations” (snacks) allowed, both of which together do not add up to a full meal. Every day of Lent was also traditionally a day of abstinence from flesh-meat. No longer obligatory, these are still salutary penances. If you are not up to these penances, then eat less for Lent! We live in a very overweight society, which has us satisfy every urge, and — pardon the expression — “scratch every itch.” By discipling our appetite for food, we strengthen ourselves to resist various trials. In fact, if we do not control these bodily appetites, according to all the great spiritual writers, we will not be able to live as we are commanded to in Point Ten of our Law:

“An Explorer is clean in thought, word, and deed.”

B) I will not say much about almsgiving. But I will note that it is not limited to giving money. According to Saint Thomas Aquinas, “almsgiving” is the performance of any of the fourteen works of mercy (seven corporal and seven spiritual). Can you list these? If you can list them, can you do them? Yes, you can! And no matter how young you are.

In this article, I did not cite every Point of the Explorer Law. If you want to do some thinking of your own on the subject, look at the Law and see how you can form concrete resolutions for Lenten penances from it.

Dear Explorers, Parents, and Adult Leaders: When we pray, do we just expect God to “give us stuff,” or are we willing to give Him something in return — like ourselves, our good works, our prayers, joys, and sufferings? “God loveth a cheerful giver” says Saint Paul (2 Cor. 9:7), so be one! Everything recommended in this article is within your reach to some degree. You can give something back to the good God who has been so generous to you. In doing so, you glorify the Holy Trinity and cooperate with Him in the great work of making you a saint.
Holiness Without Hair Shirts
by: Sister Maria Rosaria, M.I.C.M.
(Sister Grey Fox)

“Penance, penance, penance!” These are the words of Our Lady at Fatima, spoken to two little girls and a little boy each under ten years of age. With Lent coming up, we all have penance in mind. Commonly, we plan to give something up to which we find ourselves too much attached. This is a very good thing. However, I am going to make a proposition. I will present you with the excellent tools of our program, (whose aim is “To save souls”) to appeal and challenge the generosity of our youth.

At my last meeting, I taught one of my Explorers how to make a bed, because in order to make her promise, she needs to make her bed everyday (her ‘Explorer Duty starts at home’). I asked, “Did you know that you could release a soul from purgatory by making your bed?” I continued, “and by picking up a piece of paper, you could convert a sinner?” At first, she was incredulous. Are you interested, my fellow leader? What does this have to do with Lenten penance? Let me answer that carefully.

I am a Religious Sister. I am a vowed Spouse of Christ living the vows of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, ‘until death do us unite’. A vow is a solemn promise. I am bound by my vows to strive for perfection, for my salvation and the salvation of others. “I am the Spouse of Him whom the angels serve, Whom the sun and moon gaze upon with admiring wonder, the Lord our God has put His ring upon my finger.” This might sound a bit lofty, especially when you consider that my day is filled with ordinary tasks. I pray, work, study, sleep, suffer, eat, attend daily Mass, say the daily Rosary, plan meetings and camps for Explorers, study the stars with them, play with a Timber Wolf and an Otter every once in awhile and...pick up those pieces of paper. Yes, what I do has more more merit because of my Vows, but everything is ordinary. Every soul in the state of grace is, in a sense, a spouse of Christ by his vows that he made at his Baptism. The Vowed Religious Life is – simply, but grandly – an intensifying of the life that every Catholic should be living – Religious, Married or Single in the world. Let me give you a few examples of how the Explorer Law is practiced in each calling in life as a means of ‘easy’ penance and living the Christian virtues you might expect to find in Religious Life.

First, for the Religious, we take the Vow of Poverty. By making this vow we give God everything, so that we own nothing ourselves. God in return shares everything with us that is His, which gives us more of an obligation to take care of all of His gifts, including nature itself. So, here the Laws #6 and #9 could apply, “An explorer sees in nature God’s creation, she loves plants and animals.” “An explorer is thrifty, she takes care of her own possessions and those of others.”

