Three NCCS Members Attend ICCS African Regional Council Meeting in Rome

By Susan Barriball
Vice Chair

I had the pleasure to join with two other NCCS members to attend the African International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS) Regional Council meeting from August 5-7, 2014 in Rome. Scott Harvey, National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) International Standing Committee Chair, Bray Barnes, ICCS World Chairman and I attended the meetings to hear reports and witness the proceedings including the election of the new African regional president. We learned much by listening to the brainstorming for activities and general business as related to the goals of the ICCS committees. I found the participants from the different countries of Africa to be welcoming and learned how the ICCS makes an impact for member countries. The conference ended in Rome and the African Regional Conference traveled to Volterra (Pisa) Italy to attend the ICCS World Seminar.

The seminar in Pisa was prepared during seminars in Latin America, Africa, and the Middle East with a focus on Scouts during the time of Pope Francis and Catholics within a multi-religious world. The work was based on biblical research done with Bose monks and with conducted at the “Route Nazionale” of Italy in the spiritual atmosphere of 30,000 rovers (San Rossores Catholic youths of the Association of Catholic Guides and Scouts of Italy (AGESCI) camping at the national park of San Rossores).

The ICCS World Seminar included Catholic Scouters from Latin America, the Middle East and Africa. Bray Barnes and Roberto Cocianci, World President of ICCS, and Fr Jacques Gagey, World Chaplain ICCS addressed the group gathered. I met Catholic Scouters from Italy, Romania, Uruguay, France, Belgium, Palestine, Brazil, Lebanon, and Portugal. The general purpose of the gathering was to learn how to deepen the vocation of Catholic Scouts in the heart of the multi-religious world. Presentations related to the general purpose were offered by representatives from South America, Africa, and the Middle East. Review and discussion of the three continents was offered on the basis of three significant topics with the words of Pope Francis addressed to members of Catholic Scouting: cohabitation (multi-religious), hope, inheritance.

The experience of attending an ICCS World Seminar was a blessing. I now look at these committees from a different point of view. I have seen the faces of the many served and those serving in the regions and the countries of the International Catholic Committee on Scouting. As a vice chair with oversight of the NCCS International Committee, I know I am now able to serve this position with more zeal.

Continued on page 6
Pope Urges Scouts to Not Be Afraid to Take on the Challenges of Safeguarding Christian Values

In a message earlier this Summer, the Pope invited 12 thousand scouts from 20 European countries to pray and work towards a “united and peaceful Europe”. The scouts gathered in Normandy to mark the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War and the 70th anniversary of the Normandy Landings, an operation which led to the allied victory in the Second World War.

“To meet Jesus you have to set off on a journey and along the way, you discover that God manifests himself in different ways: through the beauty of his creation, when he lovingly intervenes in our history, in our fraternal relationships and in our service to others.”

In his message, Francis gave European scouts a mission, pointing out the three stages he mentioned during the World Youth Day celebrations in Rio de Janeiro: Go; without fear; to serve. He urged all of them to push themselves, strengthened by their encounter with God through the Sacraments and sustained by His love, which takes away all fear, “to announce His love in all corners of the world, to serve their neighbors in the remotest peripheries.”

So many generations have their scouting education to thank for “their growth along the path of sainthood, the practice of virtues and above all the greatness of their soul.” Therefore, on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the First World War, Francis urged scouts to pray for a united and peaceful Europe, because “you are the real players in this world, you are not just spectators,” he told them.

The Pope also encouraged scouts not to be afraid to take on the challenge of "safeguard[ing] Christian values, in particular the defence of life, development, the dignity of the person, the fight against poverty, and many other battles.” (©LaPresse)

Chairman’s Corner

BY EDWARD P. MARTIN

After this the Lord appointed seventy two others whom he sent ahead of him in pairs to every town and place he intended to visit. Luke 10: 1

During the recently completed Scouting in the Catholic Church course at the Philmont Training Center in New Mexico, participants expressed surprise and excitement at two findings:

- What it means that Scouting can be a program of Catholic youth ministry
- The proper role of the Chartered Organization Representative

The situation reminds me of a story about the Greek mathematician Archimedes who was so excited about a scientific breakthrough that came to him during his bath that he ran into the streets naked, shouting “Eureka!” (which is Greek for “I found it!”). He was so excited that he took off outside to spread his good news—oblivious to his nakedness or what people would think of him.

