NCCS welcomes Bishop Conlon as new Episcopal Liaison

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has announced the appointment of the Most Reverend Daniel Conlon of the Diocese of Joliet, Ill. as the new Episcopal Liaison to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting.

Bishop Conlon was born in Cincinnati on Dec. 4, 1948. He is the oldest of six children of Robert and Carla (Holzman) Conlon. He grew up as a member of St. Mary Parish, Hyde Park, Cincinnati. Following graduation from Marian Purcell High School in 1966, he began studies at the Athanaeum of Ohio/Mt. St. Mary of the West Seminary in Cincinnati, and on March 9, 1974 was ordained a deacon at the Cathedral of St. Peter in Chains, Cincinnati.

He completed a Master of Divinity degree in 1975 and, after serving as a deacon at St. Agnes Church, Cincinnati was ordained a priest on Jan. 15, 1977.

Father Conlon served on many committees and boards within the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, including The Catholic Telegraph Board, Board of Mediation, Catholic Committee on Scouting, Futures Committee, Archdiocesan Pastoral Council and Presbyteral Council. He is a graduate and member of Leadership Cincinnati, and also a former member of the Cincinnatus Association and the Board of Dan Beard Council for the Boy Scouts of America.

He served as associate pastor at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Anderson Township, Cincinnati, from Feb. 1977 until July 1982. Beginning in Aug. 1981 until Aug. 1983, he served as director of the Office of Planning and Research and assistant chancellor in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. For the next three and a half years, he studied canon law at St. Paul University in Ottawa, Ontario, earning the degrees of Doctor of Canon Law and Doctor of Philosophy in Jan. 1987. He returned to Cincinnati to become the Archdiocese’s chancellor and director of its Department of Executive Services, serving in those capacities until July of 1996, when he was named pastor of Holy Redeemer Parish, New Bremen, Ohio.

It was while serving as Pastor at Holy Redeemer Parish that Father Conlon was named as the fourth bishop of the Diocese of Steubenville by His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, where he was installed on August 6, 2002. He chose as his episcopal motto, Take Courage.

His Holiness, Pope Benedict XVI, named Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon, the fifth Bishop of Joliet-in-Illinois. The appointment was announced in Washington on May 17, 2011 by Archbishop Pietro Sambi, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States. He was installed on July 14, 2011 at the Cathedral of St. Raymond Nonnatus in Joliet.

From 2011 to 2014, the Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon served as chairperson for the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' Committee for the Protection of Children and Young People.

He currently serves as an Executive Board member of Rainbow Council for the Boy Scouts of America, as well as a member of the Canon Law Society of America and the Mundelein Seminary Advisory Board. Bishop Conlon has previously served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Pontifical College Josephinum and as a member of the USCCB Committee on Marriage and Family life.
The NCCS Executive Board approved a new activity developed by the International Committee to help youth and adults learn about and share the lives of the Martyrs of Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

The program will encourage participants to be good citizens of the world and emphasize the importance of their involvement in the World Scout Jamboree that will be co-hosted by the Boy Scouts of America, Scouts Canada, and Asociación de Scouts de México at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in 2019.

All youth and adults — Scouts or non-Scouts, Catholic or non-Catholic, male or female, American or international — are welcome to participate in the program and learn how the Gifts of the Holy Spirit can help them to defend their faith.

To earn the patch, Scouts and leaders will be asked to complete several requirements and activities to learn about what it means to be a martyr, what it takes for Catholics to defend their faith and “take up the cross daily.”

The Martyrs of Canada, the United States, and Mexico program was introduced at the recent BSA National Jamboree and will conclude at the National Jamboree in 2021. At the conclusion of the program, plans are to introduce a new activity to encourage Scouts to participate in the World Scout Jamboree to be held in the summer of 2023.
FAREWELL NOTE FROM
EPISCOPAL LIAISON TO NCCS

August 1 of this year marked a significant change in my life and association with NCCS. On that day my term as the Episcopal Liaison to NCCS came to an end. Because of the new approach of the Conference of Bishops to limit Liaisons to three year terms with one extension as is the case with all the committee memberships of the Conference, my second term would have ended in December of 2016. Because of my 25 year history with the St. George Trek, I requested that I remain in the position until NCCS celebrated the silver anniversary of that magnificent program. Being able to be part of the Jamboree Mass as Liaison was another bonus for me and thus Aug. 1 was determined to be the end of my time as Liaison.

