NCCS Completes Successful Year and Looks Forward to Challenges in 2013.

There has been a lot of activity within the United States in the past few months including extreme heat, fires, torrential rains, tornadoes, and hurricanes that have caused the loss of life and property. As of this printing we are not aware of any Catholic Scout or Scouter who lost their life. Unfortunately, property damage is a different issue. There are Scouters that have had damages due to Hurricane Sandy. There is no word yet if any Scout camps were damaged or had damage to chapels. Please keep all our Scouts and Scouters who have been affected by these events from Mother Nature in your thoughts and prayers.

In August we conducted our Philmont Training Course “Scouting in the Catholic Church.” Margaret Matarese served as Director with Father Kevin Smith as the Advisor. Susan Barriball and Ben Feril were the other key staff members and represented the NCCS well to the 34 participants. Next year’s course will be staffed by Ben Feril as the Director, Father Norm Supancheck as the Advisor and George Sparks and Nancy Watts rounding out the staff. This course is scheduled for July 21 – 27, 2013.

Father Gerard Gentleman and Chris Manning have been working hard on the 2013 St. George Trek which is scheduled for July 10 – 25 at Philmont. They have found enough Clergy, Seminarians and Sisters to staff seven Crews. Information has already been circulating and is posted on our website. Registration currently stands at 45 Scouts. Please note there will not be a St. George Trek scheduled for 2014.

Of course, the major event for this coming summer is the National BSA Scout Jamboree, to be held from July 15 – 24 at the new Summit-Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia. Ed Martin has been meeting with the volunteers who will be staffing the Faith and Beliefs area. Father Michael Hanifin has been coordinating Clergy support for the Sub-Camps, Villages and BSA National Headquarters. Most of the priest positions are filled, but there is still room for a few more. If you know of a priest who would like to experience this unique opportunity, please contact Father Mike as soon as possible.

The NCCS has been committed to “Stop the Drop and Grow Membership” for the past three years and George Sparks, the Membership Chairman, has been hard at work to develop new programs and ideas to help in this endeavor. From April 2010 to September 2011, we have had a decrease in membership of 6,844 and a decrease of 171 Catholic units. We need help from all the dioceses to continue to make inroads on increasing membership and reducing the number of lost units. Bishop James Tamayo, Executive Board Member, attended the Hispanic Woodbadge Course at Philmont the week prior to our Philmont Course last summer and made a number of great contacts which should help us with our Hispanic Initiative program. We are still hoping to get the bishops of Puerto Rico together sometime next year and have Bishop Tamayo meet with them to promote Catholic Scouting.

The National Chairman and National Chaplain recently sent out the annual letter announcing the Annual Appeal. Your generosity is needed if we are to continue to grow and prosper and you are asked to be as generous as possible by contributing to this year’s Annual Appeal to help us fund all the programs we have in place. In January you will be receiving a ballot for voting on our first three-year Chair-Elect. We are also looking for dedicated Catholic Scouters to be submitted for the Silver St. George Award. The application and past recipients can be found on our website.

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2013 ANNUAL APPEAL

You are invited to join your fellow Scouters in a commitment to Catholic Scouting by your contribution to this year’s Annual Appeal. Because of your past support the NCCS has been able to accomplish great things - let’s make sure the good work doesn’t end now! Thank you for your gracious donation of time, talent and treasure.
The National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry Honors Chip Travers

Chip Travers, of Chip Travers Graphic Design, who has served the Diocese of Tucson’s Catholic Scouting units as the local representative on the National Catholic Committee on Scouting since 2001, has been cited for outstanding contributions to the field of Catholic Youth Ministry.

Travers, who also has served and supported numerous national Catholic Scouting efforts over the years, was recognized for “exemplary leadership in the area of scouting and a significant contribution to the vision, goals, and programs in the NCCS such as Scouting is a Youth Ministry, the Rosary Patch series, Quality Diocese recognition, the Footsteps of the American Saints, faculty member for the Philmont Training Center’s “Scouting in the Catholic Church” training, designing a myriad of NCCS patches and providing graphic support for the NCCS.” He was awarded the Silver St. George in 2011.