Many of us have had our own eureka moments, such as when we came across a particularly meaningful Scripture passage, when we discerned the presence of God in a situation, or when we experienced the success that comes as a result of hard work. At those times, we wanted to share our discoveries with others. Those who attended the Scouting in the Catholic Church course were anxious to get home to tell others of their new-found knowledge and to begin their “missions.”

As Catholic Scouters, we have a perfect opportunity, not only to rediscover that eureka moment that got us involved in Catholic Scouting, but also to let that excitement send us out as ambassadors for God. Whether it’s promoting participation in the NCCS religious emblem and activity programs, leading vespers or prayers at Scout events, or starting new units, we can spread the good news. The news is so good, and God’s love is so powerful, that we just can’t keep it to ourselves. God has fulfilled his promise of salvation! That is so much more exciting than Archimedes’ mathematical discovery!

Jesus wants us to hurry off to spread the good news—without bothering to bring a purse or bag—to all who will listen. He tells us we don’t have to worry about food or money or even what people may think of us. He’ll take care of us if we just go out and proclaim his good news. In our case, it’s the good news that invites participation in our religious emblem and activity programs and invites association with Catholic Scouters who practice their faith.

God has great things in store for his people, and I believe he has chosen you and me to spread the good news.
New Membership Initiative is Evangelization to Youth in the Truest Sense of the Word.

By George Sparks
Membership Initiative Chair

The rationale for supporting the NCCS New-unit Growth Initiative, is outlined below, but it is also a call to understanding that when we reach out to youth in Catholic Scouting we are evangelizing in the truest sense of the word.

The New Evangelization calls each of us to deepen our faith, believe in the Gospel message and go forth to proclaim the Gospel. As you are aware, the statistics on both youth membership and the number of Catholic Scout units has been on a steady decline since 2003. With regard to the new evangelization this means that the Gospel is being proclaimed to 22.5% fewer young people than in 2003.

It is incumbent upon the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, each Diocesan Committee and all Catholic leaders to reverse this trend. Young people today are being exposed to negative, secular values which are irreligious and jeopardize the souls of these youth. As Catholic Scouters, we can use Scouting and the programs of the NCCS to show how integral our religious beliefs and practices are to our everyday life.

We strongly encourage diocesan committees to recruit a full team to carry out their full complement of responsibilities, including the membership function. Detailed information on the recommended structure and organization of the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting may be found at: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/diocese/Administration.php.

For more information or background on the Membership Initiative, please contact George Sparks at georgesparks@verizon.net or by phone at 817-431-4903.

Notes from the National Chaplain

Dear Catholic Scouters,

The summer is coming to a close and many are preparing to return to school for the fall semester. I am preparing to walk the Camino Santiago de Compostela in Northern Spain. I depart for Spain on Tuesday August 26th and will return on Tuesday October 7th. This 40-day pilgrimage will begin in St. Jean Pied de Port in the French Pyrenees and will end in the city of Santiago de Compostella, a trek of about 500 miles or 780 kilometers.

I first became interested in the Camino when I attended the World Youth Day in Santiago de Compostela in 1989. Saint John Paul II summoned the youth of the world to come on pilgrimage to the City of Santiago de Compostela and the tomb of Saint James the Apostle. That World Youth Day had over 600,000 youth who came to spend the weekend in this famous city. Santiago de Compostela (Compostela means “Field of Stars”) is the third most visited Christian site in the world (behind Jerusalem and Rome). Pilgrims for over 1000 years have journeyed to this Spanish city to visit the tomb of the apostle that somehow was miraculously discovered in the 10th century when local people witnessed the “stars” dance over a hill named Monte de Gozo (Mount of Joy). Upon excavating the site, the relics of the apostle were discovered and are now located in a reliquary within the Cathedral.

When I attended the 2011 World Youth Day in Madrid I had an opportunity to celebrate Mass in the Cathedral at Santiago de Compostela. I made a promise to God to go on this pilgrimage in September of 2014. I found eight other pilgrims from my area (Orange County, California) who will be traveling with me. Please pray for us during this time and I will keep all Catholic Scouts and Scouters in my thoughts, prayers and Masses. Buen Camino!

