More than 225 Catholic Scouters from across the country joined together in Louisville, Ky., from April 1 to April 5 to participate in the NCCS 40th biennial conference. Working under the theme of “Witnessing with Youth” the participants heard from a variety of speakers, shared program ideas and concerns, attended workshops, and spent time together in developing a stronger youth ministry through Scouting under Catholic auspices.

The program got underway on Tuesday, April 1, with meetings of the standing committee chairs and advisors and the regional chairs and chaplains.

Wednesday morning began with a continental breakfast in conjunction with the Info-Sharing 2008 exhibits and displays. Participants had the opportunity to visit more than 15 different booths and displays highlighting various dioceses and the programs they offer and see displays from the various standing committees, the Philmont Training Center and the Relationship Division of the Boy Scouts of America.

The participants spent the remainder of Wednesday morning attending Regional meetings.

Continuing a tradition started at the last Biennial, the Philmont reunion lunch was held, with Greg Gamewell, Associate Director of Philmont programs, as the guest speaker. Mr. Gamewell brought the attendees up to date on happenings at the training center and attendees had a chance to share their experiences and memories from past training sessions and treks at the Ranch.

Following the luncheon was the opening general session highlighted by a presentation on the Renewal Program from the NCCS consultants from Boston based School & Main Institute who presented a summary of their initial findings from the survey that had been sent out to NCCS members earlier in the year. They reported that there were more than 320 responses and a lot of data had been collected. The attendees were then divided into smaller discussion groups and spent the remainder of the time in group discussions focused on how to “operationalize” the findings and reporting back to the larger group on their discussions. (See the Renewal article on page 8 for further details).

The Most Reverend Joseph Kurtz, Archbishop of Louisville presided over the opening Mass at the Cathedral of the Assumption with NCCS Episcopal Liaison, Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger and Bishop Ronald W. Gainer of the Diocese of Lexington concelebrating. The evening concluded with a country dinner and entertainment at the Huber’s Ranch.

Thursday’s activities began with a prayer breakfast. Father Jeff Shooner, an Eagle Scout and the Associate Vocations Director from the Louisville Archdiocese, was the guest speaker, and spoke of how his Scouting background has helped in his vocation as a priest and his work in recruiting new priests.

Participants then spent the remainder of the morning and early afternoon attending workshops sponsored by the various committees of NCCS. In all seventeen separate workshops were offered in eight areas, including such wide ranging topics as “Enhancing membership growth,” “What do chaplain aides do?” “Marketing for dummies” and “The secret manual that doesn’t need clearance.”

The afternoon concluded with the second general session with continued group breakout discussions on the Renewal program. The evening Mass was celebrated by Bishop Gettelfinger with Msgr. Tony Ferrero as the homilist.

The NCCS business meeting was held on Friday afternoon and the Executive Board Meeting was held on Saturday morning. Highlights from those meetings included discussions on membership; a proposal to begin the planning process for a new religious emblem for those that are between the Parvuli Dei and the Ad Altare Dei awards; implementation of a new religious activity “Footsteps of American Saints;” and the creation of online Diocesan committee training.

The closing liturgy for the conference was celebrated by Bishop Gettelfinger with National Chaplain Father Ray Fecteau as the homilist. The conference banquet followed with comments from Robert J. Mazzuca, Chief Scout Executive, BSA, who spoke about his years as a Scout and how his Scouting experience has shaped his professional and adult life.
QUALITY DIOCESE PATCHES

If you are a member of a "Quality Diocese Award" winning diocese and your committee did not buy any extra patches for their members, there is a small number still available for purchase. The price is $3.50 each, and payment must accompany the order. Checks must be made out to "National Catholic Committee on Scouting" and sent to John Ribar, 9328 Springbrooke Circle, Louisville, KY 40241. This offer applies until the present supply runs out and there is no quantity limit. Don't forget to include your Bishop and any of the priests who routinely help support your program.

MARKETING POSITIONS NOW OPEN

The Marketing and Public Relations Committee is looking for a few good volunteers who have an interest in working out of the box to help communicate the NCCS message. To apply for consideration, and certain joyful acceptance, please email nccsnews@nccs-bsa.info.