This year the awards were presented Dec. 1 during the organization’s national conference in Orlando, Fla. The NFCYM is a nonprofit organization incorporated in Washington, D.C. that advocates for and supports Catholic youth ministry on national, diocesan and local levels.

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

Let me start out by thanking all those Scouters who had the courage to attend the ‘Scouting in the Catholic Church’ course at Philmont. They could have spent that week doing hundreds of other things rather than sitting in a classroom environment. They could have spent it enjoying family, loved ones and friends. A number of the Scouters who attended the course had to use their precious vacation time. Other Scouters were able to bring their family and loved ones only to spend most of their days in class while those who brought with them were able to experience the wonders of Philmont.

Another group that has showed courage are the Clergy who have volunteered to staff the brave new world of the Summit for the 2013 National Scout Jamboree. We all know how full the schedules are for our Clergy. For any one of them to commit to a few weeks away from their respective duties only to face the unknown and primitive conditions of the Summit is remarkable. They have my deepest gratitude. I would be remiss if I didn’t include the Scouters that have volunteered for the Faith & Beliefs Area at the Jamboree. Similar things can be said about them as they too face the unknown of the Summit.

Finally, the last courageous group is the Clergy and Seminarians willing to take on the back country of Philmont for the 2013 St. George Trek. Not everyone can put up with being cold, hot, wet, hungry, grungy, eaten alive by insects, sleepy, tired, achy, etc. just to ensure that the scouts attending have the best possible experience. I can think of hundreds of other ways to spend my summer vacation, but am very grateful that this is how they plan to spend theirs.

Having the courage to say yes to these activities knowing that it will cost them some of their time, talent and treasures tells me how dedicated they are to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. These Scouters emulate the sacrifices that are needed in order to give the best Catholic Scouting programs possible to our deserving youth. Hopefully the examples of these Scouters will give the rest of us the courage to take on these responsibilities and more.

We have just completed the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. The Good Lord has blessed us with many gifts, both physically and spiritually. Hopefully during the holiday and Holy Day season that you gave your family the quality time they deserve. Most of us do so much during the year that takes us away from our families and this completed holiday season should have been the time that we gave ourselves back to them.

On behalf of the National Chaplain, Fr. Stephen Salvador, and myself we hope you had a very Holy and Blessed holiday season. We are thankful for what you all do for Catholic Scouting and for all the support you have given us. We pray that you are refreshed and renewed so that you can continue to help Catholic Scouting grow and prosper in this New Year. 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

Forty years ago in 1972, the NCCS approved a way to recognize Catholic-chartered units that meet certain standards of Youth Ministry. Originally called the Pope Paul VI National Unit Recognition, this was first presented in 1973. The Holy Father at the time, Pope Paul VI, approved the use of his name for this recognition.

A patch was produced. At least a dozen variations have appeared since then. Currently it has been unchanged for a while, with rockers available to show the year earned. About ten years ago the name of this recognition evolved to the Catholic Quality Unit Award.

Each Catholic-chartered unit should review the criteria posted on the NCCS web site, set the unit’s goals to include earning this, and then at year-end apply for the recognition. Now is the time to check, and if accomplished, apply.

New Altar Vessels Donated for Use at Philmont Chapels  
By Father Dennis O’Rourke

Spending time as a Philmont Chaplain during the summer is filled with wonderful experiences of the youth of our organization. Each evening at 7 p.m. trek crews come to the chapel of their choice for religious services. With over 35 crews coming to Philmont each day, the Catholic Chapel gets crowded with up to 300 Scouts and Scouters attending each evening. Some of those crews are trail bound, while others are home bound. Some gather to give thanks for their completed trek; others to ask for the blessing of God on their journey into the back-country. All are encouraged at Mass to remember the presence of God in their lives through this experience.

This past summer, we were blessed with generous donations from a single family, and we were able to purchase new altar vessels in memory of a deceased loved one. We have four new common chalices for the reception of the Precious Blood, and two new ciboria for the hosts. It is thanks to the generosity of our regular visitors, and even others who have never been to Philmont, that we can up-grade our supplies. The previous common chalices were made of pewter. They have been tarnished with time, and didn’t look all that good because of it. A staff member asked if we needed anything at the chapel. Through his family’s generosity, we have these new vessels.

