Regional and national officers elected to lead NCCS

The National Catholic Committee on Scouting recently elected new regional and national officers. In elections held earlier this year voting members in the regions voted for their regional chairs and chaplains who will be inducted at the end of the annual meeting to be held in April in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

The chair-elect and vice chairs of the NCCS were also elected by voting members, who included all diocesan chairs and chaplains, the NCCS Executive Board and Advisory Board.

The new national chair Jim Weiskircher and new national chaplain Fr. Joe Powers will also begin their terms in April. John Anthony will serve as the national chair starting in 2022, and Fr. Gentleman will also start his term at that time.

Chair-elect and Associate Chaplain (3-year terms)

John Anthony
Fr. Gerard Gentleman

National Vice Chairs (2-year terms)

John Ribar
Bill Guglielmi

Region 1 Chair
Region 2 Chaplain
Region 3 Chaplain
Region 4 Chaplain
Region 5 Chair
Region 7 Chaplain
Region 8 Chair
Region 10 Chair
Region 11 Chair
Region 13 Chair

John Meakin Jr.
Fr. Frank Zero
Fr. Michael Santangelo
Fr. Ray Fecteau
Chris Manning
Fr. Mark Augustine
Michael Fratto
Charles Raimond Sr.
Bernie Kilcoyne
*Gerry Quinlan

(Appointed to fill vacant position)
COR training now available online in BSA learning system

By Mark Kramer

In cooperation with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) ScoutingU, NCCS will soon be offering our new Chartering Organizational Representative (COR) training through the BSA’s online learning system.

The NCCS version of the COR training mimics the content of the BSA’s COR training but focuses on the potentiality of the BSA’s programs as a ministry program within the Catholic Church. In a four module series, the Catholic COR will come to understand: the purpose of chartering a BSA program to a Catholic institution, the role of the parish and the diocese in the operation of a BSA program, how to reach Scouts through NCCS programs, the role of the COR as part of the Catholic faith community, and how to run a Catholic Scouting program in conjunction with the BSA’s Rules and Regulations.

Catholic COR e-learning is the first in a series of Catholic Scouting leadership training. In development, the Training Committee is working on training for Catholic Cub Scouting, Catholic Scouts BSA, and Catholic Venturing. Each of the program series will examine the potential and the mechanics to empower leaders at all levels of the unit to achieve the three goals of Catholic youth ministry: empower young people to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in our world today; to draw young people to responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Catholic faith community; and to foster the total personal and spiritual growth of each young person.

If you have questions, please contact Mark Kramer, Training Chair at dccoscf.kramer@gmail.com.

CHAIRMAN’S CORNER

BY GEORGE SPARKS

RENEW-REBUILD-REJOICE

In the March 2016 issue of The Bridge I outlined Fr. Kevin Smith’s and my plan of action for the next three years. The theme we chose was Renew-Rebuild-Rejoice. The first point was to Renew our belief in the value of Catholic Scouting and the development of the future leaders of our church and nation. The second point involved Rebuilding the Catholic Scouting program in each of our units and strengthening our relationship with our diocese and communities. We must also Rejoice in the fruits of our labors: small and large.

How successful were we? Over the course of the last three years we introduced the new Catholic Unit Excellence Award comparable to the Boy Scouts of America’s Journey to Excellence Award. It was developed to give direction to the unit’s Catholic Scouting program: in our case to help the religious well-being of the unit. A new national training program currently called “Scouting in the Local Church” was held at the BSA National Sea Base in 2017. This course was developed to help local diocesan committees become successful in their mission. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Learning for Life which allowed us to extend our religious emblems program to Explorers.

We hosted the World Scout Interreligious Symposium held at the Seminary of The Immaculate Conception in Huntington, Long Island, New York, where representatives of a broad group of religions met to discuss the importance of “Duty to God” in the Scouting program.