OBITUARY — REV. JAMES LEBAR

Father James LeBar died on Thursday, February 21 in Poughkeepsie, N.Y. A priest with the Archdiocese of New York, he served for more than 30 years on the NCCS executive board and later the advisory board. In the early 1970s he chaired the NCCS Communications Committee, serving with Truman Stacey. He also was editor of the NCCS Newsletter (forerunner to The Bridge). He served on the faculty of the 1975 Catholic course at Philmont. One of his notable projects was the Scout involvement at the Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in 1976. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

RENEWAL PROGRAM NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT TO IMPLEMENT IDEAS

You can help ensure the Renewal program is a vibrant one by serving on a standing committee, e.g. Marketing, Conference, or Activities, or you can sign up to serve on one of the four task forces that will work across committees. Email Bob Oldowski (Oldowski@juno.com) and let him know what committee, group, or task force you want to participate in.

LONG TIME NCCS MEMBER DIES

Truman Stacey, of the Diocese of Lake Charles, La., died in early May. Mr. Stacey served the NCCS for more than 36 years including service on the Communications, Vocations, and Membership Committees. He is also remembered for his work in establishing the NCCS-Serra International Pope Paul VI Scouting unit recognition program. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

Chairman’s Message

From William Davies

I want to take this opportunity to thank the Louisville Catholic Committee and the Most Reverend Joseph Kurtz for the hospitality they showed us at the recent National Catholic Committee on Scouting Biennial Conference. The daily Masses at the Cathedral, with the wonderful music, were very moving and a tribute to the NCCS organization.

We owe a special thank you to Dr. Carroll Goodwin, Chairperson, National Federation Catholic Youth Ministry, for attending our conference. Dr. Goodwin briefly highlighted the importance of Youth Ministry at our Friday evening banquet and helped reinforce our efforts to make Scouting true youth ministry.

Our keynote speaker, Bob Mazzucca, the Chief Scout Executive, set the tone for our renewal efforts. The Boy Scouts of America are also reviewing their organization, and changes will take place within Scouting, as well as the changes we are identifying.

The highlights of the general session were the four breakout sessions, each facilitated by a vice chair to discuss our renewal process; Bob Oldowski is compiling the suggestions and data with projects underway to implement many of the changes. The main theme for the groups is the way in which the NCCS communicates with its leaders, scouts and diocesan leadership.

We want to welcome new Vice Chair, Austin Cannon, to the Executive Committee. Austin has been active with the St. George Trek and is involved with youth ministry of his Diocese of Rockville Centre.

Let’s also welcome Susan Barriball as the new chair of the Conference Committee. This committee is involved in the planning of the 2009 meeting, as well as the 2010 Biennial, which corresponds to the 100th year of Scouting in the United States. Do not forget to mark your calendars for the 2009 Executive Board meeting in Galveston, Texas, on April 21st to April 25th, 2009.

NCCS CALENDAR

2008

May 21—May 23 BSA National Meeting—San Diego
July 10—July 13 ICCS World Seminar—Korea
July 15—July 20 World Youth Day—Sydney, Australia
July 27—August 2 Scouting in the Catholic Church Training Conference Philmont Scout Ranch

2009

April 21-25 NCCS Annual Meeting
July 20—August 5 St. George Trek Philmont Scout Ranch

The Bridge is an authorized publication of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS).

It is published quarterly to provide news and information to members of the NCCS, Diocesan Catholic Committees, Youth Ministry personnel and Boy Scout Councils.

NCCS Chairman
William Davies
NCCS Chaplain
Rev. Raymond Fecteau
Chairman, Marketing and Public Relations
Tony Madonia
Advisor, Marketing and Public Relations
Rev. Donald Hummel
Editor
Mike Gannon
NCCS Webmaster
Tony Madonia

To submit items for future editions of The Bridge please contact Mike Gannon at scoutrain@aol.com. Photos are acceptable and should be in a jpeg format. Please ensure all people in photos are identified and the subject matter is fully described.

To submit items for the eBridge which is published monthly please send all information to nccsnews@nccs-bsa.info.
**Did You Know . . .?**

*By Bob Oldowski*

What is the "Ad Altare Dei"? And the "Parvuli Dei"? And why do we call them that? Let’s look at how these started.

