NCCS Hosts Catholic Scouts and Scouters for Summer Events at Philmont

By Kathy Polowski

“Sing to the mountains, sing to the sea. Raise your voices, lift your hearts. This is the day the Lord has made. Let all the earth rejoice.”¹ This refrain proved to be a rousing theme for the 2015 Scouting in the Catholic Church course.

Sing to the mountains! The Sangre de Cristo Mountain range extends into the Philmont Scout Ranch in northern New Mexico and names such as Baldy Mountain, Mount Phillips, Cimarroncito, Schaefer’s Peak, Big Red and the Tooth of Time are familiar to trekkers and participants, with the “Tooth” perhaps being being the most famous. What is the Tooth of Time? Historically, it is a landmark along the Santa Fe Trail marking the travel time remaining to Santa Fe. For backpackers and hikers, it is a challenge. For faculty and participants at the Philmont Training Center (PTC), the BSA’s National Volunteer Training Center, the Tooth of Time serves as an inspirational backdrop and reminder that we are in God’s country! This was one of the largest Scouting in the Catholic Church courses ever held with 49 participants, including 5 priests and 4 deacons, coming from Maine to Hawaii.

(continued on page 7)

Nearly 50 Scouters Attend Scouting in the Catholic Church Course

St. George Trek Participants Urged to Commit to Continued Discernment

The Saint George Trek is the NCCS high adventure Catholic leadership program for older Catholic Boy Scouts and Venturers. The program brings Catholic high school youth from around the country together with selected priests, religious and seminarians for eleven days of backpacking in the context of a vocation retreat. The 2015 Saint George Trek began on Wednesday, July 8, 2015 in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where the 78 youth participants met, got to know one another, train, have fun and pray.

Then it was off to Philmont Scout Ranch where they hiked the Sangre de Cristo Range of the Rocky Mountains. While hiking, they experienced a program that is designed to encourage the integration of morality, values, spirituality, faith, scripture and vocation in their lives as young Catholic men and women and take their experiences back to their home dioceses to share with others.

For individual reflections from the participants, see page 5 inside.

Bishop Robert Guglielmone, liaison to USCCB, celebrates a field Mass for the St. George Trek.
BSA Announces Changes to Adult Membership Policies

The following is from the BSA website of July, 2015 (http://scoutingnewsroom.org/blog)

On Monday, July 27, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ratified a resolution that removes the national restriction on openly gay adult leaders and employees. Of those present and voting, 79 percent voted in favor of the resolution. The resolution was recommended for ratification by the Executive Committee earlier that month. The resolution is effective immediately.

Chartered organizations will continue to select their adult leaders and religious chartered organizations may continue to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders, including matters of sexuality. This change allows Scouting’s members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. This change also respects the right of religious chartered organizations to choose adult volunteer leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own.

Moving forward, we will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth, helping them grow into good, strong citizens. By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to accomplish incredible things for young people and

CHAIRMAN’S CORNER

BY EDWARD P. MARTIN

The Boy Scouts of America recently changed its policy on adult leadership (see story on left and NCCS response on page 8). As a result, pastors, bishops and heads of other Catholic chartered organizations in times ahead may have to make difficult decisions about their relationships with the Boy Scouts of America.

As parents, we make similar decisions about our families all the time: To what school should my children go? In what extracurricular activities should they participate? How do I encourage their spiritual development and religious formation? How do I deal with the fact I don’t know all those who may not be a positive influence for my children when I’m not with them? We don’t all make the same decisions but, hopefully, we pray that we make the right ones. We wish the same for our chartered organization executives.

The leadership of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) finds itself in a similar situation in determining how we should move forward. Catholic youth are still allowed to participate in Scouting. Catholic organizations are still able to use Scouting as a program of youth ministry. A review of the mission statement provides guidance: the constructive use of the program of the Boy Scouts of America as a viable form of youth ministry with the Catholic youth of our nation. The NCCS will continue to promote its programs of religious emblems, religious activities, adult training, service recognition and chaplaincy. We will continue to seek ways within the Catholic community to use Scouting as youth ministry and to preserve the experiences Scouting provides.

However, there are some things that will change. The need to find ways to reach Catholic youth not registered in Catholic-chartered organizations just got greater. The importance of our diocesan committees in building relationships within the local Catholic communities and promoting the opportunities available to Catholic Scouts and Scouters to do their “duty to God” just got more important. The time for all of us to live authentic lives of faith just got more urgent.

