New Development training set for February at BSA’s Florida Sea Base

By
Mark Kramer
Training Committee Chairman

So you’ve completed the NCCS Fast Start training and you are hungry to learn more about the various roles within the local diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting. Perhaps you have even asked yourself “What is the role of the diocesan committee? How does it operate?” Or, you may have even deeper questions such as what is our mission within the diocese and how do we measure success?

Wouldn’t it be great to have a training course that would answer these and similar type questions? And wouldn’t it be even better if such a course could be held in the doldrums of winter? Perhaps even a warm and exotic location that will allow you to escape chilly weather for a few days in February? Well, how about the Boy Scout’s Sea Base in the Florida Keys from Tuesday, Feb. 21 to Saturday, Feb. 25, 2017?

That is the date and location of the new NCCS pilot training “Organizing a Successful Diocesan Committee” which will pick up where the training course “Scouting in the Catholic Church” leaves off. If you are new to Catholic Scouting, a member of a diocesan committee on Scouting, or a veteran Catholic Scouter and you want to learn how to organize a successful diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting, this is the course for you.

The structure of the course builds off adult learning principles where, in addition to classical lectures and discussion on topics, the course builds off the participant’s experiences. The course will provide a general overview of the organizational structure of a diocese and discuss the best practices on how a Catholic committee can work with, and within, the local diocesan structure. It will investigate what committee structure has proven to work best for executing the programs of the committee and much more.

Come for the information and stay for the weather. You’ll have time to stretch your legs on Thursday afternoon during our scheduled “day off” where you have the opportunity to visit the area or just relax.

The course is scheduled to run from Tuesday, Feb. 21 through Saturday, Feb. 25. There are two options for registering for this conference.

The first is to pay a fee of $400, which includes a room at the Sea Base’s motel accommodations located at the Thomas Building on the BSA Sea Base (based on double occupancy).

The second option is to register for $200 and find your own accommodations. Note that both options include all meals, snacks, meeting facilities and of course, course materials. In addition, please be aware that because of the Sea Base schedule, any early or late departure may require you to find off-site accommodations.

You can contact the Training Committee Chairman, Mark Kramer, at dccoscf.kramer@gmail.com or you can call him at (202) 765-6204. If you would like to register, please contact the NCCS office at NCCS@scouting.org.
Youth Ministry and the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (SiCC) Conference

It was my pleasure to spend a few days at the Scouting in the Catholic Church (SiCC) conference at the Philmont Training Center. The conference staff consisted of Ben Feril, Director; Fr. Joe Powers, Course Advisor; Carroll Brennan, Deacon Leo Ferguson, Ed Martin and Elizabeth Olivas, all of whom did an outstanding job delivering the course material. I congratulate the staff of the 2016 SiCC conference for their excellent work.

During the course, questions arose regarding the relationship between the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and the Knights of Columbus. There are still misunderstandings of the decision made by the Knights of Columbus last November. The complete article, which is quite lengthy, by Supreme Knight Carl Anderson outlining their decision can be found at: http://www.kofc.org/en/columbia/supreme_knight/fromthesk_20150112.html. The key points referencing parish youth ministry start 13 paragraphs from the end of the article. If you are still unclear about our relationship with the Knights of Columbus I would strongly encourage you to read the nine paragraphs starting with the sentence: “Second our Building the Domestic Church While Strengthening Our Parish initiative requires that our parish-based councils move toward greater integration into the life of our parishes.” It is important that we support our local Knights of Columbus councils in their efforts to transfer units to the local parishes.

Our NCCS Training Committee, under the leadership of Chairman Mark Kramer and Adviser Fr. Ross Chamberland has been working very hard on a new NCCS training opportunity: Organizing a Successful Diocesan Catholic Committee to be held at the BSA’s Florida Sea Base Conference Center, February 21 – 25, 2017. Look for details on the front page of this issue of The Bridge.

If you have ever wondered about the long-term impact on youth of our Religious Emblems program, make sure that you read the article about the Yancey brothers on page 4 of this issue of The Bridge.

The Boy Scouts of America are gearing up for the 2017 National Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in southern West Virginia. Nearly 40,000 Scouts, Venturers, volunteers and Scouting staff from all over the country are expected to descend upon the Jamboree site for one big celebration of Scouting.