The Ad Altare Dei was Scouting’s first religious emblem. This award grew out of an idea originated by Msgr. James E. Dolan, of the Diocese of Los Angeles-Monterey. He awarded a cross to first class Scouts who served satisfactorily as altar boys during their tenure as Scouts. The first was presented in 1926. At that time the Mass in the Western world was said in Latin, and the opening prayers in the Mass began "Introibo ad altare Dei"—"I will go unto the altar of God". Msgr. Dolan called this recognition the Ad Altare Dei.

Over the next decade or so, Catholic Scout leaders picked up on the idea that developed into a national program that was approved by the bishops’ committee. This was named the "Ad Altare Dei". At first requirements included knowledge of Church symbols and basic tenets, and specified the boy must give a certain number of hours to the Church serving Mass and/or doing other projects. In 1939 The Boy Scouts of America approved the wearing of this the first such medal on the Scout uniform. Other denominations eventually developed similar programs, and in fact the Lutherans at first titled their equivalent with the Latin name "Pro Deo et Patria"—"God and Country".

When the program for Catholic Cub Scouts was developed in 1956, it followed the practice of using Latin and was called "Parvuli Dei"—"Little Children of God". After Vatican II, instead of the Latin Mass, priests were directed to say Mass in the local language. Use of Latin terms has fallen out of practice now, but the rich heritage and history of "Ad Altare Dei" and "Parvuli Dei" continue.

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**NEW RELIGIOUS EMBLEM PRICING AS OF MAY 15, 2008**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMBLEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Light of Christ Emblem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light of Christ Miniature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parvuli Dei Emblem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parvuli Dei Miniature</td>
<td>4.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ad Altare Dei Emblem</td>
<td>10.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ad Altare Dei Miniature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pope Pius XII Emblem</td>
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<td>Pope Pius XII Miniature</td>
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<tr>
<td>St. George Packet</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>St. George Miniature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light is Life Emblem</td>
<td>9.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Awareness Activity Set</td>
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<td>ICCS Medal &amp; Patch</td>
<td>18.50</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICCS Patch &amp; Miniature</td>
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</tbody>
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**Religious emblems price increase set for May 15**

by Edward P. Martin,  
NCCS Vice Chair-Finance

Religious emblem and International Awareness Activity award prices will be increasing as of May 15, 2008. The new prices are listed in the chart on this page.

There are two reasons for the price increases. One reason is because of an increase in worldwide metal prices that the manufacturer (Esco) has asked to pass on to its customers.

The second reason is the need to offer authorized purchasers the ability to be billed for their orders. When the NCCS moved production and distribution of our emblems to Esco, we negotiated more favorable pricing by agreeing to provide payment at time of order. Esco agreed to a one-year transition period that ends July 1.

During this past year, we learned that many authorized purchasers are unable to provide payment at time of order. We then negotiated a revised agreement with Esco that allows us to continue the invoicing option into the future. As a consequence, we are incurring an additional increase in pricing that will be phased in over the next two years.

While this is not our preferred pricing position, it does allow us to continue to purchase as before. It also gives us time to work with Esco to find a more equitable solution.

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Chaplains wanted to support National Jamboree in 2010

The Chaplains Committee is beginning to recruit priests to serve as chaplains for the National Jamboree, which will be held at Fort A.P. Hill, Va. from July 26 to August 4 in 2010. According to Father Michael Hanifin, there is a need for approximately 27 Scout Chaplains for this upcoming Jamboree. Father Stephen Salvador will be the National Chaplain and responsibility to recruit sufficient numbers of Catholic Chaplains falls to him, and the Chaplains Committee will assist him. At the NCCS Biennial Conference, 16 priests expressed an interest in serving as a Scout Chaplain. For more information about being a Scout Chaplain at the 2010 BSA National Jamboree please contact Father Stephen Salvador at sbshg@aol.com or by calling (508) 676-8463. You may also contact Father Michael Hanifin at mhanifin@santaclarachurch.org if you are interested.

