

Why Catholic Camping? ... Youthful attitudes

Is there any specifically Catholic way of camping any more than there is a Catholic way of playing football? The answer depends on what you mean by Catholic and what you mean by camping.

Take camping, for example. All camping ought to promote the physical, mental, social, and spiritual health of the camper. Now, if a camp is organized under Catholic auspices, and one of its spiritual goals is to foster vocations to the religious life, or to teach catechetics, then it would properly be called "Catholic camping." Or, if by camping you simply mean outdoor living and the camp buildings and grounds are used for liturgical workshops, retreat movement, CFM gatherings, etc., combined with some outdoor activities, then again "Catholic camping" would be a proper description.

But let's talk about the usual recreational camp that is designed for children's vacations. To qualify as Catholic a bare essential would be an assurance to the parents that the camp is an ally to Catholic family life and that opportunities for basic religious practice are at least as readily available there as they are back home. In this case, church auspices would not be an essential point, as long as the Catholic laymen running the camp arrange to supply the religious requirements.

Now let's ask the question, what is meant by Catholic? Does Catholicity consist in external practice or internal attitudes? Ideally, both, of course. But our position is that internal attitude is more important than external practice. If camp is designed only to impart to the camper new information and new skills (like bringing a gym teacher into a rural setting) and to give varied



Our Lady of Hills Camp, our own Diocesan Summer Camp will begin its 12th summer of operation in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains near Hendersonville. Hundreds of children have benefited from this Catholic camping program. Under the direction of experienced clergy the camp is staffed by competent adult personnel and capable young people who act as counselors. Two Sisters of Notre Dame assist the staff with periods of instruction and hand craft classes. For information write: Our Lady of the Hills Camp, PO Box 745, Hendersonville, N.C. 28739.

opportunities for devotional practices, then the child could possibly return home not having grown in any other way than physically and intellectually.

Quality leadership

Ideally, a Catholic camp should offer more than that. Camping should aim at helping the camper to internalize a Catholic philosophy of life, an attitude summed up in the best cultural values of the Judeo-Christian tradition. Here the question of time

enters the picture. How long will the child need to stay before such a program can make a significant impact on the child's life. Another key lies in the quality of the leadership and the staff who are in direct contact with the camper and how they go about their work.

The value of camping lies in a child's exposure to an environment that stimulates toward growth and development by new experiences in an outdoor setting that affords him security and friendliness — where every child counts whether rich or poor, Negro or white; where counselors try to serve the hard-to-reach, the unmotivated, the unloved; where the democratic process is valued; where work habits are esteemed; where fun and play afford opportunities to learn; where there is room for self-confidence, creativity and

individuality; where spiritual opportunities are promoted—these are some of the things that any camp ought to strive to offer through its recreational program.

Rome Action Upheld By Head of Sisters Institute L.A. Case

Cincinnati — The national chairman of the Conference of Major Superiors of Religious Women's Institutes has commended the action of the Vatican Congregation for Religious in forbidding the Immaculate Heart of Mary nuns of Los Angeles to continue experiments approved by their general chapter last summer.

The chairman — Mother Mary Omer, mother general of the Sisters of Charity of Cincinnati — said here the congregation "is the official body for guiding and directing all Religious communities in the Church" and that she does "not feel that the sacred congregation intends to hamper or discourage in anyway the good work that is being accomplished" in the renewal of Religious communities.

The Immaculate Heart of Mary nuns already have announced that they will petition Pope Paul VI to overrule the congregation's order that they return from lay clothes to a "uniform habit"; reinstitute common religious exercises in their communities, and keep educational work as their principal occupation.

The experiments, as well as chapter-approved changes in the nuns' educational programs, have been the source of dispute between the religious order and James Francis Cardinal McIntyre of Los Angeles.

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