The National Jamboree is held every four years and is a chance to camp out with friends, meet new friends and try out high-adventure activities, learn new skills and enjoy the out of doors. The Summit Bechtel Reserve is the permanent location of the National Jamboree in West Virginia. The National Jamboree setting has seen many upgrades and improvements since the 2013 National Jamboree.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has been charged with providing Jamboree Chaplains to serve the Catholic Scouts and Scouters. Jamboree Chaplain duties include celebrating Mass in the subcamps, hearing confessions, visiting the injured and hospitalized and providing the Sacrament of the Sick. The highlight of the National Jamboree will be the Camp-wide Mass with an expected 10,000 Catholics participating.

Catholic priests in good standing with their religious community or (arch) dioceses are needed. Staying the entire 10 days is required. You must be in good health and there is a registration fee that will be reimbursed after the National Jamboree is over. To learn more about the event you can visit the National Jamboree website at http://www.summitbsa.org/events/jamboree/volunteers. If you are interested in joining the National Jamboree Chaplain staff please contact Father Michael Hanifin, at the following email: fr.hanifin@oc.rcbo.org.

Chaplains needed to support National BSA Jamboree in 2017

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.

NCCS Chairman: George Sparks
NCCS Chaplain: Father Kevin Smith
Chair, Marketing and Public Relations: Margaret Matarese
Advisor, Marketing and Public Relations: Father Roger LaChance
Editor: Mike Gannon
NCCS Webmaster: Roselito de los Reyes

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.
Dear Catholic Scouters,

I hope you had an enjoyable and restful summer. I want to thank so many of you for your best wishes and prayers during my surgery and I am happy to report everything went so smoothly that I was able to get out to Philmont this summer and catch the end of the Catholic Conference and spend a couple of weeks as a Philmont Chaplain. Thank you to all who made the conference successful.

Next summer we will be in need of priests to serve as Chaplains or Advisors for three major events: The Jamboree, The St. George Trek and the Philmont Chaplaincy. These programs overlap with each other so we are going to try very hard to fully staff each of these events but we need your help. If you know of a priest or seminarian who would be interested, please place them in touch with us. The sooner the better. Please ask the priest first before you submit his name to us.

Thank you for your attention to this important ministry.

Peace and Prayers,

Fr. Kevin

This past July, twenty-three Catholic Scouters, including three priests, came from New Hampshire to California, and all points in between and converged at the Philmont Training Center to attend the 2016 Scouting in the Catholic Church conference. As in previous years, the faculty and participants were graced with beauty of the Sangre de Cristo mountain range that snakes through the Philmont Scout Ranch, as well as Philmont’s inspirational landmark, the Tooth of Time, that serves as a constant reminder that we were all “in God’s country.”

From July 24-30, the conference faculty and participants gathered in fellowship and learned that Scouting is indeed “Youth Ministry”! The week was filled with prayer, networking, and the sharing of ideas to implement strategies back in their home dioceses. Faculty members for this year’s conference included Ben Feril as Course Director, Fr. Joe Powers as Course Advisor, Deacon Leo Ferguson, Carroll Brennan, and Elizabeth Olivas, the NCCS Program Administrator. George Sparks, the NCCS National Chair, Mark Waple, the NCCS Staff Advisor, and Fr. Kevin Smith, the NCCS National Chaplain visited with the participants and provided updates on ongoing NCCS initiatives and all participated in a question and answer session.

During the week, the faculty moderated group discussions focusing on the conference topics that included Faith Formation, Catechism, NCCS Mission and Programs, Youth Ministry, and “My Mission”, a presentation on how the participants could take many elements of what they learned and develop a project that will benefit their diocese and allow them to earn the coveted Jerusalem Cross.

The day began in the classroom with a morning prayer and ended each evening with celebration of daily Mass at the “ranch site,” celebrated by Fr. Don Hummel and Fr. Ray Fecteau. The group shared in the Holy Eucharist and prayed for the outbound crews who were eager to begin their treks. They also celebrated the accomplishments of the returning crews, whose Scouts and leaders, although a bit tired, stood a lot taller because of their achievements.

