Theme: Duty to God—Duty to Scouting

World Scout Interreligious Symposium co-hosted by NCCS

By Phil Krajec

The 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium was held at the Seminary of the Immaculate Conception in Huntington, New York, January 27-29. Rabbi Peter Hyman and former NCCS Chair Bray Barnes were the co-chairs, along with NCCS Vice-Chair Jerry Scanlan serving as Logistics Coordinator.

The theme of the symposium was Duty to God - Duty to Scouting. The goal of the program was to develop materials and strategies to assist Scouts and leaders in understanding Duty to God as a core value of Scouting.

More than 100 participants representing nearly every major faith from more than 40 different countries on six continents took part in workshops and discussion breakouts on topics as Interreligious Dialog, Duty to God in the 21st Century, Scouting as a Value Driven Organization, Scouting as Change Agent, and Religious Diversity and cultural Unity.

NCCS Chairman, George Sparks, was one of the lead speakers and spoke on spiritual and religious development as a part of the Boy Scouts of America organization.

NCCS Chairman, George Sparks

Keynote speaker for Saturday's luncheon was Bishop Robert Guglielmine, USCCB Episcopal Liaison to NCCS. Bishop Bob spoke eloquently about the legacy of Lord Baden-Powell and the importance of remaining true to the founder's vision of Duty to God as a component of Scouting. The luncheon also featured a presentation on the 24th World Scout Jamboree by Executive Director Marty Walsh and Jamboree Co-chair Scott Sorrels. Saturday Mass was offered by International Catholic Conference of Scouting, World Chaplain Father Jacques Gagey of France.

The Mass on Sunday was celebrated by NCCS Chaplain Father Kevin Smith, joined by priests from Belgium, Portugal, Uganda, France, South Korea and England as concelebrants.

Despite the significance of the symposium's mission, it was not all work. On Saturday evening, participants were treated with an impressive performance by the Medicine Wheel Dancers from the Lenapehoking Lodge of the Order of the Arrow. There was opportunity for friendship and fellowship as well, at meal time and at late-night discussions featuring refreshments and laughter with new friends.

In all, it was an amazing gathering of diverse leaders united by a Duty to God and a desire to create a better world through Scouting.

Lenapehoking Lodge of the Order of the Arrow Medicine Wheel Dancers
Youth Protection sessions help Scout leaders stay responsive to best practices

By Mark Kramer
Training Chair

Last October, the Boy Scouts of America hosted a symposium for youth protection practitioners from both national and international youth serving organizations. NCCS participated in the event to stay relevant and responsive to the best practices in the field of youth protection.

During the two-day symposium there were many instances to see the positive work being accomplished by those working youth protection issues within youth serving organizations. There is much more work to be accomplished in broadening our focus beyond sexual abuse to other modes of victimization. While NCCS isn’t a policy making body, it has the ability to sustain and strengthen the relationship between the BSA and the Catholic Church, and through its cooperative relationship with the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry and various other groups involved in youth ministry in the United States, we CAN influence policy. It is through our cooperative energy that we can make a difference and affect positive results in youth protection NOW and in the future.

Whether you are a BSA Unit Youth Protection Champion, Diocesan/Parish VIRTUS facilitator, Unit Key 3, or a concerned parent, the protection and safety of our youth is paramount. Communication and education of a broader spectrum of youth protection issues, faced by youth serving organizations, has diversified to include recognizing and dealing with bullying and newer terms such as polyvictimization. While there is evidence that supports the decline of sexual abuse in youth serving organizations there is still much work for all of us to protect the most vulnerable among us.

If you would like for information on the lectures please visit:

www.nationalyouthprotectionsymposium.org/2016_resources/

As I write this column for the Spring Bridge I am participating in the 5th World Scout Interreligious Symposium being held at Immaculate Conception Seminary in Huntington, Long Island, New York. There are approximately 120 participants from all around the world representing many faith traditions: Sikh, Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Catholic, Jewish, Orthodox Christian, and Hinduism.

