Response to the NCCS feedback survey has been overwhelming. The survey went out with the June issue of The Bridge to more than 1,000 people. We have also asked NCCS board members to respond to a self-assessment survey. This includes executive and advisory board members and members-at-large, a total of just more than 100 people. This survey asks them to make suggestions to improve the way the NCCS is organized and operates, so that we can fulfill our mission to deliver vibrant programs and strong diocesan support.

So far, more than 300 people have completed the survey -- almost all doing so online. For surveys this is a very high return. Thank you for your support. This input is key to the NCCS Renewal Project, which was approved at the annual meeting this past April in Milwaukee. From our preliminary review, it is clear that diocesan and unit leaders want to know more about Catholic Scouting and what it offers. Many said they were unfamiliar with quite a number of NCCS programs. Almost everyone said they wanted better, more direct ways to get information so they could keep informed of what the Catholic Scouting program offers.

Over the next month our partner, School & Main Institute of Boston, will help us analyze responses and identify how we can address your suggestions and requests. An initial analysis and proposal for next steps will be presented at the NCCS executive committee meeting in Dallas in October. A more complete analysis with recommendations will be presented at the annual NCCS meeting in April in Louisville, Ky.

Both surveys include rounds of follow-up phone calls to individuals willing to provide more in-depth information. Calls will continue for another month or so.

This promises to kick off a new and exciting time for Catholic Scouting. We will keep you posted and share results with you as the Renewal process continues.
Pope Praises Scouting Movement on the 100th Anniversary of Founding

(Published courtesy of Zenit)

Pope Benedict XVI recognized the fruits offered to the world and the Church by Scouts, in honor of the 100th anniversary of their foundation. The Pope said this in a letter addressed to Cardinal Jean-Pierre Ricard, archbishop of Bordeaux and president of the French bishops' conference.

Aug. 1 marks the centenary of the first Scout camp, held on the island of Brownsea, in England, and organized by Sir Baden-Powell (1857-1941), founder of the World Scout Movement.

"For one century, through play, action, adventure, contact with nature, life as a team and in service to others, you offer an integral formation to anyone who joins the Scouts," said the Holy Father in his letter written in French. He continued: "Inspired by the Gospels, scouting is not only a place for authentic human growth, but also a place of strong Christian values and true moral and spiritual growth, as with any authentic way of holiness.

"The sense of responsibility that permeates Scout education leads to a life of charity and the desire to serve one's neighbor, in the image of Christ the servant, based on the grace offered by Christ, in a special way through the sacraments of the Eucharist and forgiveness."

The Pontiff encouraged the brotherhood of the Scouts, "which is a part of its original ideal and makes up, above all for young generations -- a witness of that which is the body of Christ, within which, according to the image of St. Paul, all are called to fulfill a mission wherever they are, to rejoice in another's progress and to support their brothers in times of difficulty."

"I thank the Lord for all the fruits that, throughout these last 100 years, the Scouts have offered," he said. He encouraged Catholic Scouts to go forward on their path, offering "to boys and girls of today an education that forms them with a strong personality, based on Christ and willing to live for the high ideals of faith and human solidarity."

Benedict XVI's message ends with advice from Baden-Powell: "Be faithful to your Scout promise, even when you are no longer young, and may God help you to do so.

"When man seeks to be faithful to his promises, the Lord himself strengthens his steps."
October 28 Set Aside as Priesthood Sunday to Show Support for Priests

On Sunday, Oct. 28, 2007, Catholic parishes throughout the United States will show support for their priests with prayer, celebration and dialogue. The last Sunday of October is designated as Priesthood Sunday, a one-day celebration of the priesthood organized by parish lay leaders and coordinated by the USA Council of Serra International.

"The purpose of Priesthood Sunday is to engage every level of the church in the United States in a national conversation about the priesthood," said Rev. Richard Vega, President of the National Federation of Priests' Councils. NFPC represents more than 26,000 U.S. priests.

