Scouts and Venturers Strengthen Their Christian Identity as They Join Priests, Seminarians and Sisters in Biennial St. George Trek at Philmont Scout Ranch in July

The St. George Trek is a biennial, high adventure, backpacking retreat program for Catholic Scouts and Venturers administered by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting in cooperation with the Boy Scouts of America’s Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico. Philmont’s high adventure backpacking experience is placed within the context of a retreat program dedicated to assisting the Scout or Venturer’s awareness of his or her Christian vocation. While there is a particular emphasis on the vocations of Priesthood and religious life, the trek first seeks to strengthen the participant’s Catholic Christian identity.

The leadership team for the 2011 Trek included Trek Director, Father Gerard Gentleman; Logistics Director, Chris Manning; Trek Advisor, Father Kevin Smith; Gerry Quinlan, Transportation Coordinator; and Nancy Watts, the NCCS Program Assistant.

The trek began at the Madonna Retreat Center in Albuquerque on July 6, 2011 with the arrival of the advisors of the seven crews. Six diocesan priests and 14 seminarians, along with a seminarian of the Eastern Providence of the Dominicans, and two Sisters of St. Benedict graciously gave their time to serve as this year’s advisors. The participants arrived throughout the next day. This year’s participants represented 34 dioceses and 21 states. Upon their arrival at the retreat center, the participants divided into their crews before an orientation meeting and Mass celebrated by Father Michael Hanifin, Associate National Chaplain of NCCS.

On Thursday, July 7, the participants spent the day preparing for the Trek engaging in presentations, group activities and team building exercises. By the end of the day each crew had selected their youth leadership consisting of a crew leader, a chaplain’s aide and a wilderness pledge guide.

The evening activities also included Mass celebrated by Father Gerard Gentleman, the director of the Trek.

Early Friday morning July 8, the participants loaded their coach buses to make the trip north to Philmont Scout Ranch.

Once they arrived at Philmont the trek participants were in the capable hands of their Philmont Ranger who prepared the crews to hit the trail on Saturday morning. After a few days on the trail all of the crews reunited at Cimarroncito Camp for a two-day layover. During these days the retreat program was reinitiated with a presentation on the Theology of the Body, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and Eucharistic Adoration. In addition, the participants were also able to participate in the Cimarroncito’s rock climbing program and conservation projects, as well as use the camp’s showers.

(Cont on page 6)
Sunday, October 30th Marks The Tenth Annual Priesthood Sunday

By Homer Radford

Catholic Scouting units can take the lead in promoting “Priesthood Sunday” in their parish by taking time to remember the priests who have served in our parishes and who have been especially close to us and our family in times of joy, Baptism, First Communion, Weddings for family members and of comfort in times of sorrow. Now is the time to begin planning to be sure each priest knows they are appreciated.

It is great when a parish plans a celebration, but Scouters and Scouts can make a personal commitment and make a difference in the life of a priest.

When was the last time you expressed appreciation to a priest?

Plan to have one part of a meeting in October to have each Scout make an appreciation card to be presented to the pastor on October 30th following Mass.

More appreciation and celebration suggestions are on the NCCS website: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/ScoutUnits/PriesthoodSunday.php There are eight downloadable appreciation cards in Word.doc or PDF that can be personalized by your Troop, Pack or Venture Crew.

Priesthood Sunday is sponsored by the United States Council of Serra International (http://www.serra.org) in collaboration with the NCCS Vocations Committee. For additional information contact Homer Radford, Coordinator at 815-356-1760 or hrрафord2@comcast.net

Our apologies to the Diocese of Wilmington, Del. which was inadvertently left off the list of Quality Dioceses that was printed in the June issue of the Bridge.

Chairman’s Corner by Colonel (Ret) John Halloran, Jr.

As Father Stephen Salvador and I enter into our second year, our theme changes from Concern to Commitment. The dictionary states that Commitment is “A pledge to do something”. When you agree to give of your time, talent and treasures to better Catholic Scouting then you have made a commitment.

Many of you probably have heard a number of jokes about commitment before. The one I like is about “a pig and a chicken walking by a church where a gala charity event was taking place. Getting caught up in the spirit, the pig suggested to the chicken that they each make a contribution. "Great idea!" said the chicken. "Let's offer them ham and eggs." "Not so fast," said the pig. "For you, that's a contribution. For me, it's a total commitment." I am not asking you to be like the pig, but I do need you to be more than the chicken.