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The opportunity to earn the Jerusalem Cross by completing a Mission project has been offered to participants at the Scouting in the Catholic Church conference since 2004. The National Chaplain awards the Jerusalem Cross at the NCCS Annual meeting. Prior to the NCCS Biennial Conference in Louisville, twenty one Jerusalem Crosses had been awarded. Twelve of the Jerusalem Crosses are worn by those who have served as faculty from 2004 to present, the remaining nine by participants in the Philmont course. Fourteen Jerusalem Crosses were presented at the Biennial Conference in Louisville in 2008. Below is a list of those who were awarded their Jerusalem Cross in Louisville:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>PTC Class</th>
<th>Diocese</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gary Weaver</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Randy Voz</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Archdiocese of Kansas City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christopher Keesey</td>
<td>2005</td>
<td>Archdiocese of St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Tommy Watts</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Diocese of Wilmington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramon Alberto Silva</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Archdiocese of San Juan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Chisholm</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Diocese of San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Hickey</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Diocese of Cleveland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carol Beckman</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Archdiocese of Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Len Zandrow</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Diocese of Grand Rapids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomas A. Magnifico</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Diocese of Colorado Springs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bert Obregon</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Diocese of San Bernardino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Gironda</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Diocese of Phoenix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence W. Wilson</td>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Diocese of Grand Rapids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon Roger Hunter</td>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Diocese of Peoria</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information on the “Scouting in the Catholic Church” course and requirements for the Jerusalem Cross Mission Project can be found on the NCCS Website: www.nccs-bsa.org.

Seminarian provides keen insight into Philmont Chaplaincy

By Mr. Joseph Palacios

I’m sure that many of you have had the experience of visiting and participating in programs hosted at Philmont Scout Ranch and at the Philmont Training Center, but how many of you have gotten to work there? Those of you who have known the special way of the wonderful priests who were not only holy priests, for my vocation in particular, and their caring, their thoughtfulness with regard to the men and women we serve in Scouting.

I carry these experiences with me, and as a seminarian in particular, it was the learning experience of a lifetime. I was privileged to be a part of some of the most tender and sensitive moments in the lives of the people I served both in and outside of our daily Mass. I was happily the man who was able to share with a camper that he had a new baby sister. I was both sad and glad the one who wanted to go home, but was incredibly privileged to be under the mentorship and guidance of the wonderful priests who were not only housemates and co-workers, but friends to me throughout the summer. Among the many things I learned from them, I was impressed by their caring, their thoughtfulness with regard to our continually changing community, and their versatility as they approached the various situations that presented themselves daily.

I served as a Philmont Chaplain last summer, I met a great deal of people all over the ranch, and I can say without any hesitation that I had the best job on the ranch. As a chaplain, I was able to visit just about every single facility and backcountry camp at Philmont and meet people from all over the world, including but not limited to France and the Czech Republic. The unique and motley crew that made up the Philmont family of the summer of 2007 was serving and caring for literally 5000 visitors a day, and over the course of the summer changed the lives of more than just those who were our visitors. It was a place where the “Phil-magic” was always at work, helping participants and staff members alike learn new things about the person that God has made in them and wonderful things He has in store for them.

As a seminarian in particular, it was the learning experience of a lifetime. I was privileged to be a part of some of the most tender and sensitive moments in the lives of the people I served both in and outside of our daily work, helping participants and staff members alike learn new things about the person that God has made in them and wonderful things He has in store for them.

Mr. Joseph Palacios
(Assumption Seminary)
2600 West Woodlawn Avenue
San Antonio, TX 78228
Email: joseph.r.palacios@gmail.com
Silver Saint George award presented to four Scouters

Four Catholic Scouters were awarded the Silver Saint George Award at the biennial conference in April. They were recognized for their significant service to Scouting in the Catholic Church at the national level. Recipients of this award this year were:

Susan Barriball from the Diocese of Gary, Ind. Barriball is currently serving as the Chairman of the Gary Diocese Catholic Committee on Scouting, a position she has held since 1998. She was recognized for her continued service to the national Catholic Committee, including her leadership as Chair and Advisor to the Training Committee and her work in revising the Scouting in the Catholic Church Conference training program at the Philmont Scout Ranch.

Don Ellefsen of the Diocese of Salt Lake City, Utah. Ellefsen is currently the Chair of the Salt Lake City Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, a position he has held since 1976, and is also Chairman for NCCS Region 13, which includes 11 dioceses in five states and more than 300 Scout units. Active in Scouting for nearly 48 years, he holds numerous positions in the Scouting program, including service on the Executive Board of the Greater Salt Lake Council of the Boy Scouts of America.

