By Tim Bishop
Catholic News Service
MOUNT HOPE, W.Va. (CNS) -- Nearly 10,000 Boy Scouts from throughout the United States braved heavy rain and thunderstorms July 21 for an outdoor Mass celebrated by Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, apostolic nuncio to the United States.

The Mass was part of the 10-day National Boy Scout Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Family National Scout Reserve in Mount Hope. Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston concelebrated and served as the homilist for the Mass.

In his homily, Bishop Bransfield welcomed the Scouts to the Mountain State for the national jamboree marking its significance to the church. "It is a pleasure," he said, "to welcome you and Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano to our state. You now can see firsthand why it is called wild and wonderful."

Bishop Bransfield acknowledged the hard work of the many people it took to make the national jamboree a reality for West Virginia. "For many months," he said, "a great deal of planning and labor has gone into preparing for this jamboree. When I visited here earlier this year, in the middle of winter, I was impressed with the beauty of the place and I wondered if it would be ready for you by summer.

"As I look out now, I see a transformed place, made more wonderful by your presence and your enjoyment of all that nature has to offer you. It is especially good to be with you as we gather around the altar, led in prayer by our apostolic nuncio, and take part in Lord's Eucharistic sacrifice."

Bishop Bransfield told the Scouts that their Catholic faith and participation in the Eucharist bind them together with the entire church throughout the world. "The oath you take as Scouts," he said, "explicitly mentions God: The promise you make echoes the promises at baptism and repeated at confirmation, as you pledge to do your best to do my duty to God and to keep yourselves, in his sight, morally straight.

"Likewise, the 12th point of the Scout law invites you to be 'reverent,'" he continued, "and as we gather this Sunday morning to celebrate our faith in this Mass, you fulfill your Scout promise and keep your Scout law in a wonderful way. I thank you for the choice you have made to be involved in Scouting and to actively celebrate your Catholic faith as people committed to reverence of God and service of others."

The first duty of people of faith, Bishop Bransfield said, is to listen to God and, like the Gospel for the day teaches, put things in their proper order. "Each of you Scouts knows how essential it is to perform the steps of a task in their proper order," he said. "If you don't, a sturdy tent cannot be erected, a bow cannot be strung and its arrow shot, a boat cannot be properly steered."

Bishop Bransfield said he prayed the Scouts "will continue to enjoy this jamboree and that, during the many activities and adventures ahead, you will continue to listen for the Lord God and experience His presence in the wonder of nature around you, in the goodness of the people you are with, and in the joy that you experience throughout these days."

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Sea Scouts Now Eligible For Scholarships

The Executive Board has approved the addition of Sea Scouts as eligible to apply for the Doerr college scholarship program, in addition to Boy Scouts and Venturing Scouts. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting awards five $2,000 scholarship to graduating seniors. Applications are due no later than March 1, 2014. Please refer to the NCCS web site (www.nccs-bsa.org) to obtain the application.

Please Pray For:
Retired Bishop George K. Fitzsimons of Salina died Sunday, July 28, at his home in Ogden, Kansas. He was 84. He headed the Salina diocese from 1984 to 2004. In retirement, he lived at the rectory of St. Patrick Parish in Ogden and continued to serve in the diocese until his death. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, he was the episcopal moderator for the National Catholic Committee on Scouting from 1988-1994.

Henry B. Murphy, who died August 9. He was a long-time member of NCCS and served as Chairman from 1980 - 1983. He was awarded the Silver St. George, Brother Barnabas Award, Silver Buffalor Award, the Whitney M. Young, Jr. Award, and the Silver Beaver Award. His funeral Mass was August 13, at St. Ann's Church in Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

Elaine Goss, sister to Father Leo LeBlanc, who passed away on June 28. The funeral Mass and burial were in Boscawen, N.H.

Congratulations to:
Msgr. Richard P. LaRocque and Father Greg Weider, both past national chaplains, on the occasion of their recent 50th anniversary of their ordination to the priesthood.

OOPS! – Our mistake
We neglected to recognize the Diocese of Galveston-Houston which has earned the Quality Diocese Award each year since the award began. The local committee worked hard to attain that distinction and we apologize for missing them.

Chairman’s Corner
BY EDWARD P. MARTIN

One of the questions I was asked regarding my letter on the BSA’s youth membership standard was whether Scouting should really be used by us Catholics to evangelize youth in our faith.

To define what I mean by “evangelize”, I refer to what Matthew Kelly uses in his book, the Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic, where he identifies evangelization as one of the signs of a dynamic Catholic. He writes that evangelization is “inviting others to grow spiritually”. He goes on to say that this sign becomes more intentional as the individual practices the other three signs: prayer, study, and generosity.