Philmont has always been a place that transforms Scouts, Scouters, and family members alike. A participant noted that her week at Philmont enabled her to “recharge her batteries” and get “charged up” again. That’s the beauty of “God’s country.”

It provides all who experience Philmont with inspiration grounded with new leadership tools and a network of fellow Scouters. For the faculty and participants of the 2016 Scouting in the Catholic Church, it was an extraordinary faith building experience that enabled all to renew their commitment to Scouting as Youth Ministry.
Young people have been known to lose things – Scout leaders have heard enough off-key renditions of “I’m a Little Teapot” to attest to that. It’s also not rare for adults to have lost track of items that meant a lot to them when they were in elementary school. It is unusual, however, when an adult wants to replace a Scouting award earned in the early 1960s.

I recently received an email from Gerald Yancey. He and his brother, Michael, were awarded the *Ad Altare Dei* Catholic Scouting religious emblem in 1961, and he was hoping it would be possible for them to obtain replacements. To substantiate their having earned the awards, he sent a picture of themselves in full uniform with their *Ad Altare Dei* and Eagle Scout medals.

Touched that the awards meant so much to them after all these years, I asked Archbishop Wilton Gregory if he could re-present their awards to them. While making the arrangements, I had the opportunity to speak with Gerald and he shared more of his family’s history. Their grandfather, Arturo Yancey, was presented the *Pro Ecclesia et Pontifice* Award by Pope John XXIII. After graduating from St. Paul of the Cross Elementary School in Atlanta, Gerald and Michael were the first African-Americans to attend Marist School, a local Catholic college prep school. Michael went on to Harvard and Duke University School of Medicine and recently retired after 41 years as a neurosurgeon. Gerald earned a degree from Georgetown before going on to Harvard Law School and the University of Pennsylvania Medical School. Despite being slowed by Lambert-Eaton Syndrome, a neuromuscular disease, he continues to serve as a medical-legal consultant.

It was my honor to meet the Yancey brothers and be there as the Archbishop presented their medals at a ceremony at St. George Village Chapel in Roswell, Georgia.
Charleston and Savannah Dioceses sponsor Bishop England trek to promote vocations

Last year on the St. George Trek, Charleston Bishop (and Bishop Liaison to the NCCS) Robert Gugliemone, challenged Father Jason Adams, Region 14 and Diocese of Savannah chaplain, Father Matthew Gray, Diocese of Charleston chaplain, and Father Giovannie Nunez, C.R.M. a religious priest of the Adorno Fathers to start the Bishop England Trek (BET) in the off years. BET is a collaborative effort of the Diocese of Charleston and the Diocese of Savannah. The BET is patterned after the St. George Trek. It seeks to promote vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life among young Scouts.

Father Gio said “the BET offers a unique experience of prayer, discernment, and response to God’s call in one’s life. Mass is celebrated on the trail, confessions are heard, counseling, praying and talking casually with priests, sharing vocation stories and seminary life are just few priceless moments on this trek.”

On June 12, 2016, all participants gathered in Spartanburg, S.C. for final preparation. Mass was offered and Fr. Pablo Magione, Vocation Director of the Diocese of Savannah came to give a talk on vocations and how this trek is so important to them. He compared this trek to a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey to a holy place to experience God and grow in spiritual life. Each participant received a cross, a sign that each one would take this trek as a personal pilgrimage to grow closer to God.

On the trail, Scouts had the opportunity to learn so much about life. The difficult terrain, exhaustion, dehydration, and fatigue are part of life’s tests. Every obstacle on the trail that one managed to overcome speaks a lot about life’s trails in overcoming sin and temptation. Looking at the horizon to see the beauty and grandeur of God’s creation, one can’t help but respond with great admiration for God’s creating power.

The first BET ended on Saturday June 18, 2016 with a Mass at base camp at Oconee State Park. The parents came to share the joy and success of this first expedition. Certificates of completion and neckerchiefs were given and the hope for the Scouts to join the St. George Trek 2017 was ignited.

In his homily, Bishop Bob reminded the Scouts to continue to listen to God’s call in their life, ever present in the silence of one’s heart.

He reminded them that 50 miles or 30 miles of trekking in five days have their own difficulty. Life’s lesson learned on how to persevere and not to give up. One may fall three times, sprain an ankle, get sick but the virtue of perseverance keeps that hope alive to finish the pilgrimage.