Pope Francis reminds us that “every Christian is a missionary” and that all of us are called to be “missionary disciples” (Evangelii Gaudium, 120). As Catholic Scouters, we are missionaries among the youth—some Catholic, some not, and some with no church affiliation—in our communities.

We may be the only example of a “religious” person with whom these youth develop a relationship. When we do our best to respond to this call, I believe the Holy Spirit will guide us and bless our efforts. Our future will depend on all of us all doing our duty to God!
Dear Catholic Scouters,

What a summer we had at Philmont Scout Ranch. A few weeks ago we had 49 participants at the Scouting in the Catholic Church. These Catholic Scouters came from the four corners of our nation and including Hawaii. The faculty led by director George Sparks and advisor Father Michael Hanifin, facilitated a fun and instructive week.

July brought the largest group of Saint George Trek participants to the Philmont Scout Ranch. There were eight crews including an all-girl crew led by Benedictine Sisters Theresa (Sister “T”) and Kathy. Many thanks go to the Priest and Seminarian advisors, the “hiking nuns,” and Fathers Gerard Gentleman and Michael Santangelo for their fine and successful effort.

Mass attendance at the Philmont Chapel was high all season long. The crew of Catholic chaplains assembled by Associate National Chaplain, Father Kevin Smith has been impressive. Philmont Catholic Chapel had a seminarian from the Archdiocese of Saint Louis named Cole Bestgen who worked alongside the priest chaplains all summer.

BSA President Robert Gates stated in his May address, “We work with the world we got and not the world that we want.” On July 27th the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America voted to rescind the present Adult Membership Policy that excluded openly homosexual adults from membership in the BSA. That day the NCCS issued its response to the Membership Policy change that can be found on the NCCS website and the NCCS Facebook page. As Robert Gates stated in May, faith based groups have the ability to determine the membership standards for Scout units that meet in their house of worship. The NCCS is confident that the Membership Policy change will have a negligible impact on the present status of Scout units meeting in Catholic churches and institutions.

Fr. Mike

Father Michael P. Hanifin
NCCS National Chaplain
(2013-2016)

The language of the Order of the Arrow grace invokes the poetry of the Pre-Ordeal, Ordeal and Brotherhood ceremonies, and alludes to the four tenets of the ordeal.

The grace acknowledges the rest of sleep, the break of day or daily journey on the trail, or cheerful fellowship about an evening fire or food, and our work to serve others, all for which we are thankful.

NCCS Provides Spiritual Presence At National OA Conference

by Fr. Frank Basa

"It Starts With Us" - This was the theme that inspired 15,000 Scouts on the campus of Michigan State University in East Lansing, MI, August 3-8, as the Order of the Arrow (OA) celebrated "100 Years of Brotherhood and Cheerful Service."

At this National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC), the spiritual presence was provided by Arrowmen Fr. Frank Basa (Akron, Ohio) and Fr. Mark Spring (Fort Madison, Iowa). Both assisted the NCCS Bishop Liaison, Bishop Robert Guglielmone (Charleston, S.C.) with morning Masses and opportunities to see his first NOAC. Joining them was Fr. Steve Arisman (Springfield, Ill.), who provided "Vigil" training sessions to the Arrowmen.
We are now back from the Jamboree. We were hosted by the Japanese Catholic Scouts team. They were a wonderful group, demonstrating faith, courage and welcoming us into their friendship. We were set up in the Faith and Beliefs Zone by the Interreligious Forum. Its goals were achieved; religions were mixed together, close to each other in friendship. We were all in the same kinds of tent, we all ate together in the shared tent, we saw each other pray and went visiting each other.

In the crushing heat, we shared the cool water of the Jamboree and in three days, we built the interreligious ceremony together. I had never seen a ceremony like it, inside or outside Scouting. People quietly said a prayer, read out words of wisdom, or sang a song that meant something to them, the programmes were short and at the end, representatives of ten religions each gave a blessing in their own way to the 15,000 Scouts who were there and who hadn’t budged. We maintained a long, profound wonderful silence, then sang the Jamboree song – which worked really well. For the Catholics, it was the bishop responsible for Scouting who gave the blessing, as is traditional.

On the Sunday, three bishops concelebrated the Jamboree Mass for nearly 3,000 participants. The Mass, which was carefully prepared, exuded Japanese Catholic sensitivity, the university choir was exceptional in its quality and adaptability (passing from Gregorian to Taizé chants) the sensitivity put into the liturgy demonstrated Japanese internal reflection, respect for the presence of God and finesse in the slightest detail. What a wonderful Mass.