Using this definition, I believe our parishes—and other Catholic organizations that charter units—expect evangelization to occur. The NCCS is perennially challenged to ensure that the Catholic Scouting community understands this expectation. To assist in this effort, our publication Scouting is Youth Ministry (http://www.scouting.org/filestore/membership/pdf/522-451/522-451_low_english.pdf) explains how the programs of the BSA integrate Scouting experience with faith experience.

Examples of our evangelization efforts abound in this edition of The Bridge. For instance, there was the presence of our Scout chaplains at this summer’s activities of the St. George Trek, at the BSA National Jamboree, and at the Philmont Scout Ranch and Training Center. Celebrating daily Mass, providing counseling and sharing camaraderie give witness to how we do our “duty to God” throughout the day and with all with whom we come in contact.

At the BSA National Jamboree, 18 lay volunteers assisted about 900 Scouts and Scouters with learning how to make and pray the rosary. This activity gave the participants knowledge of the significant events in the lives of Jesus and his mother, Mary. During the time it took to make the rosary, we were able to learn more about the Scout’s interest and involvement in his or her spiritual formation. It gave us the opportunity to promote awareness of our religious emblem and religious activity programs.

As the new program year gets underway, I pray that we all might spend more time and effort developing these signs of a dynamic Catholic. You may want to consider attending Scouter Development: Lay Apostolate Formation for Scouting, an NCCS course intended to help Scouters discern their call to evangelize (http://www.nccs-bsa.org/ScoutUnits/ScouterDevelopment.php).

Our example will encourage Scouts to grow spiritually and will give perspective to achieving Scouting’s aims of character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. Go in peace to love and serve the Lord!

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.
Notes from the National Chaplain

By Father Michael P. Hanifin

July 15, 2013 launched a new chapter in the Boy Scouts of America’s National Jamborees held at a new and permanent site outside Mount Hope, West Virginia. The Summit Bechtel Scout Reserve as it is designated saw some 27,442 scouts from all over the world descend upon this rural location for ten days of high adventure activities and entertainment including white water rafting, COPE courses, zip lining, BMX biking, skate boarding, canoeing, scuba diving, and swimming. When not participating in high adventure activities the Jamboree scouts and their leaders attended a number of entertainment programs in the Stadium with such talent like Distinguished Eagle Scout Mike Rowe from Discovery Channel’s Dirty Jobs. A feature of the 2013 National Jamboree was a Day of Community Service held in the surrounding cities of the Summit Bechtel Scout Reserve.

Of the participants at the 2013 National Jamboree 7,929 scout, 956 adult leaders, and 1,603 staff members for a total of 10,488 were Catholic. They were served by 10 priests, two deacons and one seminarian. Many of the subcamps and basecamps provided daily Mass or prayer services, counseled, consoled, and befriended the participants and staff members at the Jamboree. A certain highlight of the 2013 National Jamboree was the Catholic Mass held at the Stadium on Sunday, July 21st celebrated by Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States and the homily was preached by Bishop Michael Bransfield of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston. The Bishop Liaison to the NCCS, Bishop Robert Guglielmone concelebrated the Mass along with the ten priests who were subcamp and hospital chaplains.

Approximately 10,000 National Jamboree participants attended the Mass and much of the Mass was in the rain. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting is very much grateful for Father Dennis Schuelkens, Jr. of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston and the diocesan offices for their assistance and support of the Catholic Chaplains serving the 2013 National Jamboree.

Did You Know . . .?

By Bob Oldowski

National Catholic Scouting is now entering its 80th year. In the early 1930s, Bishop Francis C. Kelley of Oklahoma City and Tulsa became the head of a bishops’ committee on Scouting. He expanded the committee to include twenty-two archbishops and bishops, one from each Ecclesiastical province in the United States.

This committee developed a comprehensive plan of cooperation to use Scouting based on the authority of the bishop of the diocese and the responsibility of the pastor of the parish for the supervision of all work among Catholic boys in their respective jurisdiction. Diocesan Scout Chaplains were to make the plan effective.

The Boy Scouts of America approved the plan in March of 1933, and this Plan of Cooperation was formally approved at a Bishops Dinner November 14, 1934. This was the start of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting as we have come to know it today. Eventually priests and later lay people were given responsibilities to continue this relationship with the Boy Scouts of America.

Additional information, including a series on the history of Catholic Scouting, is scheduled to appear in the next editions of The Bridge.
Ed Martin, NCCS Chairman, instructs Second Class Scout Steven Kiss of Troop 461 of St. Jane Frances de Chantel Parish of the Archdiocese of Washington on how to say and make the Rosary, while his father Albert Kiss looks on.