Michael Gannon of the Archdiocese of Washington, D.C. Gannon has served on the National Catholic Committee for 14 years and currently serves as the editor of "The Bridge," the NCCS newsletter and as Region 4 Chairman, which includes seven dioceses in the mid-Atlantic area and comprises more than 470 Scouting units. He has been active in Scouting as an adult since 1980 and has held a variety of local, regional and national positions, including service on the national Jamboree staff as editor of the Jamboree Journal.

George LeCrone of the Diocese of Knoxville, Tenn. LeCrone is the past chairman of the Knoxville Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and now serves as Chairman of Region 5 for the NCCS, serving 18 dioceses in five states in the Boy Scout Southern region with more than 635 Scouting units. The Most Reverend Gerald Gettelfinger, Ordinary of the Diocese of Evansville, Ind. and Episcopal Liaison to the NCCS, presented the award, which is named in honor of the patron Saint of Scouting.

Scouting in the Catholic Church training program set to start on July 27 at Philmont Training Center

Each year, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting conducts the "Scouting in the Catholic Church" training conference at Philmont Training Center in Cimarron, N.M. as part of BSA Relationships Week. This conference brings together religious and lay participants with varying experience in Scouting and the Catholic faith. The goal of the conference is to help the participants understand how Scouting is a Youth Ministry and how to use the information in their dioceses when working with Scouters, priests, and youth ministers. In 2008, the dates are July 27-August 2. Father Mike Santangelo will be the Course Director and Father Michael Hanifin has been named Course Advisor. The remaining staff members are Susan Barriball and Chris Manning.

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Class is in session Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. On Wednesday the Center offers events and activities to keep you as busy as you like, or you can just relax and enjoy the scenery.

If you would like to bring your family members with you, Philmont has programs from infants to spouses so you can concentrate on your class experience and still have time to experience Philmont during the evening hours. In addition to the knowledge gained and the experiences shared during the week, you will go home certified to facilitate the Scouter Development Lay Apostolate for Scouters program and have the opportunity to earn the Jerusalem Cross Award for bringing what you learned back to your diocese.

Additional information on the “Scouting in the Catholic Church” course can be found on the NCCS Website: www.nccs-bsa.org.

For further information, contact Father Mike Santangelo at frmikedt@aol.com and for an application to attend, please contact the NCCS office at nccs@netbsa.org.

Seven Chaplains certified
Chaplain certification program renewed at Biennial conference

In 1995 the NCCS Chaplains Committee initiated a Basic Chaplain Certification Program to give greater skills and professionalism to the Catholic Scout Chaplains. Over the years a number of Catholic Chaplains received certification through this process. In the last few years the NCCS basic chaplain certification process fell out of use, but recently, the basic chaplain certification process was reinstated and at the recent NCCS Biennial Conference several basic chaplain certification certificates were issued to those who completed the process.


For further information please contact the Chaplains Committee chairman, Father Michael Hanifin @ mhanifin@santaclarachurch.org or at h t t p : / / w w w . n c c s - b s a . o r g / CatholicScoutChaplainApplication.doc
GOLD MEDALLION RECIPIENTS - 2007

Region 1:
Pack 570, St. Rose of Lima Parish, Newtown, Conn., Diocese of Bridgeport
Troop 7, Saints Rose & Clement Parish, Warwick, RI., Diocese of Providence

Region 2:
Pack 345, Our Lady of Assumption Parish, Bronx, N.Y., Archdiocese of New York
Crew 99, Athanasius Church, Brooklyn, N.Y., Diocese of Brooklyn

Region 3:
Pack 78, San Juan Bautista, Lancaster, Penn., Diocese of Harrisburg.
Troop 107, Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin Mary Parish, McSherrytown, Penn., Diocese of Harrisburg
Crew 500, Diocese of Trenton, N.J., Diocese of Trenton.

Region 4:
TIE:
Pack 283, St. Margaret of Scotland Parish, Newark, Del., Diocese of Wilmington
Pack 61, Holy Rosary Parish, Claymont, Del., Diocese of Wilmington
Troop 1250, St. Mary of the Mills Parish, Laurel, Md., Archdiocese of Washington, D.C.