The NCCS cannot succeed without the commitment and dedication of its members at all levels. When you make a pledge to do a project or task, it needs to be done in as timely and efficient manner as possible. If you take on a leadership role, you should have a plan on how you will do that job using short, medium and long-range goals. Regardless if it is a task assignment or leadership role, when all is said and done, evaluate it and record it for your potential successor. We are not looking for folks trying to punch a ticket or have some fancy title that looks good on a resume. We want folks that mean what the say and say what the mean. Most of all don’t say yes and over commit yourself if you already have enough stuff on your plate. I would rather see something not get done than lose a dedicated and committed Catholic Scouter due to burnout.

Another commitment issue I would like to address is training. When you become part of something, one of the first things you should do is learn about your job. Next, learn about the structure that supports your job.

Finally, get trained in your job. Our National Training Committee has put together numerous programs and materials that can help you get comfortable in whatever role you have committed to. Much of it can be found on our website. If you are involved in an (Arch)diocese, they should have programs to help train you that they have created or the NCCS has supplemented. At the NCCS level, we offer workshops during our Biennial Meeting (held in even years). Then we have the Philmont Course – “Scouting in the Catholic Church”, which is designed to help you understand how it all fits together. If you are reading this, you have most probably already said yes to supporting Catholic Scouting. If you are one of those that are not trained or understand how it all works, you should be committed in doing so. One of Father Stephen’s and my goals is to ensure that when you speak or do something on behalf of Catholic Scouting that we are all on the same page.

Enjoy the rest of your summer. Continue to be committed in making a positive difference in the lives you touch. Take care and God Bless.

Col (Ret) John Halloran

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.

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To submit items for future editions of The Bridge please contact Mike Gannon at scouttrain@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.
Did You Know . . .?
By Bob Oldowski

Back in 1943, the requirements for the Ad Altare Dei were very different. There were three Steps: the first could be completed while a Webelos or Tenderfoot Scout, the second while Second Class, and the third at First Class level. Each Step had three sections: Christian Spirit, Church Participation, and Christianity in Action.

Christian Spirit included knowing and explaining various prayers, the Ten Commandments, the Six Precepts of the Church, the Seven Sacraments, the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy, the principal parts of the Mass, and the value of confession and frequent reception of the Eucharist.

Church Participation included attending Catholic school or religious instruction, owning a Sunday missal, identifying vestments and articles used for Mass, ability to set up a temporary altar and assist the priest during Mass, knowing the names of key people in the diocese, and showing how you would prepare a sick room, then meet the priest at the door and assist him there.

Christianity in Action included Church etiquette, evidence of corporal and spiritual works of mercy in your Scout life, spiritual first aid, evidence of supporting your parish (altar server, choir, financially, etc.), presenting a collection of personal drawings of at least six symbols used in Catholic art and literature, and making a pilgrimage in uniform and keeping a log of this. Finally, under the guidance of a Catholic priest, relate how you made a serious effort to return to the Church a Catholic boy who had been lax or who has not had the proper opportunity for religious instruction.

The local diocese had the opportunity to add its own regulations. For example, the Milwaukee Archdiocese required a total of 100 hours of logged service as an altar boy, choir member, etc. The Scout must have been able to at least read the Latin responses while assisting the priest at Mass.

UPCOMING EVENTS

NCCS Executive Committee Meeting
Irving, Texas
October 11-12
Tenth Annual Priesthood Sunday
October 30, 2011
Applications Due for Quality Diocese Awards
Dec 1, 2011– March 15 2012
NCCS Annual Meeting
Dallas, Texas
April 19-22, 2012

WANTED: Volunteers with Executive Capability

The NCCS is in search of capable volunteers to serve as national officers, regional leaders, committee chairs and standing committee members. Job descriptions are found in the bylaws and Handbook for Operations found on the NCCS Website.

All of these positions involve self-motivation and leadership skills and often professional level skills (marketing, finance, accounting, journalism, sales, human relations, etc.). The NCCS is a committee principally involved in the relationship between the BSA and USCCB so Scouting and Church (parish and/or diocesan) leadership experience is expected.

