

Bishop Taylor honored with Outstanding Eagle Scout Award in LR

written by Katie Zakrzewski |



Hundreds of scouts and scouting enthusiasts gathered at the Albert Pike Masonic Center in Little Rock Feb. 28, where Diocese of Little Rock Bishop Anthony B. Taylor was presented with the Outstanding Eagle Scout Award.

The Outstanding Eagle Scout Award was created by the National Eagle Scout Association to mark the 100th Anniversary of Scouting in 2010. The prestigious honor is given exclusively to Eagle Scouts who have achieved extraordinary success beyond their scouting experiences, excelling in their careers or vocations at local, regional or national levels.

Since its inception, fewer than 50 men in Arkansas have received the award.

Shawn Johnson, the 6th Judicial District circuit judge, an Eagle Scout since 1992 and Outstanding Eagle Scout Award winner in 2024, helps organize scouting events locally. He told *Arkansas Catholic* the award is only given to three people each year.

“Since Bishop Taylor’s episcopal ordination in 2008, he has proudly recounted his involvement in scouting as a boy and his achievement of the Eagle Scout Award in 1969 in Oklahoma’s Will Rogers Council, (which has since been renamed to Cimarron Council Troop 5),” he said. “As bishop of the Diocese of Little Rock, he has presided over Catholic camporees and other events, and he has shepherded the scouting program in our parishes across the State of Arkansas.”

Bishop Taylor's impressive track record in other areas — not just scouting — also caught the eye of Scouting America.

"Additionally, given his remarkable efforts in advocating with the Vatican for the canonization of Blessed Stanley Rother — including his investigative efforts in Guatemala — as well as his inspiring leadership of the Diocese of Little Rock, he was nominated to the National Eagle Scout Association (NESA) to be recognized as an Outstanding Eagle Scout," Johnson said. "In late 2024, NESA endorsed the Natural State Council's nomination, and he was selected as a recipient of this prestigious award. In short, Bishop Taylor has been influential in demonstrating the lifelong values of the Eagle Scout Award to our Catholic community in word and deed, and we are honored to bestow this award."

John Anthony, the 2022-2025 chairman of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, said there is overlap between scouting and the Catholic faith.

"The Outstanding Eagle Scout Award is given on a very selective basis, and we really appreciate Bishop Taylor's commitment to a Catholic scouting," he said. "Twenty-eight percent of seminarians right now (nationwide) were Boy Scouts, and the Catholic Church is the largest religious organization that has scouting."

Anthony said the Catholic Church has always been supportive of Scouting activities.

"The National Catholic Committee on Scouting was founded over a hundred years ago in the Archdiocese of New York. That's where the first Catholic scout trip was organized, and from there, it has just grown," Anthony said. "Bishop Michael Fisher is our bishop liaison and is the bishop of Buffalo (N.Y.). He's also an Eagle Scout. He states that if it wasn't for the fact that he received the Ad Altare Dei Catholic Scouting Religious Emblem, he might not have become a priest."

At the Eagle Scout Award dinner, Johnson presented Bishop Taylor with a special neckerchief from the National Catholic Committee on Scouting.

"I was thinking about when I was your age, a Scout, I was 15 years old ... and I was already starting to think of what I was going to do with my life," Bishop Taylor told the more than 300 in attendance — including many young scouts — in his acceptance speech. "People would ask me, 'What do you want to be when you grow up? What do you want to do when you grow up?' And I discovered that that was the wrong question.

"The right question is, 'What does the Lord want you to do with your life?' Because if you just do what you want to do with your life, that leads to selfishness. It just leads to what makes you the most money, or gives you the most power. If you ask, 'What does the Lord want me to do with my life?' he'll lead you to something even bigger than yourself. That's the only place where you find true, lasting happiness — when you're living for something bigger than yourself. In Scouts, you have many opportunities to learn how your life is enriched in others."

"(Scouting) is very formative, for young boys, especially in developing self-reliance and good values," Bishop Taylor told *Arkansas Catholic* after the ceremony, adding that he felt "very excited" about having received the prestigious award.