The focus was on interreligious dialogue and the many ways the international Scouting community works with the various faith groups. I was asked to make a presentation on how the BSA’s Religious Relationships Committee can get 42 different faith traditions and religious denominations to work together. This is a concept which is not understood by many Scout Associations around the world. The essence of my remarks was that it is accomplished by hard work and mutual respect. In all this was a great event.

Our Scouting in the Catholic Church Conference is scheduled for the week of July 16th to the 22nd at the Philmont Training Center. This conference focuses on the mission and programs of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS), but also involves them in adult faith formation and an understanding of the concept of Scouting as a youth ministry. It is designed for any adult interested in using Scouting as a program for Catholic youth ministry such as Scout chaplains, clergy, (arch) diocesan or parish youth ministers, council, diocesan, regional and national Catholic Committee leadership and members.

The course director is Kathy Polowski and she has an excellent staff consisting of Kathy Polowski, Rev. Mark Carr, Course Advisor; Elizabeth Olivas, Program Administrator; John Anthony and Deborah Sitz. The website for more information on the Philmont Training Center and the Scouting in the Catholic Church conference can be found at: http://www.philmontscoutranch.org/PTC.aspx

To register go https://reservations.scouting.org/profile/form/index.cfm?PKformID=0x676228304

Don’t forget our NCCS annual business meeting, April 27 to 30, 2017 at the Peppermill Resort in Reno, Nevada. Because of the Bridge deadline, we are not able to include information on the annual meeting registration. A broad E-mail blast went out to all NCCS members with the registration information. If you did not receive it, contact our NCCS Program Administrator, Elizabeth Olivas by E-mail and request the information. Elizabeth’s E-mail address is nccs@scouting.org.

The Bridge is an authorized publication of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting® (NCCS). It is published quarterly to provide news and information to members of the NCCS, diocesan Catholic committees, youth ministry personnel and Boy Scout councils.

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Scout reflects on his personal Catholic Scouting experiences

Editor’s Note: At the Scout convocation in the Diocese of Charleston, S.C. on Scout Sunday one Scout spoke to the group. Here are the remarks of Adam Rogers, who has earned all four religious emblems, and is going on this year’s St. George Trek.

By
Scout Adam Rogers

Today, I am going to share with you my Catholic Scouting experiences, as well as my thoughts on the Bishop England Trek, and the upcoming St. George Trek. It all started as a Cub Scout, while taking part in the Light of Christ program. This basic program mainly focused on building a relationship with my family and with Jesus as a friend.

My next step was taking the Parvuli Dei course, which means “Children of God”. This program focused on my role as an important member of my family, community, and as a member of the Family of God. Both emblems planted the roots of my faith in Scouting.

As I crossed over to Boy Scouts, I learned that there were even more emblems I could achieve. The first of these was the Ad Altare Dei, which means “To the Altar of God”. In this program, I became familiar with the sacraments and how to grow in my faith.

It was after taking this program that I was made aware of the Bishop England Trek. I had always loved hiking, so when I saw the chance to spend a week hiking 50 miles on the foothills trail with priests as guides, and have the opportunity to go to Philmont later, I knew I had to take it.

To begin our journey, we arrived at Jesus Our Risen Savior Church on Sunday, where Fr. Pablo gave a talk about vocations and the meaning of a pilgrimage. He talked about how God will reveal his plan for us on Earth when we are ready. He also told us a story about a pilgrimage he went on with his family when he was a kid.

On Monday, we had to hustle to make up lost time in the morning; we had a long journey ahead of us. On Tuesday, we stopped at the Fish Hatchery to look at the trout. I learned the morning prayer the priests pray every day. That day, Fr. Gray accidentally cut his finger while attending to his blister and had to go to the air-conditioned Emergency Room and ate a Whopper. We said Mass on the beach, which was refreshing. On our 14-mile journey that day, I learned I could handle the load.

On Wednesday, we eased our way to Burrels Ford where we collapsed, exhausted from the day before. We had a nice Mass and dinner with both groups together. The three priests shared their vocation stories. I was inspired by their courage to follow God’s call. I quickly threw my rain fly over my tent as there was chaos in the campsite. I spent the next hour soaking up water out of my tent as it kept raining. I learned to never trust weatherman Weiskircher. (EDITOR NOTE: NCSC Chair elect – Jim Weiskircher)

In the morning, many Scouts were ready to go home. I learned I never quit, even when circumstances get tough. After an easy day, we rested at Oconee State Park. We had finally finished our trek. I learned I can take on whatever is thrown at me.