Saint George, patron saint of Scouting, pray for us.

Father Michael P. Hanifin
Annual Anza Trek—Diocese of Tucson.


Diocese of Orange (Calif.) Annual Trek
Applications are now available for the 2015 Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship

By Scott Harvey

The “Blessed are the Merciful” is a program for Scouts in the United States to become aware of the “Keep the Lamp Burning” celebration and the history of Scouting in the Catholic Church worldwide over the past 100 years. In keeping with the themes of the next three World Youth Day celebrations, that will recognize the Beatitudes taught by Christ, the theme is about mercy. On 27 April, 2014 Divine Mercy Sunday, Pope John Paul II was canonized. On this great occasion the “Blessed are the Merciful” program was approved by the NCCS Executive Board.

The Blessed are the Merciful program will encourage Catholic Scouts to explore the richness of the Catholic faith experienced throughout the world. This program is in addition to the NCCS International Awareness Award which provides a meaningful introduction to the varied Catholic Scout organizations in the international community. The “Keep the Lamp Burning” celebration helps Scouts from around the world learn about how Scouting came to be encouraged by the Catholic Church and approved by the Vatican. One of the first Catholic priests to recognize the value of Scouting was Venerable Father Jacques Sevin, S.J. of France in 1913. More information on the program is available on the NCCS website (www.nccs-bsa.org)

Scouts and leaders will be encouraged to participate in the World Organization of Scouting’s “Messengers of Peace” program when they perform organized “Acts of Mercy.” When Scouts participate in the Messengers of Peace program, they earn a special patch that is placed around the World Crest on their uniform. When Scouts perform an act of mercy, or good deed, they may receive the “Blessed are the Merciful” Keep the Lamp Burning patch.

This program is an ideal theme for an organized activity at the diocesan level. Several diocesan committees have already introduced the “Keep the Lamp Burning” program as part of a Scout retreat or event. The official conclusion of the “Blessed are the Merciful” promotion will be at the National Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree in 2017.

Applications are now available for the 2015 Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship

The 2015 Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship application is now available. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) established the Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Distinguished Scout Scholarship to be awarded to five, outstanding high school Catholic seniors who are Scouts in a BSA program and continuing their education in college. These scholarships honor Mr. Doerr, who was a dedicated Catholic Scouter and a very active member of the NCCS. The Doerr family and the NCCS are continuing his legacy by offering this $2,000 scholarship in his name to five distinguished Catholic Scouts.

Eligibility Requirements:

- Must be a practicing Catholic
- Be a full-time high school senior
- Be a registered young man or woman actively involved in a Scout Troop, Varsity Scout Troop, Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship.
- Must have earned the Ad Altare Dei or Pope Pius XII Religious Award
- Earned the Eagle Scout, Silver Award or Quartermaster Award
- Provided service to his/her church, community, school and Scouts

For applications or more information:

- Download an application at http://www.nccs-bsa.org/national/EJDoerrScholarship.php
- Email: nccs@scouting.org
- Call: NCCS-Program Assistant at NCCS (972) 580-2114

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS IS MARCH 1, 2015
Three from NCCS Attend ICCS Meetings in Italy

(continued from page 1)

following this trip. The meetings of ICCS I attended in the 5 days in Italy were filled with enthusiasm and hope. The Catholic youth attending were asked to move forward with courage.

We were also able to attend the closing ceremony and attended Mass on August 10th which closed the encampment of AGESCI. Pope Francis could not attend the Mass, but to the delight of the youth, and all in attendance, he called in and offered his encouragement to the youth and a blessing to those gathered for the Mass.

The Mass ended and the crowds began to leave San Rossore. It felt as though I had just arrived, met all the new Catholic friends from around the world and now it was time to say goodbye. I know this will not be my last international Catholic Scouting experience. This trip was a blessing because now I will see the faces and hear the words of the members of the ICCS. The memory will help me remain focused when discussing the ICCS because I now know and understand the need and workings of those promoting the work of Catholic Scouting on a world level.