Our Catholic team was led by Scott Harvey who put in monumental efforts throughout those long hot days. In addition to the planned activities, he took on the role of representing ICCS because our vice president, Hubert Douampo, could not attend. We owe Scott a particular vote of thanks.

Our President, Bray Barnes, was on site for the period covering our Jamboree Mass and the visit of the Archbishop of Osaka, the Bishop of Yokohama (the bishop responsible for Catholic Scouting in Japan) and the Apostolic Nuncio to Japan and we are grateful to him for attending.

We had three priests in the Faith and Beliefs Zone, including a wonderful young polyglot Dominican who, time and again, saved us when there were problems of comprehension. Several other priests came to lend a hand from Nigeria, Hungary, Italy, France, the UK, Mexico, Portugal and the USA (Fathers Joe Weber and Stephen Salvador).

Two stalwart volunteers from Germany and the USA were there throughout the event particularly supporting the activity in the Catholic tents. The activity based on making rosaries succeeded beyond all expectations. There were twenty participants making rosaries continuously. You couldn’t stop them. They made a thousand and we blessed them on the last day.
Reflections from the 2015 St. George Trek

**Celina Husbands, Venturing Crew 25, Lexington, SC**

“This summer, my life changed. I don’t know if anyone can see it, but I’ve become a different person over the summer. I participated in The St. George Trek. It was the hardest thing I have done in my life. The struggle that I had climbing to the top of Black Mountain and Baldy, reminded me of the struggles of life. However, experiencing Mass at the top of Baldy reminded me of all of God’s promises. It was truly remarkable.”

**Sasha List, Troop 420, Simpsonville, SC**

“I have never really given much thought about how often priests are required to pray. Several times during the Trek I was given the opportunity to join Father and a seminarian as they said their morning and evening prayers. At first I wondered how the priests could pray three times a day, but I began to realize how calming it could be. No matter if I joined in the morning or evening, I felt a sense of peace afterward. By giving my worries and stress to God I found He would help me get through anything. I experienced how empowering prayer can be. Practicing regular prayer might not be easy, but it is sure worth it.”

**Ilya Watson, Troop 20, Mt. Pleasant, SC**

“I knew it offered challenging opportunities for high adventure and hiking. Some of the great moments for me were looking out from the Tooth of Time, climbing Mt. Baldy at sun rise and having Adoration at Camp Cimarroncito. It was an honor to be able to serve sunrise Mass with Bishop Guglielmone. This Trek was a once in a life time experience for me and I am very glad that I was chosen to be a part of it. One treasure that I received as a member of the Trek was a Crucifix depicting the Trinity. I wear it faithfully and treasure the memories of all my Catholic Scouting friends.”

**Max Watson, Troop 20, Mt. Pleasant, SC**

“My Crew advisor, Father Adam Rust from Memphis, was an amazing priest who was willing to talk about anything. He helped encourage me on my Trek and I could not have asked for a better priest to have shares the adventure. I had trained a little for the Trek but nothing prepared me for Philmont. I was very tired after every day. I just prayed that God would give me the strength to get up and keep going. John "Jake" Magee, the seminarian, was a laid back kind of guy. He was a great role model for the members of the crew. The St. George Trek gave me an opportunity to look deep within myself and discern a vocation. Even just sitting down and meditating on the day was good. St. George’s Trek was a life changing experience. The beautiful sunrise in the morning with all sorts of different colors, to the wind rushing around me on the trail, all just lifted my spirits in a way no other place ever has. I was in God’s country and I did not want to leave.”
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

The Holy Father is visiting America this fall. Back in August of 1993 Pope John Paul II came to Denver for World Youth Day, the first ever held in the United States. NCCS helped host that visit.

In coordination with the Bishops Conference and the ICCS, Fr. Joe Carroll and Bob Oldowski made various arrangements to promote and host Scouts from around the world who would be attending. They secured the St. Thomas Seminary for the Scouts, walking distance midway between the downtown venues and the site of the closing Mass. The participating Scouts could camp out on the grounds or stay in the seminary dorms. Youth from Europe often participate as provisional Scout units.

Initially the plan was to host Scouts and other campers at the local Air Force Base, Jamboree style. National BSA offered assistance in this planning, but the Colorado Congresswoman eventually denied use of the base.