Financial support is not normally offered for volunteers in normal execution of their duties and a level of annual financial contribution to the NCCS is expected.

Resumes of pertinent service are invited from all members for inclusion in the NCCS database. Further, nominations are solicited for national leadership positions (including self-nominations and letters indicating willingness to serve in specific capacities). These resumes would preferably include:

- BSA experience and service,
- Service in Catholic institutions,
- Technical or professional experience pertinent to NCCS operations,
- Projects indicative of leadership or management skills,
- Statement of a willingness to support your NCCS volunteerism.

A standard biography form is available from the NCCS Program Assistant. Information provided in resumes and biographies may be shared with other members of the NCCS, BSA, and Diocesan leaders in the process of verification.

Submission of a resume does not assure an appointment to a specific position or standing committee. Recommendations are made by the Nominating Committee but approval of the Executive Committee is required for all ballot candidates and appointments to national committees.

See the NCCS Website http://www.nccs-bsa.org/ for this year’s application form.
More than 40 Boy Scouts, and adult Scouters from throughout the San Diego Diocese participated in the Annual Catholic Boy Scout Retreat that was held at Rancho San Vincente in Campo. The theme of the retreat was “St. Paul” - beginning with what conversion is, how Paul was affected by his conversion, and showed each Scout how to make conversion an ongoing process in his life. There was also time for fun, including archery and a radio controlled car course amid the oaks of the ranch. A special highlight of the weekend was an appearance by “St. Paul” himself, as portrayed by Mark Price, who discussed some of the truths and myths of St. Paul.

The adult Scouters participated in “Scouter Development,” a weekend experience for adults who work with Catholic youth in Scouting. The weekend was concluded with Mass celebrated by Father Joe Carroll, the Catholic Scout Chaplain for the local Scout Council.

Bishop Kevin W. Vann presided over the Fort Worth Diocese's Scouting Religious Emblems awards ceremony honoring Catholic youth representing all levels of the Boy Scout and Girl Scout movements. This year’s award ceremony boasted hundreds of recipients from every part of the Fort Worth Diocese, and every phase of both Boy and Girl Scouting.
One hundred sixty five Scouts were honored at the 85th Annual Archdiocese of Los Angeles Presentation Mass held at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels. The Catholic Committee on Scouting presented 144 Ad Altare Dei and 21 Pope Pius XII Religious Emblems. Additionally six Scouts received the coveted local Chi Rho Award by earning all four of the Religious emblems.

Members of the Rockville Centre Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, the two Diocesan Venture Crews and Scouting friends joined Father Frank Zero at both his ordination and First Mass. Father Frank Zero is in the center, Diocesan Chaplain Father Gerard Gentleman is to the right and first year seminarian, Eagle Scout Sandro da Luz is to the left in cassock and surplice.
Philmont Scout Ranch Hosts St. George Trek

Continued from Page 1

The concluding event of the retreat layover was sunrise Mass at the Cimarroncito Reservoir celebrated by the founding director of the St. George Trek, Bishop Robert Guglielmone. From the sunrise Mass the participants hiked on to continue their trek. They all arrived safe and sound in base camp on Wednesday, July 20th.

Before the participants returned to Albuquerque they spent Thursday morning evaluating their experience and making a two part covenant. The first covenant was with God and one which opened the participant to God's vocational call. The second covenant was to their sponsoring diocese, stating how they planned to be of service to the Church through Catholic Scouting.

These covenant commitments help the participant recognize the serious commitment of participating in the St. George Trek. The trek formally concluded with the celebration of Mass at the Pastoral Center in Albuquerque offered once again by Bishop Guglielmone.

The Trek participants express their gratitude to NCCS, the Sacred Military Constantinian Order of Saint George, local diocesan committees, and their personal benefactors who funded the Trek.

For another view of the Trek please read the following story by Carly Hill from Orange County, Calif., who was one of the Venture participants.

“At the End of the Trek All You Want to Do Is Go Out and Make an Impact on Other People as God Did For You”

By Carly Hill, Trek Participant
Philmont Crew # 4

The St. George Trek, sponsored by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, is a two and a half week spiritual journey for Catholic young adults from all over the country. We started in Albuquerque, New Mexico where you meet all the priests, seminarians, nuns, and the many young men and women you will spend time with, share memories with, and depend on for the next few weeks. When you first get there you are immediately thrown into a whole new atmosphere of all these strangers that are just as anxious and nervous as you are. Little do you know that all those strangers are going to end up being like a family to you and know things about you that you never even knew about yourself.