Priesthood Sunday was established in 2003 to provide a way for Catholic communities to express appreciation for the devoted priests who serve them so faithfully despite recent negative attention in the media. Such a celebration is increasingly relevant in light of the declining number of priests in the U.S. Only about 4,000 of the 19,000 parishes in this country currently have more than one priest. Many priests serve two or more parishes by themselves.

The lay faithful of each parish, school or other ministry are asked to develop their own special way of marking the day and honoring both priesthood and their own priests. Special liturgies, Priesthood Sunday celebrations and the opening of a dialogue between priests and parishioners are encouraged. Priesthood Sunday is traditionally celebrated on the last Sunday of October, but some dioceses and parishes may celebrate at a different time to coincide with other planned events.

Catholic Scout leaders are invited to visit www.priestsunday.org for suggested liturgies, social celebrations, reflections, and downloadable graphics, guides and posters.

"Affirming and supporting our priests are some of the most important things that we can do as Serrans," says Gary Davis, president of the USA Council of Serra International, the non-profit organization coordinating Priesthood Sunday. The USA Council is responsible for disseminating information to parishes interested in honoring their priests on this very special day. "Our priests give of themselves every day in so many different ways. It is an honor to recognize them in a manner in which entire parishes may join together in an outpouring of appreciation," said Davis.

Priesthood Sunday is sponsored by the USA Council of Serra International and the Serra International Foundation. Serra International is a worldwide Catholic organization of lay men and women dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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<th>NCCS CALENDAR</th>
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Did You Know . . .?
By Bob Oldowski

National Catholic Scouting has changed considerably since its beginnings in the 1920’s. As part of a Plan of Cooperation, the NCCS originated as a committee of the U.S. national bishops conference in 1933 and the committee members were bishops. It was supported by a chaplains’ committee and a laymen's committee. In the following decades priests, then lay men and eventually women became the leaders of the NCCS.

In 1964 the National Catholic Committee was restructured to include a chaplain and a lay representative from each diocese. In 1968 the plan of cooperation was revised and an executive board was provided for, to be made up of priests and laymen from each region, to be elected from the dioceses, and a layman was elected as national chairman. These officers began two-year terms of office. Beginning in 1980 the term of office became a single three-year term.

The BSA downsized the Relationships Division in 1992 and no longer provided NCCS with an Executive Secretary (executive director). To accommodate this, a set of by-laws was prepared and finally approved in 1998. That same year NCCS went electronic with e-mail and a web site. In 1999 the Advisory Board was created.

In still another change, now in 2007 we are working with a consulting firm to help us set our future course. Such changes are a healthy sign of responsiveness and growth.
Forty Seven Scouters Attend Scouting in the Catholic Church Conference at the Philmont Training Center

By
Tony Madonia

The week of July 29-August 4, 2007 will be memorable for the 47 participants and four faculty members of the Scouting in the Catholic Church conference at Philmont Training Center (PTC). In addition to the knowledge gained at the conference, the participants were also honored to serve as the group to raise the flags on Wednesday, August 1, for the PTC opening ceremony commemorating the 100th anniversary of World Scouting, and the opening flag ceremony and invocation at the Thursday BSA session.

This year’s participants represented 32 dioceses and archdioceses, 32 BSA councils, 19 states and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Their Scout level and experience ranged from Cub Den leader to Sea Scout Sea Skipper to Council president, with zero to more than 50 years experience. The group included three priests, two seminarians, and two men discerning a call to the priesthood or deaconate.

Course Director Tony Madonia, Course Advisor Father Mike Santangelo, and faculty members Margaret Matarese and Chip Travers facilitated the knowledge sharing, which included presentations, bible readings, and small- and whole-group discussions. The participants were divided into the faith communities that were used to facilitate small group discussion and interaction. In addition to the faith communities of Saints Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, and Paul used last year, the Saint George and Saint Peter faith communities were added to accommodate the 12 additional participants over last year’s number.