Before next year’s season begins, we need to purchase new Mass kits for use in the back-country. These kits cost about $500 each, and we’ll need two of them. The Mass kits that you might have seen in your parishes are not necessarily useful at Philmont. There is a kit design that fits into a small day pack. That’s perfect for use at Philmont. If you are able to “sponsor” the purchase of one or more of these Mass kits, please send a message to Nancy Watts at nccs@scouting.org or call her at 972-580-2114.
The Year of Faith and the Footsteps of American Saints Are a Perfect Match

by Julia Fogassy

Pope Benedict XVI announced a Year of Faith, which began on October 11, 2012—the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council—and continues until the Feast of Christ the King on November 24, 2013. The Latin title of the Apostolic Letter which officially proclaimed this Year of Faith was Porta Fidei, or door of faith. Pope Benedict used other metaphors to describe this year of faith: he also used the words journey and path.

The Holy Father’s purpose in proclaiming the Year of Faith is to invite each diocese, parish, each family, each Catholic individual in every part of the world, to study and pray about the faith, to freely embrace the fullness of the faith, and to share that faith with others.

Pope Benedict encouraged all members of the clergy and of the faithful to devise activities and programs that could lead to a deepening of faith. For their part, the Bishops of the United States have taken up the challenge and have posted informative articles and practical resources to guide the faithful in making this journey along the path that leads to faith.

One particular resource offered by the U.S. Bishops is called Saints for the Year of Faith. The USCCB website provides a prayer to and a short biography of several American saints, one for each month of the celebratory year, and suggests that the faithful look to these saints as guides who can help us on our journey, lead us along the right path, and accompany us as we approach the “threshold to the door of faith.” (see www.usccb.org)

The Footsteps of American Saints Activity Patches, available through NCCS, are a perfect means for following the bishops’ lead. Each activity offers age-appropriate requirements for 6 year-olds through adults, plus a beautifully embroidered patch to mark completion. The example of the saints enlivens our own faith, gives us courage to embrace it fully, and inspires us to share the good news with others.

Interestingly, seven of the saints on the bishops’ list are also saints in the Footsteps series. There are currently sixteen saints available through the Footsteps series and additional saints are anticipated in the near future.

Below are a few suggestions on how these activities might be used.

Celebrating the Year of Faith: A-Saint-a-Month.
Introduce your unit or family to a different saint each month.
Encourage everyone to find out more about this saint from books or the Internet and make a specific time for sharing that information. Use the prayer given on the USCCB web site to open each meeting or for family prayers. At the end of the month, assist everyone in the family or unit to earn the Saint Patch by completing the requirements for the Footsteps Activity. (You can find these requirements at www.nccs-bsa.org.)

Celebrate with a Day of Recollection with American Saints.
Encourage your Diocesan Scout Committee to promote and celebrate the Year of Faith by planning a Day of Recollection using several of the Footsteps of American Saints as the focus.
Scouting Around the Dioceses

While John Ryan and Bill Jackson of Boy Scout Troop 32 in Fort Worth, Texas look on, Japanese Scout Yu Tsukamoto presents National Catholic Committee on Scouting Chaplain Father Stephen Salvador and National Chairman Retired Col. John Halloran patches from a Catholic Japanese Scout Retreat. The patches were a gift provided by Mr. Hidekatsu Sato of the Japan Catholic Committee on Scouting on the occasion of this historic Catholic Japanese/American exchange to the National Catholic Conference being held at Philmont Scout Ranch during August 2012. At the same time, 500 living Rosary packages were presented for members of the Conference so they could take them home and give to Catholic Scouts across the nation. This same gesture was made during a similar trip in 2007 that resulted in hundreds of postcards signifying the saying of 3 rosaries apiece... similar to a rock thrown into a pond with a ripple effect of praying the Holy Rosary.