After being acquainted with Jesus Our Risen Savior Church through the Bishop England trek, I decided to take my next step as a Catholic Scout, the Pope Pius XII course. In the program, we talked about the different vocations, occupations, and Church ministries. Interviewing people from these different categories widened our view of what we might do in the future ahead of us.

Now, I am looking forward to the St. George Trek at Philmont. It has always been a dream of mine to go to Philmont, and now, because of my Catholic Scouting adventure, my dream will come true.
Religious Activities Committee working to update and add new Religious Activities

By Theresa Dirig
Religious Activities Committee

The Religious Activities Committee has been hard at work updating and adding Religious Activities. Very soon, the sixth Series of Religious Activities will be unveiled. The Six Series include the Rosary Series, Marian Series, American Saint Series, Modern Saint Series, Faith Series and Religious Trail Series. Some of the existing Religious Activities will be updated to ensure a consistent look of the patches across all the series. Similarly, the name of the series will be displayed across the bottom of the patch. New religious activities have been created for all the listed Series. When approval for new religious activities is received, the new activity will be added to the NCCS-BSA.org website.

An additional effort has been taken to promote the religious activities on Facebook. The day prior to the feast of an American Saint or Marian religious activity, a “Learn and Earn” post is added, leading youth and adults to the specific activity link on the NCCS website. This has increased the internet traffic to our website which has increased the number of religious activities earned.

Our Committee has learned that some diocesan committees are using the religious activities to catechize to the parents of the youth by having a “Saint of the Month” meeting at a local parish. Attending Mass, sharing a meal and learning about the “Saint of the Month” has led many families to learn more about their faith!

The Religious Activities committee is excited for the future and rolling out the new activities. We encourage all to check the website often to see the new activities being offered.

New Registration and Renewal
NCCS membership matters can now be handled online

NCCS members are now able to renew their annual membership online. This registration is available to not only anyone renewing their existing membership, but to anyone who wants to register to be a member. You can go to membership services at:

http://NCCSMembershipDues.kintera.org/bsa

Members - identified by a position on the NCCS Executive Board or Advisory Board or who are diocesan chairs or chaplains.

Associate Members - not a member, but active on diocesan or NCCS committees.

Supporters - neither member nor associate member, but one who supports NCCS and wishes to be kept informed of NCCS events and activities.

Any registered Scouter can join the National Catholic Committee on Scouting by filling out the NCCS membership application. Your membership fees support the efforts of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. In addition to The Bridge, the NCCS quarterly newsletter, you will also receive invitations to the annual meeting, to participate on standing committees, and Scouting in the Catholic Church conference at Philmont Training Center. The cost is $35.00 per year or $350.00 for a new Lifetime membership for as long as you are registered with BSA.
Updated information for NCCS Meeting Registration!

The NCCS is late in receiving all the information needed to finalize the registration link for our NCCS Annual Meetings in Reno, Thursday - Sunday, April 27 - 30. However, the room reservation link for the Peppermill Resort, Spa, Casino, in Reno, Nevada, is provided below. At some point in the reservation process, you'll have to click a box to accept conditions, or the reservation confirmation process will not proceed, so look for it.

https://aws.passkey.com/e/10897208

Also, at some point in the process, you'll be able to select a room type that is available at our $89 group rate. When you see the calculated total charges for your selected room & dates, don't have a heart attack. It will include 15% taxes and a $20 per night resort fee. At checkout, the $20 per night resort fee will be removed from your bill. The waiver was a negotiated contract concession for our group. If you know you are sharing a room with someone, decide among yourselves which of you will make the reservation. The person making the reservation needs to add the name of the additional room occupant (if not husband and wife), please give it in the comments/remarks/special request box during the on-line reservation process so that both room occupants will get keys if arriving on different days or times. The reservation should be in the name of the room occupant who is arriving first. If you suspect you might be assigned to a special room, you must make your own room reservation.

