BSA membership statistics for 2014 have been reported and, as expected, there is good news and bad news. The bad news is that membership in Catholic-chartered units declined 6.02% to 244,180 registered youth and the number of units chartered to Catholic organizations declined 4.2% to 7,799. The good news is that the NCCS has kicked off the New-unit and Membership Initiative with 87 dioceses participating and a longtime Scouter has been appointed to lead the Initiative.

John Anthony will be succeeding George Sparks as Chairman of the NCCS Membership Committee following the upcoming Annual Meeting. John retired from the professional service of Scouting in 2013 after 37 years of service and then volunteered his service as a member of the NCCS Membership Committee. He has already been working with the Fort Worth diocesan committee to organize a luncheon with Bishop Michael Olson that will inform parish leadership of the importance of Scouting as part of their youth ministry.

In announcing his intent to appoint John to the position, Chairman Ed Martin says "John has been an active member and has a long history with BSA promoting Scouting. He will be a key resource in finding ways to help our diocesan volunteers promote the Scouting opportunity."

In a recent interview, John remarked, "I have seen how Catholic Scouting can bring young people closer to God personally. Prime examples are my children: my son earning the Ad Altare Dei and daughter earning the Pope Pius XII and having the privilege of participating in the St. George trek at Philmont."

John has a Bachelors degree in History and a Masters in Human Services. He is an Eagle Scout, a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow, and is Wood Badge trained. He has earned the Ad Altare Dei himself and received the St. George Award from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia in 1987. He was recognized with the La Flor de Lis Cubana in 2012 and the Jewish Shofar Award in 2013. He is also a 4th Degree Knight of Columbus.

John reaffirmed that "We need to help parishes understand how Scouting can help them now and in the future in developing quality leaders for their parish. This is the main reason why I am taking on this challenge."

As George Sparks focuses now more on preparing to become National Chairman in a year, he reports that he is more confident that we will be able to meet Chairman Martin's goal of 300 new units by 2016. He responds that "We would like every diocese to support the initiative to the best of its ability. There is still time to participate."

We are hopeful our work with our diocesan committees will make that possible.

For more information on the Initiative, please contact Elizabeth Romero-Coca in the NCCS office at 972-580-2114 or send her an email at nccs@scouting.org.
The National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) was represented at the National Conference on Catholic Youth Ministry (NCCYM) which was held in San Antonio, Texas December 4-6, 2014. The theme for the conference was “Prepare the Way.” There were 2,502 youth ministers in attendance and the 139 conference exhibitors. The conference offered more than 20 workshops and thematic tracks on adolescent catechesis. Daily Mass was celebrated by several bishops and the sacrament of Reconciliation was offered each day.

The NCCS hosted an information exhibit where we met and spoke with several hundred participants, shared literature, answered questions and held a drawing for Starbucks gift cards. Many of the attendees were involved in the Scouting program and were familiar with the activities of the NCCS. We also made many new friends who expressed interest in Scouting as youth ministry and the many programs and activities offered by NCCS.

Special thanks to Fr. Gerard Gentleman, Fr. Dennis O’Rourke, Bill Davies, Ed Gargiulo, and George Sparks for their efforts in making our exhibit a great success!
Dear Catholic Scouters,

On Saturday January 30th my local diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting had its annual Religious Emblem Award Mass at my parish of Saint Joachim in Costa Mesa, California. Many young people attended so as to receive their religious emblems. The Diocese of Orange Diocesan Chaplain, Deacon Nicholas Sherg, was in his element enthusiastically placing each emblem when the Scout or Venturer presented him or herself.

Catholic Religious Emblems (Light of Christ, Parvuli Dei, Ad Altare Dei, Light is Life, and Pope Pius XII) are the backbone of Catholic Scouting. The blending of these two programs, the Catholic Church with the Boy Scouts of America, contributes to the moral, spiritual and psychological formation of our Catholic youth as they endeavor to be faithful citizens of the greatest nation on God’s green earth.

I have been a Religious Emblem Counselor for Ad Altare Dei and a Facilitator for the Pope Pius XII Programs since 1995 and am so proud of the young people who have earned these religious emblems and their commitment to Scouting and to the Catholic Church. In an age when many young people are walking away from the Church of their youth and many from religion all together, these young Scouts and Venturers are an example of what is great in the Boy Scouts of America and what is exciting within the Catholic Church.

I commend and affirm the dedication and commitment of all Religious Emblem Counselors in the Boy Scouts of America, no matter the faith tradition - for your commitment to Scouting, your faith community and to the young people you minister to in your local communities.

Fr. Mike

Father Michael P. Hanifin
NCCS National Chaplain
(2013-2016)
Scouts from around the Oakland Diocese gathered at the Cathedral of Christ the Light for the annual “Celebration of Scouting.” The “Celebration” included a prayer service, awarding of Catholic Scout Religious Awards, and a special blessing of Scouts and Scout leaders by diocesan Scout Chaplain, Father Neal Clemens.