2013 National BSA Jamboree

Archbishop Carlo Maria Viganò, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, received patches for himself and the Holy Father, Pope Francis, following Mass from Scott Harvey, Chairman of the NCCS International Committee. The patches include the Japanese “Keep the Lamp Burning” patch celebrating 100 years of Catholic Scouting, the NCCS “Pray the Rosary” patch and the ICCS International Awareness Activity patch.
Bishop Michael J. Bransfield of Wheeling-Charleston, W.V., Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States and Bishop Robert Gugliemone of Charleston, S.C. and USCCB Liaison to the NCCS, join in the final blessing and the blessing of the rosaries at the end of the National Jamboree Scout Mass.

Monsignor John Brady of the Archdiocese of Washington, DC and Region 4 Chaplain, distributes Holy Communion during the Mass.
Frequently Asked Questions and Answers About the Membership Standards Resolution
(From Boy Scouts of America (http://www.scouting.org/filestore/training/membership/pdf/Unit_Implementation_FAQ.pdf)

Will the new policy result in greater risk of liability for chartered organizations?
BSA members are not required to be members of a chartered organization, and the chartered organization cannot deny BSA membership solely on the basis of sexual preference. As a result, the BSA has and will continue to be the responsible organization for establishing and defending its membership standards. The BSA has and will continue to assert its constitutional right as a private organization to define the moral standards embraced by its members. Duty to God, duty to Country, duty to others, and duty to self, as expressed in the Scout Oath, and the Scout Law are the fundamental tenets of Scouting and always have been. The BSA respects the rights of other organizations to disagree or to have their own moral standards, which may be different from the BSA’s. However, the BSA has and will continue to oppose any action that threatens the BSA’s right to define its own moral standards for membership.

Is the BSA endorsing homosexual conduct and forcing its chartered organizations to do the same?
No. The BSA is reinforcing that Scouting is a youth program, and any sexual conduct, whether heterosexual or homosexual, by youth of Scouting age is contrary to the virtues of Scouting. Scouting is not the place to resolve divergent viewpoints in society, and no member may use Scouting to promote or advance any social or political agenda. This policy rightly recognizes there is a difference between youth and adults while remaining true to the long-standing virtues of Scouting.

Is this merely the first step in a process that will fundamentally change the BSA?
No. This policy change was the result of an internal Scouting discussion, not because of pressure from external groups. The adult membership standard remains unchanged, and within the framework of this policy, chartered organizations continue to have the right and responsibility to choose their own unit leaders according to their own values and Scouting values. The Boy Scouts of America fully supports its chartered organizations. As the BSA just completed a lengthy review process, there are no plans for further review on this matter. The youth membership standard was not intended to be, or to be seen as, a “first step.”

What should a Scout or Scout leader do if a youth with same-sex attraction asks whether they can join Scouting?
Invite them to join and explain the joining requirements. No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone.

What should a Scout or leader do if a youth member lets them know that he or she is gay?
It is an individual’s choice how public they wish to be about their sexual orientation. As always, Scouting teaches respect and courtesy for all people. It is the Scout leader’s responsibility to address the issue with concern and sensitivity, while ensuring the member understands the boundaries. The leader should emphasize that there is no place in Scouting for any sexual conduct by youth of Scouting age.

What about youth privacy and accommodations?
This change in membership standards is not a youth protection issue. To consider it a youth protection issue would lead one to believe that sexual abuse and victimization is considered inherent to sexual orientation. This is not the case.

Should there be special arrangements made for showering, swimming, lifeguarding, and changing areas?
Personal activity involving bathrooms, showers, hygiene, and dressing are respected as private. A general move toward individual toilet and shower facilities is already underway and individuals needing additional privacy can take appropriate actions on their own or request others to be respectful of their needs. As always, the adult leaders have the discretion to arrange private showering times and locations, as needed. The privacy and security of our youth members is among our top priorities.

Should special arrangements be made to accommodate youth in camp, on trips, or during events based on sexual orientation?
Requests by units for special accommodation to camp/participate with others, or to be exclusive from others, is discouraged. We are all Scouts and are accepting of all members of the Scouting family.

Will there be any changes to current policies regarding sleeping arrangements on Scout activities?
Each unit’s leadership along with their committee will be responsible for working with their parents to determine appropriate sleeping arrangements. This is consistent with current practices that allow for unit leaders, in consultation with parents, to use their discretion to ensure the safety and comfort of the youth members in their charge. In the past, there have been a variety of issues that required these conversations and this will follow that process. The training materials will reflect this direction.
By Mary-Kate Smith
PhilNews

The St. George Trek is a special trek, held every two years at Philmont beginning in 1992. The goal of the trek is to bring together young Catholic Scouts from across the country to experience Philmont from a different perspective.

