

Austin Scout earns all merit badges in Scouting

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Raymond Adrian DeLeon Jr. is in a rarefied field. He's an Eagle Scout, a rank earned by a little more than 2 percent of boys in Scouting. He earned his Pope Pius XII Medal, the highest religious emblem a Catholic Scout can earn. And he has earned all 121 merit badges currently offered by the Boy Scouts of America, something so rare that Scouting doesn't keep records of that accomplishment.

But for Adrian, as he is known, those accomplishments weren't enough. He also is founding president of Venture Crew 1209 at San Juan Diego Catholic High School, where he is a senior.

Eleazar "Dingo" Dominguez, scoutmaster for Adrian's troop, said the young man is so "quiet and humble" that he underestimated him.

"I knew he'd make his Eagle," Dominguez said. "He's driven. But to do all that he has done is really amazing."

Adrian didn't start out with the goal of earning all the merit badges. An Internet search found only one other Eagle Scout this year in Maryland and one in 2006 in Massachusetts who earned all the merit badges.

"I started with small goals," said Adrian, a member of Troop 33 at St. Ignatius Martyr Parish in Austin. "I earned 10. Then I began to advance in rank and I tried to earn more and more. But every class I took (for merit badges) inspired me to learn new things every day."

It wasn't always easy. He did the requirements for the citizenship badge five times before he passed it.

Conventual Franciscan Father Jayme Mathias is president of San Juan Diego and was Adrian's adviser for his Eagle and religious emblem.

"He's an extraordinary young man," Father Mathias said. "He's highly motivated and intelligent and detail-oriented."

Their first encounter was in 2003 when Adrian was a freshman. It gave the priest an insight into this soft-spoken, polite young man.

Father Mathias was teaching Spanish and assigned six pages of homework the first day of class.

"He brought back six pages of flawless Spanish," said Father Mathias. "It was the most incredible assignment. I had to ask him who'd done the assignment. He said he had. He's always done absolutely incredible work."

He got to know Adrian better while the youngster earned the requirements for the religious emblem, a months-long process, as well as his Eagle project, which also takes several months.

For his Eagle project in 2004, Adrian set up a new sign at Fulmore Middle School and established a garden, complete with curbs around the perimeter.

Adrian said he was inspired to earn his Eagle by Nathan Waldock, a former troop member now in college.

"He didn't earn all his merit badges but he got his Eagle at 14," Adrian said. "But he inspired me to work hard. And when he finished his Eagle he went into a Venture crew."

Earning the religious emblem is just as challenging. The Pope Pius XII program deals with church-related ministries and vocations, said Kathleen Lossau, a member of the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting.

Over six months teens are challenged to consider their call from God, to a vocation as a religious, single or married person.

"God doesn't just call you to religious life," she said. "God can call you to be married or have a career."

Community service is an important aspect of the religious emblem. Adrian, who also is a talented artist, made greeting cards for patients at Seton Medical Center.

Previously, Adrian earned his Ad Altare Dei religious emblem and was invited to join the Order of the Arrow, a national brotherhood of Boy Scouts. He also is certified to be a Spanish interpreter in Scouting.

Just as he has benefited from Scouting, Adrian wants others to benefit as well.

When the Cub pack at St. Ignatius was only two boys, Adrian went to the school and talked to every class about joining Scouts and recruited 15 boys.

All his accomplishments have been done without fanfare.

"Adrian is not the type to say 'I'm going to do this or that,'" said Dominguez, his Scoutmaster. "He just does it."

I've never had anyone in my troop do as much as he has."

Dominguez said Adrian is a good role model for the younger boys in Troop 33.

"He's really good with the young kids in the Cub pack," Dominguez said. "He loves working with them."

Adrian's values also were evident when he asked for Dominguez's advice upon starting the Venture crew.

"He asked me about the focus of the Venture crew," Dominguez said. "In the old days all they did was high adventure or vocational work. Adrian wanted to talk about what they could do for service."

Adrian, 18, is the son of Raymond and Edna Leon. He started Scouting in third grade at St. Ignatius, where his father had been a Scout as a youngster.

His sister, Jessica, 20, is a student at St. Edward's University, which Adrian hopes to attend in the fall.

For more information on the religious emblems Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts can earn, call the diocesan Office of Youth Ministry at (512) 873-7771.