To make the reservation by phone, the number is 800-648-6992 and The group code is CNCCS17. Do make your room reservations as soon as possible as well as airline reservations. There will absolutely be no rooms available at our group rate after April 12, 2017. If you have problems reserving a room at our rate for your dates, please contact Elizabeth Olivas at our NCCS office: 972-580-2114. But first, if for example, you can't get Wednesday through Saturday nights, try making the reservation for Thursday through Saturday. When the problem is fixed, your reservation can always be revised to include the earlier night. When calling to report a problem, have your reservation confirmation number handy, as well as the name under which you made the reservation. The Peppermill provides complimentary airport shuttle service from/to the Reno Airport. If you are planning to rent a car for the duration of your time in Reno, and you have the time to drive the distance, it may be less expensive to fly to Sacramento and rent a car for the several hour drive to Reno. Self-parking is free.

Ten Commandments hike may be an opportunity for inter-faith activity

(This article is taken in part from the Scouting Magazine’s Bryan on Scouting – A Blog for BSA Adult Leaders) Go to http://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/ to read other topics on the blog.

At councils across the country, Ten Commandments hikes help Scouts and Venturers learn more about their faith and the faiths and cultures of others.

One recent example was the 10th annual Ten Commandments Hike in the Baden Powell District, part of the North Florida Council. Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts visited 10 houses of worship in downtown Fernandina Beach, Fla. At each stop along the way, they learned about the faith, saw the worship space and heard an explanation of one of the Ten Commandments.

“It is an interfaith and cross-cultural event,” says Pamela Anno, the event’s coordinator. “Scouts will gain greater understanding of religions of fellow Scouts and a greater tolerance of others’ religious beliefs.”

Anno says many Scouts will be interested to learn that some faiths, such as Judaism, use a different numbers for the Commandments. For example, Catholicism’s First Commandment, is the same as the First and Second Commandments in Judaism.

If you are interested in organizing a Ten Commandments hike Arizona should be on your list of States to contact. They had their 21st hike as always on the Friday after Thanksgiving. They move it each year around the Phoenix area, and did have a Boy’s Life article some years ago. They have helped start about 30 others across the country. Check out the comments section from the article to see the contact information and other suggestions.
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski
NCCS Historian

Early each year, it’s time to vote for several NCCS leadership positions. Prior to 1996, the nominating committee selected the candidates and asked for membership approval.

Major NCCS reorganization at that time recognized the need for the first set of by-laws for the NCCS and a committee began the long work.

In 1996, nominating committee chairman Frank Rossomondo proposed the first two-candidate ballot for the one national chair-elect position. Both Ed Gargiulo and Bob Oldowski agreed to be the candidates. Both eventually got to serve as national chairs.

The proposed by-laws were approved by the board in 1997 and the membership finalized them in 1998.

Subsequently this position and the elected vice-chair positions have had at least two candidates proposed. Positions held by priests need prior approval by their bishop or head of their order, so are selected in a different procedure.

2017 Annual Appeal Continues

- In 2016 the National Catholic Committee on Scouting was able to:
  - Provide Catholic emphasis to more than 236,000 Scouts in 7,582 Catholic chartered units
  - Award six $2,000 scholarships to deserving Catholic youth in Scouting
  - Ensure full-time Catholic chaplain coverage at Philmont Scout Ranch
  - Train Scouters in the Scouting in the Catholic Church Training Conference at Philmont
  - Award more than 17,000 religious emblems and nearly 12,000 Religious activity patches

- In 2017 with your help, we hope to equal or better these achievements PLUS:
  - Serve the 30,000 Scouts and 6,500 Scouters attending the National Scout Jamboree with Catholic Chaplains
  - Support the Catholic Chaplains who will serve the nearly 30,000 Scouts and 6,500 Scouters who will attend the National Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve

We know these activities and many others are made possible by the generous contribution of time, prayer and financial support of Catholic Scouters like you. Your contribution enables Scouts and Scouters to experience the presence of Catholic religious men and women in their lives and to learn how one’s spirituality is integrated into everyday life. For your support, we are grateful!

