



Archdiocese of San Antonio
Most Reverend Gustavo Garcia-Siller



Homily – Catholic Committee on Scouting
October 7, 2015

I am happy to be with you this afternoon to help you bring your retreat to a close. Scouting has been an important ministry in the Archdiocese of San Antonio for a very long time. Your troops that are formed by the Catholic Committee on Scouting are special. While you learn the fundamental principles and values of scouting, you also deepen your faith and your understanding of your place in the Catholic Church as you build community with your brother and sister scouts. Your dedication as scouts is truly a blessing to our parishes and the whole community.

Your theme for the retreat is "Encountering Christ". For all of us, young and old, our journey to heaven, to be with God forever, begins with our first encounter with Jesus. In today's Gospel reading, we hear the story of the rich young man's encounter with Christ. He runs toward Jesus, and kneels down before Him, nearly out of breath and filled with emotion. He looks Jesus in the eye and asks, "What must I

do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers him by asking if he obeys the Ten Commandments. The young man answers that he has been faithful to them since he was a boy. Then, to the surprise of the young man, and everyone who could hear this conversation, Jesus tells him that this was not enough. That his heart was still divided between his love for God and his love for things. In a very dramatic way Jesus tells him to "...sell what you have, and give to the poor." The young man was disappointed at Jesus' words. We are told he had a lot of material wealth and he just could not exchange it for the eternal life he seemed to want so much. Jesus was not angry with the rich young man, the gospel tells us that "Jesus was looking at him and loved him." He was not giving him a threat, he was offering him an invitation to love and care for those most in need. That is the path to heaven.

Jesus was telling him that in obeying the commandments he had kept from living an immoral life, but Jesus was asking him "What have you done to make someone's life better? What have you done to keep others from suffering the terrible pain of poverty?" This is very much like the promises you made when you became scouts. You promise to do your duty to God and country and obey the scout law. However, you also promise to help other people at all times. It is clear that being a scout is about doing good things for others, for our families,

for the community, for our country. It is not only about "NOT DOING THINGS."

When Pope Francis visited the United States, he talked about what we are called to do. He said: "Let us remember the Golden Rule, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.'" (Mt 7:12).

This Rule points us in a clear direction. "Let us treat others with the same passion and compassion with which we want to be treated. Let us seek for others the same possibilities which we seek for ourselves. Let us help others to grow, as we would like to be helped ourselves. In a word, if we want security, let us give security; if we want life, let us give life; if we want opportunities, let us provide opportunities. The yardstick we use for others will be the yardstick which time will use for us."

This all sounds a lot like "To help other people at all times." Once we have encountered Jesus, we are called to change our minds about what is important to us. It is not always easy. Jesus understands that, that is why God sent his Holy Spirit to help us love God and others like we want to be loved...maybe even better; to love to give more than to receive.

As scouts you do many good things, earning badges and honors for what you accomplish. As Catholics, your good works are motivated by love and faith in Jesus. Your encounter with Him changes your heart,

makes the love of God and love others the reason you serve. That leads you to more than a badge, it leads you on a path to heaven. When we encounter Christ we see the work we do in a new way. Having stuff that you like and earning honors and badges that reflect your good values are not bad things. However, we must never let the need for material things and recognition become the reason for what we do. Our encounter with Jesus calls us to be unselfish and place the needs of others ahead of our own. It is hard, but Jesus is with us to help.

Pope Francis showed us how to love one another when he was in the United States and he invited us, with love, to our own personal encounter with Jesus and one another. He said, "Let us help one another to make it possible to 'stake everything on love'. Let us help one another at times of difficulty and lighten each other's burdens. Let us support one another." And when it gets hard to do, say a short prayer, "Come! Holy Spirit! Come!"