Next, the Religious’ Vow of Chastity is echoed in Law #10, “An explorer is clean (meaning pure) in thought, word and deed.” Purity inspires heroism and nobility, and uprightness of spirit. Thus follows Law #5: “An explorer is courteous and chivalrous.” Purity is a recurring theme in this program, in the Law, the salute, in the flag, on the badge (and, for our group, the neckerchief). “Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.” We see God in all whom we serve.

For the Vow of Obedience, a Religious learns that it is a perfect thing to obey joyfully without hesitation and to do so fully without leaving any part of the order neglected. The first sin of Adam was of disobedience that echoed the defiant ‘I will NOT serve’ of his tempter. To obey joyfully is a great consolation to the Heart of Jesus and makes a Religious an unconquerable warrior in God’s army. Explorer Law #7, “An explorer obeys proper orders and leaves nothing half finished.” contains these same ideas. This great virtue engenders loyalty to the cause to which we Religious belong, for we know that the voice of our Superior is the voice of God. Hence we have Law #2, “An explorer is loyal to her country, leaders, parents and subordinates.”

The vocation of Holy Matrimony has similar parallels: the bride and groom make their vows of fidelity to each other, ‘until death do us part.’ I will begin here with the very first Law, “An explorer’s honor is to be trusted.” Honesty is the necessary element in any relationship worth having and is expected in a holy marriage. Otherwise, it would be pointless to make the vows in the first place. Before the marriage ceremony, the lovely wife-to-be is exorted to obey her husband. So, we
see again, the law of obedience and that beautiful virtue “An explorer obeys proper orders…” This is a great protection for her and her children. It also makes her an unconquerable heart in the midst of her household. Here, again, loyalty follows (“An explorer is loyal to her country…”), and the mother will reap the benefits of loyal children who have seen her good example.

When parents are struggling with the day-to-day rush of caring for their children, it may be easy to forget the sublime glory of their efforts. If they consider Law #6, “An explorer sees in nature God’s creation…” they will remember the honor of procreation and the privilege in helping to populate heaven for all eternity. But to assist with the difficult moments of parenting and family life, Law #8 provides the mindset: “An explorer smiles and whistles under all difficulties.” It can be a great penance indeed to smile when you don't want to, but is potentially a highly selfless and meritorious act of love.

Opportunities for acts of love are innumerable, and there are many occasions to practice them. Law #3, “An explorer’s duty is to serve others.” would serve as a reminder of the selflessness required in this state in life.

Purity applies in Holy Matrimony as well. Our Lady of America, our group’s Patroness, says that she wants sin to be unheard of in the homes of Her children. This is where the husband’s role comes in, with Law # 5, “An explorer is courteous and chivalrous.” It is his duty as head of the household to protect his ‘Garden of Eden’ from all serpents and their temptations. He is the protector of his wife and children from any harm, physical or spiritual.

Lastly, we have the Celibate Single Life in the world. This is the vocation of all who are not in either of the other two states, Married or Religious. Do your Members know that this is their current vocation? Do they understand that they are expected to practice the virtues of this holy state until such time that God wishes them to change it, if ever He does? If they understand that their current state, right now, is the celibate single state, then living the Explorer Laws will prepare them well for their futures. By observing the Law, they will be familiar with practicing the virtue of fidelity (that is, trustworthiness) which is required in every state in life. They will have learned to discipline their thoughts, words and deeds to always be clean. They will have learned to cultivate this fragile virtue which will blossom into inner beauty and fruitfulness in good works. Since people in the celibate single state do not have the immediate obligations of the Married state, they have more liberty with their time. Therefore, it is all too easy to become self-centered, selfish. So, especially to them is attached the Law. “An explorer’s duty is to serve others.” They can do this by helping out in their community or parish: visiting the sick or the aged, helping new mothers, helping families in disasters, helping the youth, helping a neighbor with homework. This will earn them merit and a lot of experience that will help in whichever state in life God calls them to. This practice also lends itself to the observance of the Law, “An explorer is a friend to all and a sister to every other explorer.”