He closed by noting, “It takes so much humility also for one to acknowledge difficulties on the trail and either pull off the trail or stop for rest to regain strength. An act of charity is shown when one stumbles and can not walk. Charity indeed begins at home, but when we realize we are on the same pilgrimage in this world, we see the need of helping others.”

Bishop Bob was pleased with the success of this first Trek. At the culmination Mass, he recalled the time when he first started the Saint George Trek at Philmont Scout Ranch. He said it was his dream for it to be national and that all dioceses would send Catholic Scouts to this national gathering. It was a success! He expressed his hope that BET or some similar activity will also be implemented in every Diocese to promote vocations to priesthood and consecrated life.

For further information on Catholic Scouting go to the NCCS website:
http://www.nccs-bsa.org/
Or on Facebook at:
https://www.facebook.com/nccs-bsa/
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

For a dozen years beginning in 1934, the BSA issued ribbon bars to be worn on the uniform to represent the medals for recognitions such as Eagle Scout, Silver Beaver, and Scouter’s Training Award. This was offered for regular uniform wear, much like the military bars. These could be worn on the uniform for hiking and camping trips in place of the medal which could be easily soiled or lost. In 1946 after World War II the BSA introduced the cloth knots and the ribbon bars were discontinued.

The Catholic Committee on Scouting also offered a ribbon bar pin to signify the Ad Altare Dei. The 1944 Chaplains Bulletin notes that the committee authorized such a bar pin which could be ordered by (only) the diocesan Scout Chaplain at a cost of 50 cents, postpaid, from 2 Park Avenue, New York City.

Religious Emblems Committee to review existing Cub Scout Religious Emblems

by
Bill Guglielmi
Religious Emblem Committee

The Religious Emblem Committee is hard at work executing its responsibility to develop, monitor, evaluate, and promote the use of the religious emblem program at all levels of Scouting. Priorities for 2016 are centered on two major efforts; the publishing of the newly adopted Pope Pius XII Workbook and the completion of an Ages and Programs study. Additionally, ongoing initiatives such as current online Ad Altare Dei Emblem prototypes and locally adopted younger Cub Scout programs will continue to be assessed.

The new Pope Pius XII Workbook has received final approval and is in the final stages of publication preparation. While I would like to be able to provide a concrete publication date, I am unable to do so at this time. The intricacies of bringing such an effort to completion prevent me from being so exact. We remain hopeful that the Workbook will be available before the end of this year but I make no promises.

The Religious Emblem Committee has established, at the request of our National Catholic Committee Chair, an Ages and Programs Task Force to undertake a review of the existing Cub Scout Religious Emblem programs. This Task Force, chaired by Bill Jenkins of the Diocese of Pittsburgh’s Catholic Committee on Scouting, is chartered to look at the Cub Emblems and study whether they are appropriate in terms of age and program content within the confines of the current Cub Scout and Webelos programs. The assessment will consider, but not be limited to, determining whether the existing emblems meet the needs of Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos participants.

The Task Force is free to consider whether the requirements are too easy, too difficult, etc…. for each of the ages and whether or not any adjustments are needed. The Ad Altare Dei is also included in the Task Force’s mandate in case the study detects potential breakdowns in the Webelos to Boy Scout transition.

Programs Task Force will not look at the Lion Pilot Program. We will be establishing a different Task Force to look at this program as more information becomes available from the Boy Scouts of America. I have asked the group to make its final report in April 2018.

Our Committee remains fully committed to supporting the National Catholic Committee on Scouting’s mission to make “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.”

REMINDER
All Scout units chartered by The Knights of Columbus must be transferred to parishes by December 31, 2016 or they will be dropped from the rolls.
See the Chairman’s Column on page two of this issue for the details.
Make plans now to join fellow Scout Chaplains, Scouters and spouses in Reno, Nevada, for the 2017 Annual Meetings of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting for a weekend conference. The local diocesan committee of Reno is very excited about being our host committee working and with the NCCS Conference Committee. There will be meetings of our national standing committees, regional leaders, Advisory and Executive Boards, etc., as well as opportunities to interface with Catholic Scouters and Chaplains from Archdioceses, Dioceses and Eparchies from around the country.