This summer the St. George Trek sent out six male crews and one female crew. The 72 youth participants met each other and their advisors at a retreat in Albuquerque a few days before they hit the trail.

“We meet everyone within 24 hours, so that is pretty different,” said participant Matt Gonzalez, from Troop 1776 in Marietta, Ga. “I think there is just a different feeling about it. We are all here for different purposes. Some people just want to go to Philmont. Some people are looking for the retreat, but I think it is different because most Philmont treks come out here just for the hiking, to shoot shotguns and go to Abreu and drink root beer. We are out here to experience God through the beauty of nature.”

The participants apply and are selected for the Trek by their local diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting.

“The local Catholic Committee selects them and sponsors them, hopefully, pays their fee,” Trek Director Father Gerard Gentleman said. “That is the ideal but sometimes we have to do some scholarships. They are selecting people that they believe personally it would be a good experience for, but also someone they believe will come back and assist with the work of Catholic Scouting in the diocese. That is why they get chosen.”

Five of the male crews were led by a priest and a seminarian. One male crew was led by two priests, and the female crew was led by two Benedictine nuns. The Catholic faith was incorporated in the Trek in a variety of ways.

“The male crews had at least one priest, so we typically had Mass everyday on the trail which is pretty cool,” crew advisor Deacon Adam Carrico said. “We found a nice sized rock to use as an altar or something like that. Then, of course, we did grace before meals. We try to find ways of praying the litany of the hours or the rosary – that kind of thing, to add to the extra sense of spirituality.

For participant Connor Nielson, of Charlotte, N.C., having Mass in the Philmont backcountry was a very new and unique experience.

“I actually go to the largest Catholic Church in the country, so we have like a 30 foot cross on the altar and more than 2,000 seats that fill up every time,” Nielson said. “Being here with 12 people just sitting around, sometimes literally just a rock with a cross and chalice on it was really cool. We sat in a circle and would have Mass, or would sit at a picnic table at a staff camp. It was just a much more intimate experience. Being able to have eye contact during the homily was weird, but it’s been really cool.”

Some of the crews held Mass on the base of the Tooth of Time and on Window Rock. In the middle of the trek each of the seven crews met at Cimarroncito for two days to celebrate the Trek and the Eucharist together.

According to Katie Morgan, of Aiken, S.C. one of the Masses at massive rain storms. Instead of bells to signify the transubstantiation we had lightning.”

The female Venture Scouts were unable to have Mass every day, but they said the rosary each day. For Morgan, the St. George Trek was full of unexpected surprises.

“One morning I felt like it was the craziest thing I have ever done in my life,” she said. “We woke up at 3 a.m. and left camp by 4 a.m. We hike up the stockade trail in the dark with 55 pound packs on our backs and with two nuns. I never thought I’d do anything like that.”

The 86 participants and advisors on the trek definitely experienced Philmont in a different way.

“On the Tooth of Time I did a 360 in that little top rock,” Gonzalez said. “I did a 360 and I thought God made all of this, and it’s amazing. That’s one of the main things. It’s experiencing God through the beauty of Philmont.

“Philmont is a spiritual, magical place already, and going there with people who really are immersed in their faith and in their relationship with God really taught me a lot about my relationship with God,” Neilson said. “It’s really helped me to appreciate the land so much more.”
The 40th Scouting in the Catholic Church training conference was conducted at the Philmont Training Center in Cimarron, N.M., from July 22–27, 2013. This conference brought 34 Catholic religious and lay participants with varying experience in Scouting and the Catholic faith to help them understand how Scouting is a Youth Ministry and how to use the information in their dioceses when talking with Scouters, priests, and youth ministers.

The conference was structured to explore the four daily components - Leadership, Holiness, Conversion, and Worship – from several points of view. The NCCS' Scouter Development: Lay Apostolate Formation for Scouting format of bible readings, reflection, and small-group discussion gives the participants insight as to why a Catholic Scouter is called to the lay apostolate. The conference priest advisor facilitates the component discussion looking from a catechism point of view. The Renewing the Vision booklet helps the participants gain knowledge from a Youth Minister's point of view.

Scouter David Rypien of the Sam Houston Council (Texas) perhaps said it best - “What a week well spent with some of the finest Catholic Adult Leadership in the Nation! Additionally having the St. George Trek at Philmont at the same time inspired us all - the faith of our young men and women who participated on the Trek and the young priests and sisters I met who were excited they were participating in the Scouting program, some of them for the first time. Additionally, it was great for me to participate in the blessings performed by the priests and the opportunity to participate in the Mass and sacraments with my fellow Scouters.”

The staff for this year’s conference was Ben Feril, Nancy Watts, George Sparks and Father Norm Supancheck.