Region 5:
Pack 381, Our Lady of Gulf Parish, Diamondhead, Miss., Diocese of Biloxi
Troop 103, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Church, Lexington, Ky., Diocese of Lexington
Crew 243, St. Barnabas Church, Louisville, Ky., Archdiocese of Louisville

Region 6:
Pack 63, Wooster, Ohio, Diocese of Cleveland
Troop 6050, Marion, Ohio, Diocese of Columbus

Region 7:
Pack 265, Our Lady of the Greenwood Church, Greenwood Ind., Archdiocese of Indianapolis
Troop 520, St. Therese Holy Name Society, Pleasant Prairie, Wisc., Archdiocese of Milwaukee
Crew 529, Our Lady Queen of Peace, Shiloh Ill., Diocese of Belleville

Region 8:
Pack 427, Church of St. Theresa, Deephaven, Minn., Archdiocese of St. Paul-Minneapolis
Troop 106, St. Paul's Christian Women, St. Cloud, Minn., Diocese of St. Cloud

Region 9:
Pack 11, Christ the King Church, Topeka, Kan., Archdiocese of Kansas City
Troop 11, Christ the King Church, Topeka, Kan., Archdiocese of Kansas City
Crew 2829, St. Sabina Church, Florissant, Mo., Archdiocese of St. Louis

Region 10:
Pack 32, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton School, Keller, Texas, Diocese of Ft. Worth
Troop 251, St. Catherine of Sienna Church, Houston, Texas, Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Region 11:
Pack 811, St. Angelo Merici Church, Diocese of Orange
Troop 99, Our Lady of Las Vegas Knights of Columbus, Diocese of Las Vegas
Crew 453, Diocese of Las Vegas Catholic Committee on Scouting, Diocese of Las Vegas

Region 12:
Pack 10, Visitation Catholic Parish, Tacoma, Wash., Archdiocese of Seattle

Region 13:
Pack 280, Our Lady of the Annunciation, Albuquerque, N.M., Archdiocese of Santa Fe
Troop 268, St. Patrick’s Church, Colorado Springs, Colo., Diocese of Colorado Springs
Crew 262, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Tucson, Ariz., Diocese of Tucson

Region 14:
Pack 45, Christ the King Church, Tampa, Fla., Diocese of St. Petersburg
Troop 277, St. Anne Church, Rock Hill, S.C., Diocese of Charleston
President George W. Bush and Pope Benedict XVI, seen from the Truman Balcony of the White House, stand together on the reviewing stand during the welcoming ceremony for the Pope on the South Lawn of the White House on April 16. Directly in front of the reviewing stand is the honor guard comprised of thirty Eagle Scouts from the Arlington Diocese and the Archdiocese of Washington, as well as members of the Knights of Columbus, Catholic school students and Girl Scouts. (White House photo by Joyce N. Boghosian).

By Bob Oldowski

The response from those in Louisville attending the two general sessions on the Renewal project was overwhelming. Attendees heard the first general report on the NCCS Renewal Project and were given a chance to respond with additional and more detailed ideas. The NCCS consultants, School & Main Institute of Boston, presented the findings from this past summer’s survey, along with their recommendations. The attendees were then placed in work groups to add ideas, including details.

In the first round a majority of the discussions focused on the NCCS web site and on how to improve it. Other discussion topics included how to reformat our biennial conference meetings; the need to direct more marketing and service to leaders at the unit level, without bypassing the diocesan committees; and doing more with technology and communication media to make the already vast library of programs and tools available to more people. Another topic heard often was how to get more people involved at all levels.

The second session saw the groups formed into sub-groups to discuss specific topics. Based on the results of these forums chairman Bill Davies has set up four major task forces to develop these plans over the next six months, with most of the work being done by e-mail. These four areas are:

- Broaden our service to unit leaders
- Restructure/reformat our annual (and other) meetings
- Do more with technology
- Expand leadership opportunities within NCCS

If you want to be part of these program developments you can participate in one of two ways: (1) Actively serve on a standing committee, e.g. Marketing, Conference, Activities or (2) Sign up to serve on one of the four task forces that will work across committees.

You can email Bob Oldowski at (Oldowski@juno.com) and let him know what committee or task force or topic you want to contribute to. Work has already started. You too can have an impact.

A REMINDER

Most of the NCCS forms and publications are available for download and printing from our website. The National Office asks that this be your preferred method unless the form is not available. Most forms are in pdf or Microsoft Word format. Adobe Acrobat Reader is available as a free download from the Adobe website (adobe.com) and Word Viewer is available as a free download on the Microsoft website (microsoft.com) if you don’t have Word installed.