

4th Sunday in Ordinary Time
February 1, 2004

By Father Charles Bowes

Jeremiah 1:4-5, 17-19
1 Corinthians 12:31-13:13
Luke 4:21-30
C cycle

We who follow Jesus are called to love heroically.

On January 1st of this year, the *Cincinnati Enquirer* ran an article about a house fire in Parkersburg, West Virginia. The headline read, “12-Year-Old Uses Scout Training to Rescue Sister.” The article describes how a 12-year-old boy saved his 18-month-old sister from a fire in their home, running through smoke and flames and carrying her out through a second-floor window onto a porch roof.

“She’s my sister, and I’m supposed to take care of her,” said Michael Wedekamm, who suffered minor burns and smoke inhalation in the fire early Tuesday.

The blaze started in a first-floor bedroom and quickly spread to the rest of the two-story home where Michael lived with his mother and three sisters. All escaped with minor injuries.

“Michael went up to get the baby. The rest of them went out the back door,” said Lt. Carl Sizemore, Parkersburg’s chief fire inspector.

The boy had to kick out a window screen and climb onto the porch roof because the stairway was filled with smoke, authorities said.

He handed his young sister, Allison, to his 13-year-old sister on the ground and jumped to safety.

Michael credited his Boy Scout training with helping him pick the best escape route, Sizemore said.

“Love is patient, love is kind. It does not seek its

own interests. Love bears all things, endures all things.” As we read the list of love’s characteristics appearing in Saint Paul’s First Letter to the Corinthians, chapter twelve, we realize how countercultural it is. Our society does not encourage us to be patient, or even kind. Certainly not heroic like the young Scout, Michael Wedekamm. In fact, our society admonishes us to seek our own interests, to look out for Number One. It applauds pomposity and ego-inflation by making icons of movie stars, sports heroes and musical artists. We then approve of this by unthinkingly paying tribute at their altars.

If we stop for a moment and reflect, we might discover that the people we really admire the most are those who are indeed patient and kind, not jealous or pompous, not inflated or rude, not quick-tempered or brooding. They are people who genuinely love, people after whom we might want to model ourselves, people who have discovered the “more excellent way.”

We’re blessed to have in our parish not only a faith, but a program, a Scouting program that encourages and nourishes such love, even to the point of heroism.

**We who follow Jesus are called
to love heroically.**