VENERABLE FR. JACQUES SEVIN, S.J.

Father Sevin, the founder of Catholic scouting once said, “It is a great grace to be an [Explorer.”] Mark, he said a great grace. I point this out because within this program is a mightily fertile seed waiting to fall on the good soil of the heart of any youth who dares to take the challenge of this adventure. This is the ultimate adventure, of becoming a saint. If you have ever had the privilege to hear our own Paul Ritchi speak, you will know what he says of the Explorer Law, “If you follow these laws faithfully every day of your life, you will become an ordinary saint.” St. Thérèse, the explorer of the ‘Little Way’ is the one who said boldly that picking up a piece of paper could be so powerful. She also lived in a convent, doing the ordinary things of prayer, work and study and faithfully observing her solemn promises. But as we all know, she is no ordinary Saint. She is a Doctor of the Church. What was her secret? Anyone could pick up a piece of paper with the result of nothing more than a kink in their back and more civility in their living room.

VENERABLE FR. JACQUES SEVIN, S.J.

SAINT THÉRÈSE AT THE AGE OF 15. (EXPLORER AGE)

Father Sevin, the founder of Catholic scouting once said, “It is a great grace to be an [Explorer.”]
St. Thérèse picks it up with a motive: Love. Not "luv", but true supernatural Love of God, which we call Charity.

In other words, she did not pick it up just because it annoyed her or it had to be done or just because she was told to do it. She formed the intention to do it for God and Him alone to prove her love for Him. For that reason, she increased in her virtue of Charity unceasingly. Here is her method in her own words, "Far from resembling those beautiful souls who, from their childhood, practiced all sorts of macerations, I made mine consist solely in...withholding an answer, in rendering little services without drawing attention to them, and many other things of this kind." "How easy it is to please Jesus, to ravish His Heart..." "In my little way, there are only ordinary things: little souls must be able to do all that I do."

Here is the refrain from the Explorer Promise Song:
'I want to love you more and more, unceasingly, 
Protect my promise, Christ Lord Jesus.'
This is what an Explorer does. He adds love for God in what he does. He is pure, selfless and devoted, rallying forth with his daily good turn and showing the world how wonderful it is to belong to God through his baptism.

Being an Explorer is a great grace, because the program exposes our youth to the adventure of self-denial and service with love, thereby preparing them for whichever state God calls them to, whether Religious, Married or Single in the world. But most importantly, it prepares them to become GREAT saints by ordinary means – daily duty with great love.

When I said, "You could save a soul by making your bed," my young Explorer’s reaction was probably much the same as yours to my bold statement (which you now know is not my own). But she picked up a piece of paper that happened to be there. Then she dropped it, so she got to pick it up twice (and convert two sinners), then (using an extra cot) we proceeded to make the bed – Explorer style.

"Penance, penance, penance!" These are the words of Our Lady at Fatima, spoken to two little girls and a little boy each under ten years of age. They were Timber Wolf and Otter age. Our Lady trusted these children with a big responsibility, and they embraced it. This same task is the one we must also carry out, and it is not beyond any of us; because, as this good Mother also said, “The penance that God asks of you is the performance of your daily duty.” And we have promised to do our best with God’s grace (as we say in our promise). With so many opportunities for penance in our daily duties, we could, as St. Thérèse did, become great Saints.

By the way, the Laws of the Timber Wolf Den and Otter Lodge can be used effectively with the younger members, being just a simplified version of the Explorer Law. By following their little laws they will be already accustomed to the spirit and discipline of the Explorer Law when the time comes for them to learn it.

So, this Lent, instead of simply giving something up, how about adding an extra challenge? To live the Law, or at least one of them more faithfully? This is a sacrifice that will help develop new habits on the way to sanctity. Mediocrity is not for our times. So embrace the Law and your Promise to fulfill Our Lady’s request for the conversion of sinners (“To Save Souls!”) through “Penance, penance, penance!”