Each day started with a BSA general session in the auditorium. In class, the morning started with a prayer from one of our priests and a song. On Thursday, Father Chris Frazer not only provided the morning prayer, but also provided a “first blessing,” a blessing given by newly ordained priests. Fr. Chris was ordained three weeks prior to attending the Philmont conference.

Each day was dedicated to one topic: Leadership on Monday, Holiness on Tuesday, Conversion on Thursday, and Worship on Friday. The participants explored the daily topic from several points of view. The first class session of the day followed the topic using the NCCS Scouter Development: Lay Apostolate Formation for Scouters to introduce the participants to the program and discuss how the daily topic related to Catholic Scouting. Each faith community was assigned a facilitator from its group who facilitated a shortened version of Scouter Development on the daily topic utilizing both scripture readings and reflections, followed by group discussion.

The daily Catechism sessions helped the participants understand how priests may interpret the daily topic and how participants can relate Catholic teaching to Scouting principles. The sessions were facilitated by Father Mike and included pop quizzes on two days, even humbling some of the priests.

The NCCS-based sessions provided information on national and local committee structure and missions, efforts to increase membership, religious emblem participation, national and local activities, and how to implement the program in their local diocesan committees and units.

The daily Renewing the Vision session provided the participants the opportunity to use the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ document that Youth Ministers use to develop programs. The participants read a short introduction from the document, and used the questions which followed, as a guide to discuss the specific topic. In addition to getting insight to the world of youth ministry, the participants enjoyed this session because they were able to go outside for their faith community group discussions.

In addition to the course faculty, the participants had the opportunity to discuss topics with NCCS National Chairman Bill Davies, NCCS National Chaplain Fr. Ray Fecteau, USCCB Episcopal Liaison “Padre” Bishop Gettelfinger, BSA Relationship Liaison George Sparks, and PRAY CEO Mark Hazelwood during class time.

During the course of the week, participants earned four progress “beads” toward earning the Jerusalem Cross award.

Daily Mass was available at the base camp chapel. Participants and their families had the opportunity to celebrate with Scout and Venturing crews starting and ending their backcountry treks. The Masses were not complete without the entertaining announcements of seminarian Joseph Palacios, who spent the summer with the Philmont Chaplain’s Corps. No one will forget the story of the power of the glowing rosary with the angel-winged Our Father beads, the various free handouts and NCCS membership application, and of course the Duty to God patch.

One of the unique experiences enjoyed by the participants and staff was on Thursday. It was Deacon Joseph Palacios’s last day before going home and the Padre allowed him to preach his first homily. I am sure that he and the Mass attendees will never forget his first homily. Everyone present started singing when he said “Announcement” for the last time this summer.

The conference concluded with the Friday afternoon graduation ceremony. The Mass was celebrated by Very Rev. Timothy Martinez, the Chancellor for the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, and was concelebrated by Bishop Gettelfinger, National Chaplain Fr. Ray Fecteau, Course Advisor Fr. Mike Santangelo, and course participants Fathers Joe Powers, Chris Frazer, and Jose Quintero. Seminarians Arthur Nave, Jacob Straub, and Joseph Palacios assisted with Mass duties. Following Mass, the conference participants received their certificates of completion, class pictures, and Scouter Development facilitator certificate.

National Chaplain Father Ray Fecteau announced that Father Mike Santangelo will be the 2008 Course Director and Margaret Matarese will be the 2009 Course Director. The 2008 conference is scheduled for July 27-August 2. The 2009 dates will be available in the summer of 2008. Contact your local BSA council or NCCS offices for an application.
Photos (clockwise from above):  NCCS National Chair Bill Davies presents Choate Phillips (son of Philmont benefactor Waite Phillips) with a Scouting in the Catholic Church neckerchief. NCCS Episcopal Liaison Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger speaks to the conference participants on the role of Scouting in the Catholic Church. Catholic Scouters and Scouts raise the flags to start World Scouting’s 100th Anniversary on August 1. Conference participants pose for their “class photo.”
On June 12, 2007, at Our Lady of Grace Catholic Church in El Cajon, Calif., the San Diego Catholic Committee on Scouting held its annual Mass to recognize and award 150 Cub, Boy, and Venture Scouts their Catholic religious emblems. San Diego Bishop Salvatore J. Cordileone was the celebrant, and many of the parish priests of the Scouts also attended, showing their direct show of support for the Scouting program.