In order to insure that these programs continue and improve in 2017, we ask you to join your fellow Catholic Scouters in donating to this year’s Annual Appeal in support of the work of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting®. Any amount you give is appreciated!

You can send your contribution to:

National Catholic Committee on Scouting
P.O. Box 152079
Irving, TX 75015-2079

or donate online at:  www.nccsannualfund.kintera.org.bsa

Thank You for Your Support
Boy Scouts of America decides to base enrollment in its boys-only programs on the gender a child or parent lists on the application to become a Scout.

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting is thoughtfully and prayerfully reviewing the statement on January 31, 2017 from the Boy Scouts of America. The Boy Scouts of America has assured its faith-based organization chartered partners that, as in the past, they will be able to organize their Packs, Troops, Crews, Sea Scouts Ships, and Explorer Posts in a way completely consistent with their religious beliefs.

We wish to communicate with all interested Catholic Scouters further information on the recent change in membership requirements. Scouting serves the Catholic Church through the charter concept which is similar to a franchise. The units chartered to a Catholic institution are owned by that organization. The BSA has stipulated that religious partners will continue to have the right to make decisions for their units based on their religious beliefs. Scouting’s chartered organizations have the right to uphold their own moral standards within the units they charter. The teachings of the Catholic Church are upheld! Thus this change by the BSA has no impact on the operation and program delivery of scouting program in Catholic Chartered units.

Following are a few questions which have arisen:

(1) Can a unit, sponsored by a Catholic institution, recommend that a youth would be better off with another unit, such as the one sponsored by another chartered organization?  Yes, A Catholic parish can establish a membership guideline that follows Catholic teaching.

(2) Do the camping rules, which currently cover the previous membership changes, also now apply or will there be further changes?  Yes, nothing has changed relative to the camping rules of BSA or Catholic youth protection policies.

(3) How about the bathroom/shower rules?  The current Guide to Safe Scouting and Youth Protection policies protect the privacy of all individuals, youth or adult.

The following statement should provide a clear understanding of the relationship between the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and the Catholic Church and National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS.) A formal connection between the BSA and the Catholic Church in the U.S.A. was established with the 1933 Plan of Cooperation which was approved between BSA and the Bishops' Committee on Scouting, the predecessor of the NCCS. The USCCB has assigned a bishop to serve as Liaison to the NCCS. At the present time our national chairman, Mr. George Sparks and our national chaplain, Fr. Kevin Smith consult with our USCCB bishop liaison, Bishop Robert Guglielmone of the Diocese of Charleston, SC before any statement is issued.
SEIZE THIS OPPORTUNITY!!

You are invited to join us for the Scouting in the Catholic Church conference at the Philmont Training Center July 16-22, 2017. This Conference brings together religious and lay participants from around the country to learn more about Scouting as Catholic youth ministry and how to implement our Catholic scouting programs in your diocese.

Top 10 reasons to come to the course—

10—enjoy a week’s vacation in the beauty of “God’s Country” in northern New Mexico
9—family members can come and enjoy programs of their own and the bathrooms are CLEAN!
8—enjoy learning the history of the Santa Fe Trail, plus you’ll want to see the bullet holes in the St. James Hotel.
7—participate in fun evening programs and explore the area or relax with a view of the Tooth of Time on Wednesday afternoon.
6—enjoy meeting new people from around the country
5— your Scout is on the St. George Trek and you want to give them a hug when they come off the trail mid-week
4—be part of a Catholic Scouting faith community while at a camp and attend mass in the Catholic Chapel with our dedicated Chaplains and hear Fr. Don exclaim “It’s free!”
3—gain knowledge and resources to take back to your diocese, parishes, councils and units
2—experience a renewal for our Catholic faith and Scouting
1—make a difference in the spiritual lives of our Scouts

Seize the opportunity and join us for this inspirational fun-filled week! Don’t delay, signup today!! For more information about the course or the PTC you are welcome to contact the 2017 Course Director, Kathy Polowski at kpolo55@gmail.com or call 480-244-6806. You can also access information about the Philmont Training Center and our conference by visiting the following link— www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc.aspx