A new activity patch has been developed and is being promoted for the 2019 World Scout Jamboree; it is based on the saints of Mexico, United States and Canada. There will be six new activity patches released in the Spring of 2019. The training committee is releasing our first e-learning program for Charted Organization Representatives. Exciting times are just above the horizon for Catholic Scouting with the addition of girls to the Scouting program.

All these accomplishments would not have been achieved without the help of dedicated committee members. Thank you for all that you have done for the Catholic youth of our nation.

My last task as chair is the 2019 NCCS Annual Meeting April 25-28th in Tulsa. Come by so that I may personally thank you. I hope that you will all join me in welcoming our new national chair Jim Weiskircher and Fr. Joe Powers our new national chaplain.

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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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.
Reflections from the new Vocations Chair

By
Bro. Andrew J. Kosmowski, SM
Chair, Vocations Committee

As I write this on Ash Wednesday, I am struck by the second reading from Saint Paul’s second letter to the Corinthians. In it, he encourages this community to be ambassadors for Christ. This is what vocational discernment is about: how is Jesus calling us to be His ambassadors.

As the newly-named chair of the Vocations committee, I wish to share a few words about what we are doing well. One exceptional program we have is our religious emblem sequence, especially Pope Pius XII. This assists Catholic Scouts, Sea Scouts, and Venturers in discerning their vocation. We encourage them to ponder how the Holy Spirit is working in their lives so they can better serve God, the Church, and the world. In other words, we ask them to examine how they are called to holiness and how that holiness can radiate throughout their work. For the great majority, God calls them to be holy husbands and wives. A smaller number are called to consecrated life or holy orders. Fewer are called to the single life. Yet, each of these vocations witness to each other and to the world the love of Christ for all people.

So, I encourage that we in our units, councils, and committees examine how we promote the universal call to holiness. When I was at the Archdiocese of Cincinnati’s camp-o-ree/retreat this past November, I was asked what else, besides our emblems and activities, do we do to assist in vocational discernment. I have no answer, but I look forward to hearing your ideas that can strengthen this essential part of youth and young adult ministry.
Scouting in Africa shows vibrancy and relevance

by
Jim Weiskircher

Editor’s Note: With the World Jamboree in the US this summer this article may be informative for Scouters to see the effects of Catholic Scouting

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is slowly recovering from a conflict known as Africa's first world war, which led to the loss of some five million lives between 1994 and 2003, but many eastern areas are still plagued by violence as rebel groups continue to operate there. The Adorno Fathers came to this area in 1984 and were right in the middle of the Hutu killing of the Tutsis. In 2016, in three separate incidents, one member of the order was kidnapped, one shot in the leg, and another shot four times as he drove to one of their outlying missions on Palm Sunday to celebrate Mass. The village of Nyamilima was recaptured by the DRC in 2005, but it is still not the safest place to travel.

I was asked by the new Father General of the Adorno Fathers, Father Ted Kalaw CRM (known as the Carocciolini Fathers in Italy and Africa) to travel with him on his first visit to Africa to see where the United States could help to support their missions in Africa. My son is in the seminary with the Order. The Order has 100 priests worldwide with another 200 seminarians in various stages of formation. It took us over four hours from Goma on unpaved roads to reach the village. Every 15 minutes or so we would see a government outpost with two soldiers guarding the road.