**Make your travel plans!** The Executive Committee and several standing committee meetings, registration, and the Trading Post begin on Thursday afternoon, April 27th, and the opening Mass is at 6:15 PM. Advisory Board meetings are on Friday morning, April 28th, and Saturday morning, April 29th. Region leaders meet on Friday morning & afternoon, April 28th. Standing Committees meet again on Friday afternoon, April 28th, and Saturday afternoon, April 29th. A Saturday Vigil Mass for the 3rd Sunday of Easter will take place at the hotel, followed by a reception and our Annual Banquet. The Executive Board meets on Sunday morning, April 30th, and Region 11 plans to conduct a convocation and training program on Sunday morning and afternoon, April 30th, and the Executive Committee also meets on Sunday afternoon, April 30th.

**Airlines** serving the Reno-Tahoe International Airport include *Alaska Airlines, Allegiant Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Jet Blue, Southwest Airlines, and United Airlines*. We understand some of our members already planning to have a rental car have found it will be more economical for them to book their round-trip air travel to/from Sacramento, and enjoy the scenic 2 hour 15 minute drive to/from Reno via I-80.

**Our Conference Hotel!** Our group room rate at the Peppermill Resort Spa Casino ([https://www.peppermillreno.com/resort/](https://www.peppermillreno.com/resort/)) will be either $69 or $89 per night. The $89 rooms are in the tower (Peppermill Tower) directly above our conference meeting rooms, and the $69 rooms are in a 2-story wing (Peppermill North/West) connected to our conference meeting area via an enclosed corridor. While as well-appointed as the $89 rooms, the $69 rooms are smaller. And the hotel offers registered conference participants who are also registered guests at the conference hotel with complimentary airport shuttle service! (*Our rate is good 3 nights prior/after the official conference dates, based on availability*). Hotel self-parking is complimentary, and in-room internet access will be complimentary. The Peppermill features 11 dining locations on site to fit any taste and budget, as well as shops with gifts and men’s and women’s clothing. Groceries and pharmacies are within several blocks from the hotel. Look for a custom room reservations link at the NCCS website in December.

**Conference registration** information will be available VERY SOON on our website at [www.nccs-bsa.org](http://www.nccs-bsa.org). See you in Reno in April 2017!
Quality Diocese Award ensures excellence in Catholic Scouting Programs

It’s more than a patch! For the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS), “Scouting is Youth Ministry” program is delivered at the (Arch) diocesan level and eparchies of the Eastern Catholic Church. After all, at the local level, religious emblems are promoted to Catholic families and Scouting youth members, and vocation programs and retreats take place. For Region and Diocesan Chairs, the Quality Diocese Award is an excellent tool to measure their progress year after year.

The goal of the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting is to promote and achieve a quality Catholic Scouting program. The program is an opportunity for the NCCS to recognize dioceses during the calendar year who have delivered exceptional programs to youth members at all levels of the Boy Scouts of America (Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring). Equally important, the application itself is a leadership and management tool. The Diocesan Catholic Committees on Scouting are encouraged to use the application to evaluate their level of effort in accomplishing their goals and if needed, to make necessary improvements and to focus leadership to those areas. Finally, local Catholic Committees on Scouting are encouraged to utilize the application as an important tool when planning annual activities and establishing goals for the upcoming year. Quality programs for all of our youth members is what the NCCS continually seeks, and it all happens at diocesan level.

What is the process? The Chair of the diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting will work with the committee to complete the application. Once the application is completed, forward it to the Regional Chair between December 1st and March 15th. The Regional Chair will review the application and forward it to the Vice-Chair of Regions for processing. If approved, a certificate and two free patches will be sent to the Region Chair for his/her signature before forwarding to the (arch) diocesan chair.

It is strongly encouraged that the Quality Diocese Award certificate be presented to the Cardinal, Archbishop, or Bishop of the diocese at a suitable ceremony. Additional patches can be ordered by contacting the NCCS Program Assistant at nccs@scouting.org Information on the Quality Diocese Award can be found on the NCCS web site: http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/awards/quality-diocese-award. Contact your Regional Chairman with any questions.