The week began with a series of workshops and spiritual activities. Fr. Bob Guglielmone and Fr. Leo LeBlanc assisted with specific theme activities for the Scouts and Guides. On-site assistance was provided by Fr. Nick Rachford and Fr. Ron Walters.

The event closed with the Papal Outdoor Mass in Cherry Creek State Park. Security was of the utmost importance. More than 500,000 participated during the five-day event.

What’s New in the Religious Emblems Programs?
By
Harvey Carter
Emblems Chairperson

Over the past year the Emblems Committee has been busy with several important projects.

**Ad Altare Dei**, now that our young ladies of Venturing can earn the Ad Altare Dei the manual has been updated to reflect these changes. The new manual reflects all of the updates needed to make the program more interesting and exciting for all Scouts that meet the eligibility requirements.

**Religious Emblem Reference Manual** has been updated for the first time since 2005. The updated Reference Manual is very useful for anyone who is involved with presenting the Ad Altare Program to our Scouting Youth. This manual is designed to help a Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting to set up an Emblems Committee, train counselors and make the Emblems program fun and exciting for our Scouting Youth. It also is a very handy tool for counselors who are presenting the program. This manual can be downloaded free at: [http://nccs-bsa.org/pdf/NCCS_RERM_July_2015.pdf](http://nccs-bsa.org/pdf/NCCS_RERM_July_2015.pdf).

**Pius XII** is in the process of being updated and refreshed. This refresh is hoped to be completed this year. There will be no major changes to the material or requirements. The Emblems Committee only wants to refresh the material and bring it up to date with the current Church’s teachings.

**Cub Scouts Emblems** are being looked at and the Emblem Committee hope’s to get them refreshed over the next few years. As we are all aware the Cub Emblems are designed to be worked on as a family project and it is the Emblems Committee hope to make these programs easier by offering more helps for the parents or guardians to go through the requirements with their Cubs and help them learn more about their faith. You can now find parent guides online at the following sites:


**How Can You Help?** Yes, the Emblems Committee needs your help. We are always looking for fresh and new ideas to make all of the Emblems programs more exciting and fun for our Scouting Youth and help them grow closer to Christ through Scouting. How can you help? First by submitting your emblem evaluations forms once you have completed the program with your Scouts. The best way to submit these forms is online at : [http://nccs-bsa.org/survey/index.php](http://nccs-bsa.org/survey/index.php). If you do not have Internet access please mail in the form found in back of the book to the address given on the form. Second please feel free to email the Emblems Chairperson, Harvey Carter at harve2@comcast.net with any suggestions or concerns.
They gathered at the Philmont Training Center from July 19-25, to enjoy a week of friendship and fellowship, and to learn strategies to implement Catholic Scouting in their home dioceses.

Faculty members for this year’s conference included Course Director George Sparks, Course Advisor Fr. Michael Haniffin, Deacon Tommy Watts, Roselito de los Reyes, Elizabeth Romero-Coca and Kathy Polowski. It was a pleasure to serve with each and every faculty member! God was with us from the very first day when we went outside to gaze at the Tooth of Time and the beautiful green, wildflower-filled meadows and yes, we did sing to the mountains, praising God!

We had the pleasure of visiting with Ed Martin, Bishop Robert Guglielmone our USCCB liaison, Padre (aka Bishop Emeritus Gerald A. Gettellfinger of the Diocese of Evansville, Indiana), Fr. Gerard Gentleman, Fr. Mike Santangelo, Fr. Don Hummel and Fr. Kevin Smith. We also enjoyed a trek or two to familiar Philmont sites including the infamous St. James Hotel.

Faculty members facilitated discussion and presented materials related to the four components of adult faith formation—leadership, holiness, conversion and worship. This was accomplished through the National Catholic Leadership Development (NCLD) program with additional presentations on related catechism topics, the NCCS Mission, Structure and Programs, and methods for using Scouting as youth ministry.

Through involvement in the course activities and thoughtful group discussion and sharing, participants became more knowledgeable and made new friends in the process.

There were many memorable moments during the week at Philmont including watching the mini-bears scamper about and the newborn fawns frolic on the lawn. Witnessing the beautiful rays of the sunrise from Lover’s Leap or singing “Morning Has Broken” at the PTC Interfaith Chapel was inspiring. Many enjoyed cowboy night and horseback riding for the first time in the shadow of the Tooth. Who could forget a trip to Cimarron for soft ice cream at Cree-Me or cobbler in East Tent City on a cool evening? Many memories were created at the Craft Lodge and campfire programs. Listening to the 78 youth from the St. George Trek share their testimonies about their experiences in the backcountry and their renewed faith in God was uplifting. Sharing in the Holy Eucharist, praying for a safe journey for inbound and outbound crews at Mass each evening and the health of our own SiCC participants as a faith community were poignant moments. Gazing upon the beautiful crucifix in the Catholic Chapel is a memory to last a lifetime.