NCCS Outlines Revitalized Process for Basic Scout Chaplain Certification

By Father Michael P. Hanifin
Chairman, NCCS Chaplains Committee

In 1995 the Chaplains Committee of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting developed a process to recognize chaplain training and competency. Early in the process many of the priests who worked as diocesan and regional chaplains were recognized and earned certification.

More recently, the process of basic chaplain certification was made a priority for the new Chair and Advisor of the Chaplains Committee and it was mandated to revitalize the basic chaplain certification process. The basic chaplain certification is good for only five years and certification must be renewed at the end of five years.

Starting immediately those recognized troop, summer camp, diocesan and NCCS regional chaplains are encouraged to seek basic scout chaplain certification through the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. The process is as follows:

Applications are online at the National Catholic Committee on Scouting website (www.nccs-bsa.org). They may also be obtained from Barbara Nestel at the National BSA Office (nccs@netBSA.org) or from Father Michael Hanifin, Chairman of the NCCS Chaplains Committee (mhanifin@santaclarachurch.org)

The candidate for basic chaplain certification must then submit the following to Barbara Nestel at the National BSA Office:

- Completed application, along with a recent photograph.
- Letter of recommendation and/or appointment from religious superior, eparch, or bishop and include candidate’s suitability for ministry and that the candidate has not had an accusation of clergy misconduct.
- Letter of recommendation from the local BSA Office.

Letters and documentation may be addressed as follows:

Scout Chaplain Certification
C/o National Catholic Committee on Scouting, BSA
P. O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

Proof of BSA registration and NCCS membership

- Experience – Three years of experience as a Scout chaplain.
- Training — at least one of the following requirements needed for certification.
  - Attendance at and participation in at least two NCCS Biennial Conferences
  - Attendance at BSA National Camp School – Chaplain Section
  - Attendance at the Philmont Training Center’s Scouting in the Catholic Church

The next step is the Interview/Review/Approval by Chaplains Committee which is normally at the NCCS board meeting or the NCCS Biennial Conference.

Certification will then be granted, normally at the NCCS Biennial Conference or at the NCCS Annual Meeting. This certification will be valid for five years at which time reapplication and submission of documentation and training will be required.

The renewal of certification requires the review and recommendation of the NCCS Chaplains committee.

Those priests who have served as a course advisor at the PTC “Scouting in the Catholic Church” workshop automatically meet the Training requirement for basic chaplain certification. Any priest who has served as a Chaplain at a National Jamboree or at Philmont Base Camp more than meets the chaplain experience requirement for basic chaplain certification. Those priests who have served in one or more of these capacities in the last five years, are considered "up to date".

Continuous registration, service and training with NCCS would be sufficient for automatic re-certification for a Chaplain. Please note these experiences and training on the basic certification application.

Application process information can be obtained from Father Michael Hanifin, chairman of the NCCS Chaplains Committee at (714) 970-7885 or his email: mhanifin@santaclarachurch.org.
The second century has begun. One hundred years since Lord Baden-Powell started Scouting. And there were many celebrations around the world on August 1st to celebrate.

The biggest event was the 21st World Scout Jamboree, held in England about 40 miles northeast of London. More than 38,000 Scouts and leaders camped there for ten or more days, and another 7,000 or more visited each day. The weather cooperated nicely.

Scouts came from 158 countries, all in colorful uniforms. The Scouts were supported by an International Service Team composed of 8,000 mostly young men and women from 158 countries.