You are then taken on a tour of the retreat center that you will stay at for the rest of the week to get to know your crew before you go out on the trail. Once everyone arrives you all meet and sit with your crews while we do introductions with the whole trek. You hear all the different places these people are from throughout the nation. After that you go to Mass with everyone to kick off the trek. It really brings everyone together from the beginning; and I have to say all the Masses we went to as a whole trek or just with your crew really get you to connect with God in a whole different and new way.

After those few days you spend getting to know your crew through various talks and activities that prepare you for the actual hiking part of the trek, you get up at a time when the sun isn’t even up yet and get on a bus to Philmont Scout Ranch. When you arrive you are greeted by your ranger who will teach a jam-packed training session in two days on how to survive in the wilderness with mountain lions, bears, and any other small animal from squirrels to chipmunks (also known as mini-bears). On your third day out on the trail your ranger leaves. This is considered for anyone the hardest day at Philmont. You are all alone, tired, short tempered, and longing for a slice of pizza or cheeseburger. Hiking sometimes up to 12 miles a day the only thing that seems to get you through it all is prayer. My own crew, actually everyday, would say the rosary at least once while we were hiking. We would say to God, “Please, just give me the strength to take this next step.” You can ask anyone who went on this trek and they would all say there is no way I could have finished this trek without my faith and God being there for me.

The connection you make with God is something unexplainable. At the end of the trek all you want to do is go out and make an impact on other people as God did for you. When people go on this trek they come back a different person spiritually. As a personal experience I have now worked with my church at least twice a month with Christian Services consisting of feeding the hungry to handing out toys and clothes to children and teens. In my school community I am starting a Catholic venture crew that focuses on high adventure and service to others. I also am helping to plan a Stations of the Cross walk for young Scouts in my county. I have come back humbled and wanting to make a difference, and to be a leader by example to everyone I meet.

Going on the St. George Trek was not only the hardest, but best experience of my life. I have now come to know that I am such a small part of such a big Scouting community and that people really do respect you for being a Scout and also have higher expectations of you. Being a Venture Scout has opened so many doors for me that I would have never thought of to go through. I thank the Catholic Committee on Scouting from the bottom of my heart for letting me go and live this experience. I have come back a changed young woman and ready to share my knowledge and experience with anyone I can.
The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) is pleased to announce the winners of the Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarships for 2011. The recipients are: Cameron Hamilton, a student at Texas Christian School in Sugar Land, Texas, Archdiocese of Galveston/Houston; Jared Linney, a student at San Joaquin Memorial High School in Fresno, Calif., Diocese of Fresno; Antonio (Tony) G. Messina-Doerning, a student at La Salle High School in Pasadena, Calif., Archdiocese of Los Angeles; Benjamin J. Moeller, a student at La Salle High School in Cincinnati, Ohio, Archdiocese of Cincinnati; and Thomas “Tucker” White, a student at New Rochelle High School, New Rochelle, N.Y., Archdiocese of New York.

These scholarships were established eight years ago by the family of the late Emmett J. Doerr, a dedicated Catholic Scouter who was an active member of the NCCS. Each of the five $2,000 scholarships recognizes outstanding Eagle Scouts who are registered in a program of the Boy Scouts of America.

This year’s winners were chosen from over 150 applicants from across the country based on a number of criteria including service to their home parish, leadership in their Scout units and other school or community organizations, letters of recommendation and their scholastic record.

“We are honored to recognize these five outstanding Catholic Scouts for their achievements as they certainly serve as role models in their communities,” said Ed Martin, NCCS Vice Chairman for Finance, who oversees the scholarship committee. “The committee was extremely impressed with all of this year’s applicants and found it extremely difficult to have to select only five recipients.”

To be eligible for the scholarships the candidates must be a practicing Catholic High-school senior, actively involved in Scouting and have earned the Ad Altare Dei or Pope Pius XII Award and their Eagle Scout or Venturing Silver Award.
By COL (Ret.) John J. Halloran, Jr.  
– Course Director

Once again, a great time was spent in God’s Country at Philmont during Relationships Week, July 10 – 16, 2011. This is when 33 participants from around the country participated in the NCCS ‘Scouting in the Catholic Church’ course. The days were a little warm and the nights were nice for sleeping. The classroom was recently air conditioned, but set on 76 degrees, which still made for some warm afternoons. It was the first time in all the years I have been to Philmont that rain was in short supply and which the area needs badly. This has been the driest season on record at Philmont since records have been kept.