Catholic Scouts Demonstrate “Faith in Action” In a Variety of Venues around the Country

Each year, Scouts, Webelos, and their families are invited to hike five miles in Old Town San Diego to learn about early California history. This event fills one requirement of the El Camino Real Award, sponsored by the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting.

The annual retreat day offered for all Catholic Scouts of the Archdiocese of New York (Cub Scouts, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and Venturers) took place last November at the Marydell Faith and Life Center in Nyack (just north of the Tappan Zee Bridge). More than 100 scouts attended the day-long event which included prayer, witness talks, the Sacrament of reconciliation, Mass and a service project (shown below).

The "vest" is how the Cub Scouts in Pack 374 Blooming-ton Minn. display the patches they have earned. When the boy joins this pack, he cuts out a felt vest, and gets help sewing it together. As he earns patches, he adds them to his vest. The pack religious coordinator promotes the Rosary patch and the Saints patch programs with the boys and families and has ready copies of the requirements for each. Wearing them on the vest encourages the boys to do more and more.
On a beautiful, sunny yet blustery day last January, one of our own, Brother Ross Chamberland OFM, was ordained a priest by Sean Cardinal O’Malley at St. Anthony Shrine (Arch St.) in downtown Boston. So many of Father Ross’ family and friends participated in this event, that the sacred space was filled to overflowing. The Christmas décor and lively music ensemble added to the festive spirit which pervaded the entire day. Father Ross, as you might imagine, was beaming after “completing” his long road to the altar. The NCCS was well represented with about a dozen members including Jerry Scanlan, Susan Bariball, Dave and Ann Moskal, Fathers Raymond Fecteau, Stephen Salvador, and Leo LeBlanc, among others.

“AD MULTOS ANNOS”

Congratulations to our NCCS Training Committee Advisor
Father Chamberland OFM!
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

There are at least three Scout people who are being considered for sainthood.

**Fr. Jacques Sevin, S.J.** was a French priest of the Society of Jesus who began the French Scout Association, Scouts de France, in 1920. Soon after, he began what is now the International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS). He died in 1951. He was declared Venerable in 2012.

**Stephen Kaszap** was a Hungarian born in 1916. In sixth grade he became a Boy Scout and his studies improved. In his senior year he joined the Jesuit novitiate. He got an infection that caused his death at age 19. Several miraculous cures have been attributed to him. He is being considered for beatification.

**Francis J. Parater** was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1897. He was an active Scout and attained the rank of Eagle. At age 19 he began studying for the diocesan priesthood. He was sent to Rome to continue his studies. There he became sick and died at age 22. A Tribunal has been established to seek his beatification.

Let us keep these men and their causes in our prayers.

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**Recognitions Available to Recognize Dedicated Scouters**

The Golden Ad Altare Dei Award is given to any adult who financially supports, in a significant way, the participation of clergy in NCCS functions. For each award, a minimum donation of $2,500 must be made to the NCCS-operated Golden AAD Fund. This fund is managed and controlled by the Executive Committee of the NCCS. The revenue generated by the fund shall be used to support the activities and attendance of clergy at functions of the NCCS Executive Board. **The donor may choose to designate a recipient other than self to receive this award.** Both the recipient and donor, however, must be at least 21 years of age and of sound moral character.

The Miter Society recognition is given to any adult who financially supports, in a significant way, the promotion of the St. George Trek. For each recognition, a minimum donation of $1,000 must be made to the NCCS-operated St. George Fund. This fund is managed and controlled by the executive committee of the NCCS. The income generated by the trust shall be used to support the St. George Trek. **The donor may choose to honor a recipient other than self with receiving this recognition.** Both the recipient and donor, however, must be at least 21 years of age and of sound moral character.

Further information available at [http://www.nccs-bsa.org/awards/](http://www.nccs-bsa.org/awards/)
Bishop Tells Scouts That Obedience and Service are Important Parts of Scouting


Do good. Share what you have and sacrifice for others. Obey your leaders. As we heard in today's first reading, this is a “how to live well” list that the author of the Letter to the Hebrews writes to the early Christians. Don't they sound familiar? Of course, because they also match the formation of the Catholic Scout, so it is fitting that we reflect on them this morning at our Annual Diocesan Scout Mass!

Yes, the lessons of God are eternal, and from the start, He has asked each of His disciples to do good, to avoid evil and to serve others. All the Scouts here today are blessed to be a part of organizations that incorporate these moral codes into their teaching and activities, just as all the Scout leaders are called to exemplify and instill these values into the young people they serve. By participating in Scouting life, our young people are formed in virtues that will serve them well both as followers of Jesus Christ, and as active and productive citizens of this great nation!