Reprint of History of Scouting in the Catholic Church 1976-77

By Bob Oldowski

This appeared as the final part of a series that described some early history of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) up through 1977. It was first printed in the NCCS Newsletter, predecessor to the current NCCS publication, The Bridge. It probably was a collaboration of Fr. James LeBar and Truman Stacey.

Scouts played a significant role in the International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia in August, 1976, acting as ushers and messengers and furnishing other services. About 5,000 attended the celebration of Mass on Scout Day. Bishop McAuliffe was the principal celebrant, and was joined by 60 chaplains from all parts of the nation.

A total of 260 Scouts and Explorers representing 26 states and 68 dioceses, formed the service corps. The exemplary way in which they carried out their tasks elicited many expressions of gratitude and thanks. More than 19,000 hours of service were pledged by the visiting Scouts during their training session as part of the congress SIGN program—Service In God’s Name.

A total of 70 Scouters from 40 dioceses participated in the Third Philmont Catholic Training Conference, underwritten by the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus. Rev. Donald F. Isenbarger was course director, assisted by a faculty of Revs. Ralph H. Sodano, Nicholas R. Rachford, Eugene Kasper, and Michael Ellifritz. Other faculty members were Joe Kessler, Albert P. Fertal, Sr., Thomas J. Greiner, and Dr. William F. Mullin.

All members of NCCS were grieved when they learned of the death, on August 20, of Tom Hawkins, the immediate past national chairman. Hawkins was the personification of NCCS to many who knew him. He had worked as a board member for more than 20 years and had been chairman for 6 years when he turned the reins over after the Philadelphia conference.

The NCCS executive board and standing committees met for the first time under the new leadership at San Antonio, Tex., January 30-February 3, 1977. “Youth Ministry” was the keynote of the annual executive board meeting. Deliberation of committees and the reviewing action of the executive board centered on Scouting as an integral part of the youth ministry of the Church and of the individual parish.

Committee recommendations as a whole brought home the need for more adult volunteers to become involved in the program, and better training methods to be developed for those who are recruited.

It was reported that 315 individual units won the Pope Paul VI Unit Recognition award in 1976, and 13,398 patches were presented. A total of 75 dioceses participated in the program. Also during 1976, 12,795 Parvuli Dei emblems were presented, 4,328 Ad Altare Dei emblems, 1,858 Pope Pius XII emblems, and 616 St. George emblems.

A diversified format marked the Fourth Catholic Training Conference at Philmont in July 1977. A total of 71 Scouters received scholarships to the conference under the 5-year grant of the Supreme Council of the Knights of Columbus.

For the first time a series of four distinct courses was offered—Scouter Development, Religious Activities, Religious Emblems, and Committee Operations. Tom Greiner was course director. He was assisted by a faculty composed of Rev. Robert F. Lentz, Rev. Roger Strebel, Bro. Keith Warrick, Charles Fosmire, Gene Johnson, Al Feliksa, Frank Shamroe, Truman Stacey, and Executive Secretary Joe Kessler.

Also during 1977 the Plan of Cooperation and Organization was revised and updated, the Scouting Bulletin of the Catholic Committee on Scouting changed its format and became known as the Newsletter of the Catholic Committee on Scouting. Of the 58 chaplains representing all major faiths at the 1977 National Scout Jamboree August 3-9 in Moraine State Park, Butler, Pa., 16 were Catholic serving under the direction of Rev. Richard P. LaRocque.

- End of the original history series -
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

The reprinted history of Catholic Scouting through 1977 concludes with this issue of The Bridge. Next challenge is to extend this to more recent times. Now is your opportunity to help record our history. Let’s see if we can recall and record the next chapters. Can anyone help identify NCCS major events from 1978 up through 1982 and maybe through 1986? What changes took place? What new ideas were added? How about Training, Religious programs, Activities, NCCS organization, etc.? Drop me an e-mail with your thoughts and memories. I’ve collected a number of items, but welcome your input. Do write me at Oldowski@juno.com in the next few weeks, in time for our next issue. To those who do, I’ll share our thoughts and findings as we progress.