When the village was overthrown by rebels in the early 1990’s, the Adorno Fathers stepped in to provide all services. Today, the parish covers the size of four normal counties with a population of 70,000, with 60,000 Catholics. They have one main church which seats 3,000 and 13 mission churches, run the only hospital with 104 beds, with nine clinics, and generate their own electricity for the parish buildings and hospital. They run 49 schools with 14,000 students. The homes are very tiny, most built of clay with dirt floors and no electricity. You rarely see a car, and the main means of transportation is walking or an occasional moped. There is no need for a church parking lot. The average wage is $2 a day. But they are the happiest people you could ever meet. The three Sunday and one Saturday night Mass are packed with more than 10,000 attending and choirs of more than 100 people each. The children’s Mass has nearly 4,000 in attendance with the children standing in the aisles.
I attended a 6 a.m. weekday Mass with more than 400 in attendance. Off to one side of the church, I was pleasantly surprised to see a group of Scouts in the pews. At the consecration, a group of six Scouts moved forward to form an honor guard in front of the altar. After Mass, Father Faustino, African Superior Delegate of the Order, introduced me to the troop. Little did I know, until later, that he was the Scout Chaplain for the Diocese of Goma. The troop’s chaplain is a Scout on his pastoral year being ordained to the priesthood next March. At the Orders house of Theology in Nairobi, I met another Scout in his 3rd year.

The troop meets every Tuesday morning, starting with Mass then a troop meeting. The meeting starts on a field with a pole that has the international scout symbol in the center. They honored me by presenting me with a troop neckerchief. The meeting then continued with song and dance in which I tried to participate. I was very honored to see Scouting alive and well in this isolated part of the world.

The next day, four priests and I traveled one hour to the Virunga National park with four Scouts tucked into the back of the vehicle. Well inside the Park, was one of the Adorno missions and we were greeted by 600 screaming school children happy to see the new Father General. The Scouts helped to provide crowd control. As we approached the clinic in the village, we saw another gathering space and pole for the Scouts.

The Adorno Fathers presently have 30 priests in Africa, but next year, they will ordain 10 young men to spread the good news. It was a blessing to see the Catholic Church and Scouting as a vibrant part of the lives of the people in this very remote part of the world.
The Scouting program is delivered in a most interesting way. The BSA does not run cub packs or Scout troops. Rather, the BSA provides the resources for others to do this. The BSA “franchises” its program to churches, schools and similar organizations for that organization to use with its own youth and own leaders. An annual charter to use the program is provided. The organization thus “owns” the pack or troop and its members. It sets its own goals and recruits its own leaders. BSA makes available program ideas (like advancement, handbooks, training and events) and offers services (like camps, administration and professional staff) that the unit can use. Utilizing this is why Scouting is Youth Ministry!

Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

Our Scouting in the Local Church “Diocesan Committee Development” Conference was held at Florida Sea Base March 5 -9, 2019 and was a rousing success! Fifteen participants joined our faculty for five glorious days in the Florida Keys, enjoying the weather, fellowship and fun! Most were very happy to get out of the snow and cold and all enjoyed getting to know each other, sharing ideas and learning techniques to enhance the delivery of Catholic Scouting to our youth.

The faculty included Chris Murray, Connie Kantor, Joe Bouley, Elizabeth Olivas—NCCS Program Administrator, Fr. Ross Chamberland –Course Advisor, Course Director Kathy Polowski and our national Chaplain, Fr. Kevin Smith.

During the week, topics pertinent to the creation and effective functioning of a diocesan Catholic Scouting committee were presented and thoroughly discussed. These topics included the mission, vision, structure, and formation of the committee, recruiting leadership, setting goals and achieving excellence as a committee.

Fr. Ross’ presentation about the ChURch was met with resounding approval and participants enjoyed brainstorming and offering ideas related to communication, marketing and PR. In learning about techniques to start new units and recruit leaders, everyone had an opportunity to demonstrate their acting ability as priests, principals, youth ministers and Scouters.

Participants brought dried palms that had been blessed on Palm Sunday in previous years and those were used to create ashes to distribute at our Ash Wednesday Mass. What a beautiful way to start the day and the Lenten season! Later in the afternoon we returned to the chapel near the marina and prayed the rosary together while Fr. Ross offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

It was very fitting that a statue of St. Francis stood next to the waterfall behind the chapel, and we could hear the water trickling in the background as birds soared over the marina and floated on the water nearby.