Let us take a closer look at the guidance provided by the author of the Letter to the Hebrews. First, he writes, “Do not neglect to do good.” As Scouts, you are recognized by your goodness. Each of you is called to service, to kindness, to generosity. As Catholic Scouts, you recognize that doing good and avoiding evil is the path to heaven and the means to serving God and others here on earth.

In light of that service, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews says, “...Do not neglect ... to share what you have; God is pleased by sacrifices of that kind.” As Scouts, you are called to share actively with the communities in which you live, including your families, your schools, your fellow Scouts and those you meet through your various service projects. The most common way you will share as Scouts will be in your service to others, and as Jesus teaches us: whenever we serve our brothers and sisters — especially our brothers and sisters in need — we are serving Him. As Scouts, you perform service projects in your communities. But outside of those, what does the service of sharing look like to a young Scout? It may take on many different forms. Perhaps it is helping a little. Perhaps it is helping a little brother or sister with homework, or offering to do the dishes without being asked. Maybe it is praying a rosary for someone who needs God's help, or spending time with a member of your Scout troop that needs a friend, like the new member, or the one who is sometimes ignored by the others. It is through sharing of yourselves, your attention and your gifts that you offer a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord.

Finally, the author of the Letter to the Hebrews gives us this instruction: “Obey your leaders and defer to them, for they watch over you and will have to give an account ...” As Scouts and Scout leaders, you know how important it is to listen and be obedient to your troop leaders, den mothers and others in positions of authority. When scouts are disobedient, it leads to chaos, anxiety, injury and even danger. Yet when Scouts are obedient, things run smoothly and in sync.

As Catholic Scouts, the same obedience holds true when it comes to the Church and the teaching of Our Lord. When we know our Catholic Faith and practice what the Church teaches, that is, when we are obedient to how Jesus instructs and guides us through His Church, we find our lives and our families run more smoothly and in sync. When we don't, there is more chaos, more anxiety, more risk of spiritual danger.

As Scouts, your obedience goes beyond the Church and beyond your scout leaders as well. You are, like all children, called to be obedient to your parents. You did not choose them for yourselves. God chose them for you when He created you, and tasked them with the duty of raising you in the faith that you may be Christian disciples.

Even the young Scouts among us know that we often fail at doing good, sharing and obeying. As disciples of Jesus, though, we know that we are strengthened by the Lord for our journey. In our Gospel account today, Jesus called His disciples aside to rest with Him for a while. Each of us is called to do the same in our busy lives, no matter what our age. Jesus wants to strengthen us by spending time with Him in prayer. At the Mass, He wants to give us His Body and Blood to transform our hearts to be more like His.

Pope Francis recently told a group of Scouts in Italy, “Your Scouting formation is a good training! ... The Christian ... trains to be a good missionary disciple of the Lord Jesus, listening assiduously to His Word, always trusting in Him, who never disappoints, pausing with Him in prayer, seeking to be a living stone in the ecclesial community.” (“Address to Italian Scout Movement for Adults,” Nov. 8, 2014).

As members of our diocesan-wide Catholic Scouting family, may you always seek to love God, to do good, and to serve our neighbor and our nation!

Comments on Servant of God Frank Parater at the Closing of the Annual Scout Mass

Today, we recall the death of Frank Parater, who died in Rome on this very day in 1920. Why do I project him before you as we conclude our annual Scout Mass? Because Frank was a Boy Scout himself, and from the day he enlisted, Scouting was very much a part of his life. He later went on to study for priestly service in the Diocese of Richmond (Remember: We became a diocese in 1974), and he offered his whole life for “the spread and success of the Catholic Church in Virginia.” At the reception downstairs in Burke Hall, prayer cards and a brochure summarizing Frank Parater’s life will be available. Please take these and imitate this fellow-Virginian Scout, who, we pray, one day will be called “Blessed” and eventually “Saint.”
Now is the Time to Register For the “Scouting in the Catholic Church” Training at Philmont

The 2015 “Scouting in the Catholic Church” course is scheduled for July 19 to 25, 2015 at the Philmont Training Center located at the Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico. The 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 youth ministry and how to use the information in their dioceses or eparchies when promoting Catholic Scouting with Scouters, priests, and youth ministers.

The course is structured to explore the four components of lay apostolate formation consisting of leadership, holiness, conversion and worship. In addition, an integral part of this experience is the NCCS' National Catholic Leadership Development for Scouting (NCLD) format of bible readings, reflection, and small-group discussion, which will provide participants with insight as to why a Catholic Scouter is called to the lay apostolate, and how to deliver a NCLD program.

For more information and registration information go to: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/ScoutUnits/ScoutingInTheCatholicChurch.php

Who Should Attend:

- Clergy and religious
- Youth ministers (diocesan and parish)
- NCCS Regional Chaplains and Chairs
- Diocesan/Eparchial and council chaplains and chairs
- Activity chairpersons
- Members of diocesan/eparchial Catholic committees
- Religious emblems counselors
- BSA staff advisers

National Catholic Committee on Scouting
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