Scouters Attending Philmont Training Course Learn How to Incorporate Catholic Scouting in Vibrant Youth Ministry

By Kathleen Polowki

God’s Country. I have heard that sentiment expressed many times over the years about the Philmont Scout Ranch. Serving as BSA’s National Volunteer Training Center since 1950, the Philmont Training Center is the venue for the Scouting in the Catholic Church course. With the Sangre de Cristo Mountains and the famed Tooth of Time as a backdrop, twenty-five participants hailing from all parts of the country, from California to Connecticut, gathered to enjoy a special week together August 3-9, 2014.

Course participants came eager to learn strategies to implement Catholic Scouting in their dioceses. Faculty members presented materials on adult faith formation, the NCCS mission and programs, and methods for using Scouting as a program of youth ministry. Participants enjoyed very informative and rousing presentations by Bro. Ross related to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Through involvement in the course activities and thoughtful group discussion, participants became more knowledgeable, making new friends and many special memories in the process.

It was a pleasure to serve as a member of the faculty with Ed Martin, George Sparks, Jim Cordek, Jim Weiskircher, Brother Ross Chamberland, and Fr. Ray Fecteau. God was definitely with us as we planned, discussed, debated, laughed and prayed together. We enjoyed a trek or two to the St. James Hotel and had the pleasure of visiting with Bishop Robert Guglielmone, our USCCB liaison, Fr. Michael Hanifin, our National Chaplain and Archbishop Michael Sheehan, Archbishop of Santa Fe.

Philmont is definitely a special place where one can watch nature in all its glory from fawns playing, bison and pronghorn antelope grazing and mini-bears scurrying about to dawn’s new day. Who will forget the thunderstorm with hail and lightning that struck the Tooth of Time and knocked out the power, or celebrating Mass under cover of the chapel in a downpour only to see a rainbow later? One never gets tired of hearing Fr. Don holler out “it’s FREE” and hearing the chuckles of the congregation when the New Testament Bibles are given out with tiny print and Fr. Gray demonstrates with the Bible held an inch from his nose, how reading them brings you closer to God.”

I can honestly say I came away from this experience inspired by the participants, faculty, chaplains, fellow Scouters, and nature’s bounty. Where has this inspiration led? To a renewed commitment to support our Scouts and scouters, encouraging them to spread the good news of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Scouting program to others, while promoting Scouting as youth ministry within the church.

For the finale at the closing campfire on Friday, faculty and staff joined together with the families and sang Silver on the Sage (also known as the Philmont Hymn). “Silver on the sage, starlit skies above, aspen covered hills. Wind in whispering pines, eagles soaring high, purple mountains rise against an azure sky. Philmont, here’s to thee, Scouting Paradise, our God’s country, tonight.” Amen!
By
Father Dennis O’Rourke

The Miter Society is an NCCS recognition of financial support of the St. George Trek. The Miter Society is so named to honor our current and former Bishop Liaisons. The history of our Bishops’ involvement in our NCCS programs and operations has been distinguished, to say the least. Through their own loyalty and personal hard work, our Bishop Liaisons’ dedication led to a stronger relationship among the membership of the NCCS, and especially showing their support and encouragement with and among the priests of NCCS.

The St. George Trek is NCCS’s premier youth leadership program — normally held every two years at Philmont Scout Ranch. We have had a number of bishops actually hike with the crews on their leadership program wrapped around a Philmont Trek experience. Youth are divided into crews usually with a priest and seminarian as crew advisors. There has usually been a female crew (Venturers) led by women religious — yes, nuns in hiking boots!

This Miter Society medal is designed with the image of a bishop’s miter as a way to honor our bishops as they have shown involvement and unshakable hope in tomorrow’s potential leaders. The recognition piece is a black and gold polished medal suspended on a dark green ribbon. Green is the color proper to a bishop. Engraved on the medal is an image of the Philmont Arrowhead — an easily recognizable image of Philmont — with the bishop’s miter superimposed. Each medal is consecutively numbered, but without limit.

Each award represents a generous contribution of a minimum $1,000. If you’d like to make a contribution in your name, or to honor someone else, please see our NCCS web site for detailed information on making your gift. Every dollar supports this great event. At our annual meeting held in Orange County last April, 24 of these were presented!

Consider giving the gift yourself, and perhaps honoring your bishop with this recognition. Information and giving options are available on our NCCS web site.