While we were there, Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger, (Padre), our Bishop Liaison Emeritus, received a boxed set of the first and last edition of the Boy Scout Handbooks, signed by the Chief Scout Executive Robert Mazzuca from National BSA Council. The presentation was made by the Assistant Chief Scout Executive Gary Butler. Also, during the graduation Mass, Padre was presented the Spes Mundi Award. Next time you see Padre, congratulate him on his recognitions and thank him for his long and devoted service to the NCCS.

The participants’ evaluation of the course and the staff were very favorable. Speaking of staff, I want to thank Dick Schmidt and Matt Budz from the National BSA Office who provided onsite support. I want to thank Father Stephen Salvador, the Course Advisor, and Susan Barriball and Virginia ‘Ginger’ Dushek for rounding out the staff. Thanks also go to Margaret Matarese, the NCCS Training Committee Chair; Father Mike Santangelo, the NCCS Training Committee Advisor; and their Committee for updating and putting the course syllabus together. Additional thanks to Nancy Watts, the NCCS Program Assistant, for getting the participants handbook ready; John Ribar II for sending the required materials and displays; and Chip Travers for designing and ordering the neckerchiefs – which were in hot demand by other participants at the Training Center and the topic of many discussions.

Finally, thanks goes to Archbishop Michael Sheehan, of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe for celebrating the graduation Mass and to Bishops Robert Guglielmone, the NSSC Bishop Liaison, and Padre, our NCCS Bishop Liaison Emeritus, for their onsite support and concelebrating at the graduation Mass.

Most of all, congratulations to those who gave of their time, talent and treasures to attend the course and make it the largest attended course in a number of years. They were a joy to work with and because of them, the course was a very successful one.

Our 2011 PTC course graduates are: Enrique ‘Rick’ Armendariz from the Diocese of El Paso, Texas; Juan Carlos Ayala from the Diocese of Corpus Christi, Texas; Sandra H. and Stephen E. Black from the Diocese of Greensburg, Penn.; Dr. Carroll Ann Brennan and Deacon Joseph O’Connell from the Diocese of Palm Beach, Fla.; Janice DiGiaimo from the Diocese of Paterson, N.J.; Father Bernard P. Evanofski and James Fetterman from the Diocese of Venice, Fla.; Betsy Flynn from the Diocese of Las Cruces, New Mexico; Blanca E. Gonzalez from the Archdiocese of San Juan, Puerto Rico; Deacon Thomas Gornick from the Archdiocese of Portland, Ore.; Kevin Gramelspacher from the Archdiocese of Mobile, Ala.; Russell D. Gross from the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio; Robert Hammack from the Archdiocese of St. Louis, Mo; Charles T. Heimerdinger from the Diocese of Tyler, Texas; Paul Herr from the Diocese of Charleston, S.C.; Father Steven R. Hoffer from the Diocese of Las Vegas, Nev.; Deacon Michael Klapplholz and Aaron Randolph from the Archdiocese of Dubuque, Iowa; Deacon Don Krehely from the Diocese of Pensacola / Tallahassee, Fla.; Anthony Kymko-Yap from the Diocese of San Diego, Calif.; Martin Peterson and Deacon Tom Stith from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe, N.M.; August Pfeifer from the Diocese of Harrisburg, Penn.; Larry and Theresa Ricke from the Archdiocese of Oklahoma City, Okla.; K; Mary Scotti from the Diocese of Rockville Centre, N.Y.; George Sparks and Jeremy Stephens from the Diocese of Ft. Worth, Texas; Danny Stift and Deacon William Thornberry from the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas; and Lucille V. Watson from the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Ga.

The next “Scouting in the Catholic Church” course at Philmont is scheduled for August 5 – 11, 2012. Margaret Matarese has been selected as the Director and Father Gerard Gentleman as the Advisor. The other staff members are Father Kevin Smith and Sue Barriball. Please place this date on your diocesan calendar and make plans to have your diocese represented.