May Our Lady bless you and keep you close to the Sacred Heart of Her Son!

Ad Mariam America!
FALLACY OF THE WEEK: “SCOUTING IS UN-CATHOLIC”

by David Smith

The Catholic Church is a hierarchical Church in which the Pope and the bishops in communion with him have the right and the duty to teach, sanctify, and govern. One would think, therefore, that the fact that Pope St. John Paul II with Polish rover scouts of the FSE there is no condemnation of Baden-Powell’s educational method (in fact, as we’ll see below, not only is there no condemnation of it but rather the opposite) is sufficient to show that scouting is not un-Catholic; for if it were un-Catholic, then the Pope and the bishops in communion with him have failed in their duty to teach, sanctify, and govern for over 100 years. The scouting movement, in all its flavors, is not insignificant — there are somewhere between 25 and 40 million scouts and guides throughout the world today, about 8 million of whom are Catholic (and it must be added that the ICCS’s number includes only those who belong to mainstream, WOSM/WAGGGS scouting and guiding associations). I don’t believe it is possible, on the one hand, to be Catholic and believe what Catholics believe about the authority of the Pope and the bishops in communion with him while, on the other hand, holding that scouting is un-Catholic. It would be akin to saying that football (whatever variety) is un-Catholic.

It is true that in the early years of scouting, there were Churchmen in continental Europe who were suspicious of the new movement. There were two articles published in the French Jesuits’ journal Études that were critical of the new movement; and in 1913 Jacques Sevin, S.J. (then a Jesuit scholastic) was asked by his superiors to look into the scouting movement (with happy results). It is also true that the Italian Catholic scouting association ASCI (founded by Count Mario di Carpegna, a member of the Pope’s Noble Guard) was suppressed by Pope Pius XI in 1927 (according to one source, 1928), but that decision was a political one — to ensure the survival of Catholic Action under the Fascist government — rather than moral or doctrinal. The suppression was lifted in 1944 when the Fascists fell out of power. We know the Pope’s decision was political because he had spoken in favor of the scouting movement in 1923 and had received an international pilgrimage of scouts in audience in 1925.
You are not only scouts that are Catholic, but Catholic scouts, that is to say, Catholics that bring from the daily practice of their duty to God, and their neighbor, an energy and generosity that is taken to the commitments made, and to the training received as scouts.

— Pope Pius XI, International Pilgrimage to Rome, 6 September 1925

So the only evidence that one might marshal in favor of scouting’s being un-Catholic is that (a) near the turn of the 20th century, some French-speaking clergy disapproved, and (b) that one Catholic scouting association was suppressed by the Pope under pressure from an unfriendly government. Not exactly the sort of evidence that would hold up long under cross-examination!

The Scouts of France were started in 1920 by Fr. Jacques Sevin with ecclesiastical approval, and even if one could argue that Pius XI suppressed the ASCI due to cause, he did not suppress any other Catholic scouting associations such as the Scouts of France or the Baden-Powell Belgian Boy Scouts (founded by Jean Corbisier in 1912). Therefore, the worst one could say is that scouting is a morally neutral public activity like football, and perhaps the exigencies of the age require that Catholics participate in public activities that are morally good to the exclusion of those that are morally neutral.

This, however, is not tenable any more than the blanket negative statement on scouting. Every Pope since Pius XI (with the exception of John Paul I) has commented favorably on the scouting and guiding movement. The words of Pope St. John Paul II and his successor Benedict XVI are particularly pertinent.