Catholic Scouting was highly visible. World Chaplain Monsignor Bob Guglielmone hosted the Hylands Abbey, Benedictine-inspired cloisters modeled after a monastery, where Scouts experienced crafts practiced by monks. This was one of many venues in the Faith and Beliefs area. Father Leo LeBlanc and Gordon Stiefel staffed an ICCS exhibit along with ICCS Secretary-General Baldur Hermans. Father Don Hummel served as the USA chaplain. Bob and Carol Oldowski worked with Guest Services and Health & Welfare. Daily Mass was offered at two major hubs, and Scouting's sunrise on August 1st included a special liturgy celebrated on-site by London's Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor.

What a sight to see the different contingents parading with their country flag to the opening ceremony, each Scout wearing the unique uniform and "necker" of his/her own Scout association. The spirit of Scouting was something to experience as new friendships developed among Scouts and leaders from so many different countries.

Visitors included England's Prince William and the Duke of Kent, Sweden's King Carl XVI Gustaf, former Polish prime minister Lech Walesa, Lord Robert Baden Powell (grandson of the founder), and BSA Chief Scout Executives Roy Williams and Bob Mazzuca.

Make your plans now to attend the next World Jamboree, scheduled for 2011 in Sweden.
Yes …… It is alive!!!

It is alive…. as part of the NCCS Rosary Patch program to help us spread the use, understanding and influence of one of the Church’s greatest teaching instruments. It is alive…. in that it takes our youth, and adults through an evangelistic path that teaches them a better understanding of Jesus and his blessed Mother, Mary, as they journey through His birth, ministries, suffering and resurrection. It is alive…. and still functioning as a program that has been widely used by thousands of youth and adults alike, not only Catholic, but other Christian ministries as well. It is alive….and will continue as part of our Scouting program for an indefinite time.

There has been a misunderstanding as to the length of this program by many participants. Since we want to appeal to the youth primarily, we want as many as possible to be aware of it. Each new year brings in a brand new group of Scouts and Scouters who would want to participate. They certainly deserve the opportunity to work on this program. The date is being removed from the patch since this designates the year it was introduced only. Future patches will not be dated. All patches are fully embroidered and are a 5” diameter

If you haven’t seen the details of this wonderful program, please go to our website; www.nccs-bsa.org and check it out. More and more dioceses are only now finding out about it and the great results it brings to our members and program. Simply show it and make it available and stand back for a super surprise!

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2007 QUALITY DIOCESE AWARD

By John Ribar

Last year we witnessed the participation in this program growing with a greater than twenty per cent increase for the third consecutive year, with the final approved total reaching 95 qualifying diocesan committees. More than a dozen additional committees indicated that they failed to qualify because they missed one requirement, or simply missed the deadline for sending in their paperwork. If everyone re-qualifies, and these potential winners are added to the list, we can expect to reach a total of more than 100 committees qualifying this year. This will be a great testimony to the hard work of the regional chairmen and chaplains along with the input of their arch/diocesan counterparts.

This year we emphasize communications. Our biggest change is again in Requirement 11 where we ask you to initiate and conduct a plan to inform DCCS members and unit leaders to use the NCCS website at www.nccs-bsa.org. There are also a few minor updates to some requirements. Any questions that you may have should be directed to your respective Region Chairman. His/her contact info is listed in the NCCS website to assist you in identifying them if necessary. Communication requirements can be met by electronic transmission or hard copy delivery.

Qualifying dioceses will receive a certificate and two free patches, one for the Chairman and one for the Chaplain. If you order extra patches please consider getting one for presentation to your Bishop at an appropriate time. The design for the 2007 patch was inspired by the theme of the 2008 World Youth Day conference which will be carried over to our Biennial conference in April at Louisville, Kentucky. Please submit the applications in the designated time frames. All awards will be processed after the first of the year. If you have any questions about this award program please contact your Regional Chairman or NCCS National Vice-Chair for Region Support, John Ribar at ribarrr@aol.com or 502-425-2504.