The Archdiocese of Louisville Catholic Committee on Scouting held their 2012 Flaget Trail at Monastery Immaculate Conception in Ferdinand, Indiana, in August 2012. Sister Mary Andre Gettelfinger (center) talks to the Scouts about St. Ferdinand Parish cemetery, which was one station of the Scouts’ pilgrimage given by the Sisters of St. Benedict of Ferdinand, Indiana. It was standing room only in the monastery church on Saturday morning when the scouts joined the sisters for Mass. Later that evening the scouts were in church again for a special scout Mass. This was the second year the Flaget Trail was held at Monastery Immaculate Conception, having first come in 2005. The Flaget Trail, which is annually held at a site of Catholic historical interest in the central Kentucky or southern Indiana area is named in honor of Bishop Benedict Joseph Flaget, who was appointed by the Holy See in 1808 as the first bishop of the newly-established Diocese of Bardstown, Kentucky. This was the 66th year for the trail.

Cub and Brownie Scouts from the Diocese of Sioux City, Iowa participated in a prayer balloon liftoff, as part of a Scouting Summertime activity held at Trinity Heights in Sioux City in June of 2012.
By Ed Martin

Question: What do the following individuals all have in common: a school teacher, an Eagle Scout, a religious brother, and a father of six sons?

Answer: They are all convicted child molesters who were registered Scout leaders.

I recently had the privilege to join with other Scouters in attending the BSA’s first National Youth Protection Symposium (http://www.nationalyouthprotectionsymposium.org/), along with Jim Weiskircher from Region 14. Many other youth-serving organizations were invited and attended also. The presenters were credible and delivered stories that would make you cringe with horror, get angry with the perpetrators, and a little teary-eyed for the victims.

Scouting, with its access to youth and need for leaders, is a magnet for such perpetrators, many of whom never get caught, reported, or convicted. Those that do, most likely have countless numbers of victims. Perpetrators can come from any walk of life or background and are best identified by their behaviors.

As Scouters, we need to insure youth and their parents have a safe environment in which to experience Scouting. Here’s what we can do:

- Schedule a presentation with the youth in your unit using the age-appropriate BSA program
- Get trained in BSA’s Youth Protection program and renew every two years
- Get trained in your diocesan-provided Safe Environment program and stay current with its training
- Be vigilant in identifying those who are not practicing the behaviors required for a safe environment
- Report suspicious and inappropriate behavior to your local Scout Executive and Chartering Organization Executive

We can’t let abuse happen to our youth. If it happens to one youth, it is too many. Fortunately, we now have programs in Scouting and the Catholic Church that serve as a deterrent to those who are tempted to commit abuse. May the Holy Spirit guide us and protect us in making Scouting a safe experience!

News Notes

TRADING POST

A limited number of all the previous nine annual Quality Diocese patches are available for purchase, as well as the Philmont 50th Anniversary of Chaplaincy patch. Prices are $5.00 each and include shipping.

A small number of original Rosary patches with the year of issue embroidered on them are also available for $6.00 postpaid.

E-Mail johnribar@iglou.com for availability or you can email Nancy.watts@scouting.org for purchase.

BSA ADVISOR PROMOTED

Congratulations are in order for our BSA Advisor Matt Budz, who has been selected as the Scout Executive in the Knox Trail Council headquartered in Framingham, Mass., effective in January, 2013. We wish him much success in his new endeavor. We sincerely appreciate the time and effort that he gave as our Advisor.

SCOUTER RECOGNIZED

On Saturday August 4th the Westchester-Putnam Council (New York) dedicated its new Trading Post and Pavilion at the Curtis S. Read Scout Reservation in honor of long time NCCS member Jack Coughlin in recognition of his lifetime of service to Scouting.
ICCS Plans Special Event in Rome for Saint Paul Fellows

The International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS) is an organization dedicated to contributing to the complete education of young people through Scouting from the point of view of the Catholic faith; cooperating in the development and enhancement of the spiritual dimension of Scouting in accordance with the unity and diversity of the World Scout Movement. It works to ensure that Catholics in Scouting are actively present in the Church and guarantees communication between the Catholic Church and the World Scout Movement. The ICCS is therefore in Scouting and for Scouting. It places itself at the service of education in the faith on behalf of all those within the movement who have chosen the Catholic faith.

The ICCS is convinced that the spiritual dimension expressed by the different religious communities is a factor of unity in the Scouting program. It strives to play a leadership role with the Movement to foster its development.