The meeting of the scout method with the insights of Fr Sevin, S.J., has made it possible to develop an educational program based on Gospel values, in which each young person is led to grow and to develop his personality, thus making his talents fruitful. The scout law, training young people in the way of virtue, invites them to moral rectitude and a spirit of asceticism, thus directing them to God and calling them to serve their brethren; by striving to do good, they become men and women who can play a responsible role in the Church and in society. In a troop, at camp, and in other situations, Scouts discover the Lord through the wonders of creation, which they are called to respect. They also have a valuable experience of ecclesial life, meeting Christ in personal prayer, to which they can become accustomed, and in the Eucharistic celebration. In addition, Scout unity gives young people the opportunity of an apprenticeship for life in society with mutual respect.

— Pope St. John Paul II, Address to the International Catholic Conference on Scouting, 1998

For a century, through games, action, adventure, contact with nature, a team spirit, and service to others, an integral formation of the human person is offered to everyone who becomes a scout. Made fruitful by the Gospel, scouting is not only a place for true human growth but also for a forceful presentation of Christianity and real spiritual and moral development, as well as being an authentic path of holiness.

It would be appropriate to recall the words of Fr. Jacques Sevin, S.J., the founder of Catholic Scouts: “Holiness does not belong to any
specific period and has no specific uniform.” The sense of responsibility inspired by the scouting pedagogy leads to a life in charity and the desire to serve one’s neighbor in the image of Christ the servant, relying on the grace that he bestows especially in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation.

— Pope Benedict XVI, Letter on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Opening of the First Scout Camp, 2007

In addition, Pope Francis sent the following message to the Guides and Scouts of Europe on the occasion of Eurojam 2014:

If we accept the Lord’s invitation to go towards him and to experience his love that fulfills our hearts with joy, then he will take off any fear: fear of God, fear of the other, fear of facing the challenges of life. And he will send us to announce his love to the ends of the earth, and serve our neighbor in the most remote peripheries.

But this is possible only if we cultivate our friendship with Jesus, trying to meet him more, especially in his Word and in Sacraments. The Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist form a unique saving event in which we are configured to Jesus Christ dead and arisen, becoming new creatures, members of the Church. How many generations owe to the scout method their growth on the way of holiness, the practice of virtues and in particular greatness of soul!

— Pope Francis, To the Guides and Scouts of Europe gathered in Saint-Evrault-Notre-Dame-du-Bois, 2014

Given what has been related above, what possible reason could a Catholic have to claim that scouting is un-Catholic? Even if one believes, as some do today, that recent Popes have sometimes faltered in their teaching office, or been less than completely clear in their exercise of that office, what of the approval of Pius XI and Pius XII? I don’t think this can be so lightly set aside. In truth, to claim that “scouting is un-Catholic” is to reject the authority of the Church — fine if one belongs to another religious confession, not at all fine if one is Catholic and wishes to present oneself as a loyal son or daughter of the Church.

Archbishop of Westminster Francis Cardinal Bourne (with Lord Baden-Powell to his left) blessing a troop’s colors

It is true that scouting is not for everyone. Many things which are nevertheless good are not for everyone. For example, the consecrated religious life is not for everyone, yet it is certainly good. I realize that one can’t really compare scouting to the religious life — religious life is certainly necessary for the Church, while scouting isn’t; religious life is mentioned in Holy Scripture, while scouting isn’t; etc. But while all things that are necessary are good, not all things that are good are necessary.
ADVICE FOR AKELAS: 
THE TIMBER WOLF THINKS OF OTHERS FIRST

By Sister Marie Gabrielle
M.I.C.M
Part 1 of a 4 part series

The Timber Wolf thinks of others first. Well, he shouldn’t—according to the rest of the world. Ours is the age that glorifies selfishness. “Have it Your Way,” says Burger King. “Get your own bag,” demands Doritos. Such mottoes will never do for our Wolves. Is there no mainstream hero left who will speak up for the underdog of basic courteousness? Is McDonald’s boast of “Billions and billions served” really the closest we can get to selflessness being restored to its former pinnacle of popularity? So it would seem. Alright then, we will draw our lesson today from the smiley clown fellow who has managed to ingratiate himself with billions the world over. And Ronald’s lesson is this: addicts make the best customers.

