

Tonight we would like to honor Fr. Mike as a founder of Troop 4 and thank him for his great support during his tenure as pastor here at St Mary's. But there is even more!

Over ten years ago, in the fall of 1997, Fr. Mike was approached about sponsoring a Boy Scout troop here at St. Mary's. In keeping with father's concern for others, he was worried that we might negatively impact other troops in Milford. We, however, felt that there was a need for this new troop, and that we wouldn't have a negative effect on other troops. Father was okay with that, and he took a chance on us. With that, troop 4 was launched. Through the years we have followed Fr. Mike's lead and have not actively recruited new scouts to the troop. We simply welcomed into the troop whatever boys came our way. In my opinion this has worked out just fine. We will start the next scout year with 35 active scouts, close to 50 registered, and 14 eagle scouts. This is not too shabby considering only 6 scouts were there to greet the first scoutmaster Bob Morin in March of 1998.

We also have to thank Father Mike for this great hall in which we celebrate tonight. While leading this parish, Father led a major building project to update an aging parish center (formerly a convent for dedicated sisters). This created fine classrooms for

religious instruction, meeting rooms, and this extraordinary hall perfect for holding a myriad of functions, crucial to the Troop's advancement and improvement, including tonight's ceremony. We thank you father for giving us a great place to meet every Thursday night.

During our first troop year together, Father Mike brought to our attention a generous offering that he felt might benefit our troop. What father had in mind was what we now call our home campsite adjoining St Mary's cemetery. At first it seemed unusual, but with a little firsthand exploration it turned out to be a very valuable asset to our troop. It has been such an asset to our scouting experience. I don't know how many boy scout troops have their very own campsite. Through the years we have sponsored numerous camping trips right here in Milford, less than 2 miles from the parish center. I don't know how many of you have attended an outing at our campsite, but when you are out there you would never know you were less than 2 miles from the center of Milford or right next to a cemetery. We thank you father for thinking of us and generously offering to us the use of this valuable property.

Through the years Father has been the most understanding landlord. You might imagine that when you invite 25-40 boys ranging in age from 10-18 every Thursday night that the facilities

occasionally might take a hit. None of this seemed to ever concern Father. His intentions were always that the parish center was here for us and was intended to be used.

Again we thank you for this. Thank you for greatly enriching the scouting experience of the Troop 4 boys of Milford.

In conclusion, I am sure I am not alone in saying that we miss you here in Milford and at St. Mary's . You have touched the lives of so many people in this community. When it comes to term limitations for various political offices I have often thought it is a good idea, but when it comes to your tenure at St Mary's I wish that it came without limitation. Although we wish you the best success at your new parish, your presence is always missed here at St. Mary's.