I always come away from the SiCC experience with renewed energy and a firm commitment to support our scouts and scouters and work with our youth to help them discover and affirm their faith in God. This inspiration comes from the participants, faculty, chaplains, fellow scouters and the beauty of God’s country. I love this place... the mountains and the people that are Philmont and Scouting in the Catholic Church!

Congratulations to Fr. Leo LeBlanc, current Region1 Chaplain and past National and International Chaplain, for being named a Distinguished Eagle Scout.

NCCS Membership Initiative Continues with New Unit Growth Reported

By John Anthony
NCCS Membership Chair

The membership initiative plan of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting was released in July of 2014. Now, more than one hundred and twenty seven dioceses have committed to participate in the initiative. Just in this year, more than seventy new chartered partners have been organized by Knights of Columbus Councils and Catholic Schools.

Once of the new units is Pack 4067 chartered to St. George Catholic Church in Van Buren, Mo. in the Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau. This new Pack is in a town with a population of just three hundred and eighty, but according to Sheryl Shepherd, committee chairman, the pack of twenty-six boys has been working hard this summer on their rank advancements at their den meetings. This rural pack has reached out to the surrounding towns to include all boys of various faiths, thanks to Michael Dineen, district executive.

Catholic Committee on Scouting Chairman Patrick Sweeney expressed his gratitude that that Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr. an Eagle Scout from Knoxville, Tenn., has been supportive of this effort.

How can your diocese be a part of this initiative? Look at new charter opportunities with parish youth groups, Knights of Columbus, Knights of Peter Claver and other fraternal groups. Check out college Neuman Centers, fraternities and even seminaries.

In doing this, you shouldn’t ignore existing units –help them to grow and become centers of Catholic youth ministry.

This initiative continuous through 2017. If your diocese has not made a commitment or would like more information, go to the NCCS website at http://www.nccs-bsa.org/pdf/InitiativeGuidebook2014Revision1.pdf or contact John Anthony at jacataka@gmail.com
NCCS STATEMENT ON BSA ADULT MEMBERSHIP RESOLUTION

On Monday, July 27, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ratified a resolution stating that no adults can be denied registration as employees or non-unit-serving volunteers of the Boy Scouts of America “on the basis of sexual orientation.”

The resolution also affirms the chartered organization’s right to select its unit leaders based on its religious principles, rejects any interference with that right, and provides that local Scout councils will not interfere with chartered organizations’ rights in this regard. It is not entirely clear how these rights will be squared with previous policy changes the Boy Scouts have made, or how they will work in practice, but it appears that the resolution respects the needs of Catholic chartered organizations in the right to choose leaders whose character and conduct are consistent with those of Catholic teaching. At the same time, we express strong concern about the practical implications of this resolution, especially for our young people in Scouting, and whether the term “sexual orientation” will be correctly understood and applied only in reference to sexual inclination and not to sexual conduct or behavior. We also express concern that the resolution articulates a position on adult sexual conduct that does not make clear that sexual behavior should be reserved to a husband and a wife in marriage. The concerns here also join the previous considerations communicated about the change in membership standards (see FAQs at www.nccs-bsa.org/mbrstd/, including FAQ #23 which pertains to BSA adult membership).

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting recognizes that differences in religious beliefs among chartered organizations and society in general have played a part in the creation of this resolution. While this fluctuating situation will be increasingly challenging, we recognize the vital importance of providing a Catholic emphasis to Catholic Scouts and Scouters seeking ways to live out their “duty to God.”

We also recognize the increasing need for the Catholic Church to offer Scouting as a program of youth ministry. Chartering Scout units will ensure that youth within their faith communities are led by faith-filled role models who share the same interests in Scouting. If you are like us, you joined Scouting to make a difference in the lives of others. Our youth don’t want to leave Scouting. Catholic Scouters like you are still very much needed. Let’s continue this important journey together and pray for the future of Scouting! Thank you for all you do to promote Scouting as Catholic youth ministry! We will keep you updated as further information becomes available.

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