The reason our Wolves need to put others first—the cares of others, the crosses of others, even the fleeting whimsical tastes of others—is to create addicts. Except we won’t have our Wolves pushing the product of ultra-processed, practically plasticized junk food, its taste equaled only its subsequent physical ramifications. (Ever seen Super Size Me?) No. Our Wolves will get people addicted to the Real Deal.

And what is the one thing that human beings, no matter their backgrounds or present pursuits, will become hopelessly addicted to if given even minimum exposure? The one thing that will draw hearts, convince minds, and stem the tide of evil living as no other force on earth? What, I ask, is the number one most essential natural element in any apostle and the success of his apostolate?

Kindness.

“Man can resist force, reasoning, science, and talent, but if someone does good to him, he will yield….There is no one—no matter how wicked, pessimistic, or disgusted with life he may be—who will not respond to kindness and sympathy….Love always succeeds.” (Fr. Lovasik)

Don’t be afraid, Akelas, to give your little Wolves the big picture. God has put them on this earth to get to Heaven and to lead as many other souls with them as possible. Period. God expects them all to become leaders like you—perhaps not in FNE, but that doesn’t matter. A man leads his wife. A mother and father lead their children. And a Catholic leads the world. But no one will follow an unkind Catholic. No selfish apostle ever did an ounce of good outside the bolstering of his own ego.

By training our youth to think of others first, we are telling them the glorious secret to roping souls onto the straight and narrow. Kindness. That incredible force as addictive as chocolate and as diffusive as sunshine. The man, woman, or even child, who has mastered the art of a ready smile, an encouraging word, and an ever-open ear, has a power to influence the hearts of others that is not to be underestimated.

But selflessness is hard. How, then, do we sell it successfully to a ten-year-old? I would try this practical principle from St. Francis de Sales: “Ask nothing for yourself. Refuse nothing to others.”

Ask nothing for yourself. “This doesn’t mean you can’t want a third cookie or a new nerf gun. But don’t ask for it.” Refuse nothing to others. “You don’t have to jump for joy when Mom interrupts your video game to ask you to help give Foofoo a bath—but don’t you dare say, ‘No’”. The Timber Wolf thinks of others first and those in your own family get dibs.”
Then, for as long as you can, Akelas, be in “good cop mode” to catch them every single time they give in to someone else’s wishes. Did Joey let Johnny go first in the water fountain line? Did Leslie let Lucy choose her colored game piece first? Pick the next song? Eat the last gummy worm? Anything? Notice. You needn’t praise them in front of everyone — but do praise them. Children learn by clear-cut consistent feedback and your approval means the world to them.

If in the Den you can successfully sell selflessness (say that five times fast) and give your Wolves a taste of the joy there is to be found in bringing joy to others, then lies like, “Have it your way” won’t even phase them. Or rather, so accustomed will they become to giving in to each other’s wishes that, who knows, maybe come Judgment Day, Our Lady will balance out the scales of their faults and shortcomings by reminding Her Son: “Billions and billions served!”

Questions or comments for Sister Akela? Please email akela@northstarexplorers.org and we’ll forward them along to her!

FROM THE TROOPS

NEWS FROM AROUND THE FNE
1st St. John Neumann-New Jersey
By Stephen Brown, Mongoose Patrol

January 29th through 31st the St. John Neumann Timberwolves had their annual winter camp at Belle Plain State Park while The St. John Neumann Explorer Troop, along with the St. John Berchmans Explorer Troop camped at Camp St. Michael, Mater Ecclesiae. During these camps five Explorers attained their Promise Cross, four from Mongoose Patrol and one from Coyote Patrol. They, aside from fulfilling all other requirements, had Benediction, a three-hour vigil from around 9:00 pm Friday to midnight in front of the Blessed Sacrament, followed by Mass Saturday morning and then the Promise Ceremony. These five Explorers showed great love for God, diligence and obedience in their Patrols, and proficiency in all the requirements. They all proved themselves worthy of the honor of taking their Promise Cross. Also during this winter camp two Timberwolves moved up into Mongoose Patrol. They were both sixers and one of them had two stars, the other had one. They both had a final howl done in their honor and then Luke Hasson, Mongoose Patrol’s PC, led them into the square, they saluted Black Wolf and then Luke led them to the Patrol, where they received their action posts.