During our “Best Practices Showcase” on Wednesday evening, participants enjoyed sharing information and learning about successful events, activities and promotional strategies sponsored by the varied diocesan Scouting committees. Newspaper articles, patches, pictures, posters and videos were shared.

Thursday brought a free day for everyone to enjoy with many exploring Key West and other areas of south Florida. Friday evening participants and faculty enjoyed a cruise in the Gulf near Florida Sea Base witnessing pelicans roosting in the trees and a beautiful sunset on the horizon. God’s handiwork.

Grant them eternal rest O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

Fr. Roger Strebel Long time NCCS Member and Region 7 Chaplain
Bob Cunningham Long time NCCS member

SMOOTH SAILING IN THE FLORIDA KEYS

Fifteen Scouters attend Diocesan Committee Development Conference

By Kathy Polowski
Pack 485 and Troop 485, chartered by VFW Post 2485, held their Scout Sunday at Jesus The Eternal Word Parish in Angeles City, Philippines with Father Ariel Limjoco presiding. Ten Cub Scouts earned Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei Medals and 12 Boy Scouts worked over one year to earn their Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius XII Medals. This was a rare occasion to have all four medals presented at the same time for these sister units.

Scout Sunday at Our Mother of Consolation Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Philadelphia with Fr. Robert Mulligan and Fr. Bob Bazolli. Different Scout units attended every Mass that weekend.

Scout Sunday celebrated in parishes worldwide

The Archdiocese of Detroit annual Scout Sunday Recognition Mass was celebrated at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament on Sunday March 3rd by Fr. David Burgard and Fr. Lawrence Zurawski.

Scout Sunday at St. Brigid Catholic Church, Midland, Michigan with Father Andy Booms.
SAVE THE DATE
Scouting in the Catholic Church
June 16 – 22, 2019 – Week 2
Philmont Training Center  Cimarron, New Mexico

Each year, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS) conducts the "Scouting in the Catholic Church” training conference at Philmont Training Center 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 participants understand how Scouting is Catholic youth ministry and how to use the information when talking with Scouters, priests, and youth ministers. We are pleased to announce that the Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, Bishop of the Diocese of Jolliet will be joining the group at the Philmont Training Center. Jim Weiskircher, the new chair, will also be in attendance as a faculty member.

The conference is divided into four daily components. First, we begin each day with a dimension of lay apostolate formation (Leadership, Holiness, Conversion and Worship) taken from the NCCS training program “National Catholic Leadership Development”. Second, we explore relevant sections of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Third, we present how best to deliver the mission and programs of the NCCS. Fourth, we consider how these programs and our efforts support the concepts of youth ministry as explained in the USCCB document “Renewing the Vision: A Framework for Catholic Youth Ministry.” This is the advanced course within the NCCS training curriculum. As such, participants are provided the opportunity to develop, carry out, and report on a mission project for their own parish or local Catholic Committee on Scouting using information and insight they have just acquired.

Registration is open!! For information about the Training Center, conferences, family programs and registration please visit the Philmont website at http://www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc.aspx. For further information or questions, please contact Course Director John Anthony email jacataka@gmail.com or Elizabeth Olivas, at Elizabeth.Olivas@scouting.org or email NCCS@Scouting.org

During this year’s training two new family programs have been announced for the families so bring the kids or grandkids to enjoy the week. The Family Banner Parade and Family Talent Show will be held on Monday evening. Families are encouraged to bring a banner from home to display at your tent and during the parade. If you wish to participate in the Family Talent Show, please send an email describing your talent to ldsbsa@scouting.org. Since time is limited, families who are invited to participate will be notified prior to arriving at Philmont.

A Children's Parade will be held Tuesday evening in conjunction with the Western Night. Children can wear simple costumes they bring from home, make a paper costume in the craft center, or may make a costume with their age-group leader during age-group activity times. Gather at the PTC pavilion at 5 p.m. on Tuesday. The parade begins at 5:15. Parents and families may sit on the Greensward to enjoy the parade!