The ICCS sponsors a St. Paul Fellowship to help raise funds for the organization. The fellowship program includes:
- Fellowship event every two years
- Presentation ceremony of insignia (pins and certificates) at a special dinner, hosted by the group’s Cardinal patron, His Eminence Raymond Cardinal Burke and the Honorary Chair and Patron, Prince Nikolaus von Liechtenstein.
- Mass in a noted church
- Excursion in Rome or nearby environs.

Of the funds raised, 50% of the money donated to the Fellowship will go directly to support the current operational needs of the ICCS and the remaining half will go to increase the corpus of the capital endowment. The earnings from the foundation support the current and future needs of ICCS.

This year the fellowship has planned a special event for the members. The event will take place from Thursday, February 14 to Saturday February 16, 2013 in Rome. The arrival and opening reception will be hosted by the ICCS Fellowship Chair and the Association of Catholic Guides and Scouts of Italy (AGESCI) at the Hotel Alimandi Vaticani.

Friday’s activities include:
- Pre-opening, private tour of the Vatican Museum and Gardens tour, including areas not normally open to the public.
- Lunch on your own (or possible arrangements in or near the Vatican).
- After tour of St. Peter Basilica to include the Tomb of St. Peter and the Necropolis.
- Cocktail reception and heavy hors d’oeuvres with Prince Nikolaus von Liechtenstein, Ambassador to the Vatican and Fellowship Patron, on Rooftop of Hotel Alimandi Tunisi.

Saturday’s events are still being worked, but there are plans for an AGESCI event.

For further information on the ICCS, the St. Paul Fellowship, and this special event, please contact Jerry Scanlan at gscanlan@hotmail.com

Conference Internationale Catholique du Scoutisme
International Catholic Conference of Scouting
Conferencia International Catolica de Escultismo
Internationale Katholische Konferenz des Pfadfinderwends
Study Conducted for NFCYM Shows Participation in Religious Activities Can Have a Great Influence the Faith Development of Young People

In a recent study conducted by Michael Carotta, Ed.D. and Charlotte McCorquodale, Ph.D., for the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry, the researchers asked engaged and enthusiastic Catholic youth to identify what has influenced their faith and what they learned may indeed help assess which aspects of ministry youth leaders need to emphasize and where to place the most energy.

This survey sought to answer two questions: What strongly influences the Catholic faith of these youth? How do they describe the impact their Catholic faith has on their lives?

Here is a summary of some of their findings.

1. Stand-alone events have strongly influenced the faith of these young people. The formative nature of specific experiences should not be underestimated. While this and other studies have documented the influence of family life and a religious upbringing, the 2,011 youth who participated in this survey said that specific experiences outside the family also have a great influence on their faith. Retreats, service experiences, youth conferences, and guest speakers are among the strongest influencers.

2. These findings strongly substantiate in a quantitative way that which the field of youth ministry has maintained and believed to be true in the past.

3. Participation in Mass, Communion, the Sacraments, and the teachings of the Church have greatly influenced the faith development of these young people.

4. These youth show a history of engagement with the church: her teachings and beliefs, her prayer life, and her ministry with them. And they tell the researchers — in their own voice—that these experiences and individuals have been very influential.

5. Catholicism has helped them. Their Catholic faith has strengthened their relationship with Christ, motivated them to be a good person, challenged them to change some things, brought new insights and awakenings, helped them determine right from wrong, and get through hard times.

6. Adolescents are in the midst of faith formation. Many of the strong influencers they identified are experiences that occur in high school. In addition, the level of these influencers increases with each year in high school. This also suggests that spiritual awareness deepens with each year in high school and/or that the influence of these experiences deepens the longer one participates in them.

7. The consistent gender and ethnic differences remind us that the story of what influenced these young people is not exactly the same for all groups. These differences once again affirm gender and ethnic awareness. It is unfortunate that the small sample size of various ethnicities prohibited further analysis.

8. Similar research needs to be directed toward young people who do not access the influential dynamics offered by youth ministry and the prayer life of the church. We are left to wonder how their Catholic faith is influenced, progresses through high school, or impacts their lives.

Finally, with all that is being written and discussed about evangelization and faith formation, the story told by these young people suggests that even the small step of participation in a one-time event holds promise.