Winter camps: For future editions, please send your ongoing submissions to akela@northstarexplorers.org We’d like to see news from around the troops of the FNE in each edition.
THANK YOU!

Dear Friends of the FNE, my brother and sister Wayfarers, Explorers, Timber Wolves and Otters!

I’d like to thank you for reading this lent edition of our newsletter. We are very happy to have some good food for thought for all of you as we enter Passiontide this year. In this edition, you have found some wonderful words of wisdom to help you and edify you as you journey to be closer to Our Lord during this Lent. We have brother and sister religious of our movement who were generous enough to give their time and efforts to write something for us all. They are Explorers as we are, and they have a unique perspective to help us see Fr. Sevin’s vision a little more clearly.

We’ve seen another year of incredible growth for our movement, and though we’ve had some bumps in the road, we see the same joyful smile on the faces of boys and girls, men and women across our continent. The unique spirit of the “Scout d’Europe” is thriving across the ocean, here in the New World. Our mission is a unique one, and it’s a big one. Bigger than any one of us. It’s nothing short of trying to live as chivalrous, generous, capable and free men and women who are trying to rebuild Christendom and live authentic Catholic lives devoted to Christ. Wherever we camp, or do our works of mercy and service, or bring joy to those around us, our Explorer spirit lives, and we do as Baden-Powell said: “try and leave this world a little better than you found it.” Christendom lives within those camps, and our interactions with others. As long as are doing as we have promised and living the Explorer Law, we try to serve and save our neighbor. No matter how difficult things may be for us, we smile and sing under all difficulties. No trial can be too great, because we are explorers and we can adapt and overcome. No trial can be too great, because Our Lord went before us and conquered the most difficult of trials. If we are Explorers in His camp, and He is our Chief, we should fear nothing. My brothers and sisters, as Pope Pius IX said, “place upon thy heart one drop of the Precious Blood of Jesus, and fear nothing”. Beautiful words, and fitting in this time where our families need to be strong and faithful.

So please continue all of your good works. From our group leaders, who take upon themselves the burden of leadership and help build this movement; to our section leaders who do the planning, give their time and serve our youth; to our PC’s and sixers, who are just learning how to decide, how to act and how to serve, please think of those words.

Remember that you are evangelizing! You are doing what Our Lord has commanded of us, to go and make disciples of all nations. Our duty begins at home. Around us, we find our neighbors, who may not know how to respond to our way of life, but by our fruits they will know us. If we have the joy of an Explorer in our heart, and live by the law which we have promised, we can plant seeds, which we hope will blossom, one day, into a nation of great faith. We walk the way of the cross for the next two weeks, and then we will see our King conquer death, rise from the grave and take His place at His Father’s right hand.

In His Sacred Heart,

Chris Hasson
FNE President
Group Leader
North Star FNE

“THE WORLD OFFERS YOU COMFORT. BUT YOU WERE NOT MADE FOR COMFORT. YOU WERE MADE FOR GREATNESS.” -POPE BENEDICT XVI
The Explorer Law

1. An explorer’s honour is to be trusted.
2. An explorer is loyal to his country, leaders, parents, and subordinates.
3. An explorer is made to serve and save their neighbour.
4. An explorer is a friend to all and a brother to every other explorer.
5. An explorer is courteous and chivalrous.
6. An explorer sees in nature God’s creations, he loves plants and animals.
7. An explorer obeys proper orders and leaves nothing half finished.
8. An explorer controls himself: he smiles and sings under all difficulties.
9. An explorer is thrifty; he takes care of his own possessions and those of others.
10. An explorer is clean in thought, word and deed.