These past few years have been quite busy and in some instances difficult and painful. However, because of the fact that so many people believe in the power and value of the program offered by the Boy Scouts of America and that I was able to be a real bridge between the Bishops and the BSA during the major changes in the Scouts’ policies, the difficulties became opportunities for personal growth and fulfillment. Many bishops have shared with me that the changes in policies truly awakened in them the values of Scouting and the necessity of stressing in their dioceses that chartered partners OWNED and DIRECTED the leadership of the units under their care. The understanding that Scouting can indeed be viewed as a viable youth ministry in their dioceses became quite evident. Yes, we lost some units…but the ones we held on to became stronger and new units will be chartered with a much clearer understanding of how Scouting can be a part of the ministry of the Church.

While these issues took much of my time and effort, my terms as your episcopal advisor were marked with many joys and much satisfaction. Working with wonderful people in the leadership of NCCS, and in the leadership of BSA as well, created memories that have brought me great joy. Succeeding Padre and being extremely thankful for his continued presence with the group was great as well. I must say however, that with all of this, the greatest satisfaction came when I saw the continued success of the St. George Trek and the programs that brought me back to Philmont each summer. Seeing the effects that our Catholic involvement with Scouting has brought to our young people makes it all worthwhile.

I will miss the formal involvement, but I cannot put aside my 40-year connection with this great movement, my many years of national leadership, my time as World Chaplain and particularly my love affair with Philmont and the St. George Trek. I will still be around to help in ways that I can for as long as I am able.

I offer my congratulations to Bishop Dan Conlon, a true friend and supporter of Scouting, as he assumes the role as Episcopal Liaison and promise my prayers for the continued well-being of Scouting in the Catholic Church.

+Robert E. Guglielmone
Bishop of Charleston

Philmont from a seminarian’s perspective shows appreciation for Scouting experience

Each summer, seminarians across the country work in parishes, attend seminars, are Scout chaplains, and do a wide variety of assignments to expand their experiences and grow in their faith. One seminarian from across the country is chosen to work at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, N.M. to work alongside of the Catholic chaplains who come in to minister to the needs of the Catholic staff that work at Philmont and Scouts that do treks in the mountains of New Mexico. Nick Shiver from the Diocese of Charleston was the seminarian chosen to serve for the summer.

Nick’s journey is a little bit different from the others. He spent his first two years of college at the US Military Academy at West Point and joined the seminary last year. He attended Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas. This fall, he will be going to the Theological College at the Catholic University of America in Washington D.C. Nick was very impressed with the mission and ideals of the Scouting movement and especially Philmont Scout Ranch. He saw young men and women that were very confident and well prepared for the strenuous backpacking treks that would start at 6,600 feet above sea level and go to 12,000 feet. Each day was refreshing to him because of the physical beauty of the area. On 140,000 acres, the Scouts have the chance to escape the dependence on cell phones and be able to experience God’s Country. He particularly enjoyed the night’s “thorn and roses” exercises as Scouts shared the ups and downs of their day.

Nick has grown this summer in his faith and has a better understanding of the values of the Scouting movement and of Catholic Scouting as a youth ministry.
Apostolic Nuncio celebrates Jamboree Mass

Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, was the celebrant of the Jamboree Mass and joined by co-celebrants Bishop Robert Guglielmone, Episcopal Liaison to the NCCS and Auxiliary Bishop F. Richard Spencer, Episcopal Vicar for Europe and Asia of the Archdiocese for the Military Services.

More than 8,000 Scouts, Scouters and guests braved the light rain to attend the huge Sunday Mass at the Arena.

Monsignor John Foster, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia from the Archdiocese of the Military, worked in the NCCS booth at the jamboree for several days. Scouts were amazed to see him and other priests making rosaries and talking with the Scouts. When blessing the rosaries Monsignor Foster would ask if the rosaries were for themselves or friends. If they were for someone else, he would ask them to pray with him to bless the rosaries.

Monsignor John Brady (right) and Rev. Jacob Lynn (United Methodist Chaplain) who tented and served in one of the subcamps, were the oldest and youngest chaplains at the Jamboree. Reverend Jacob escorted Monsignor Brady for a day, and when a staff member suggested they try scuba diving, they both accepted. Monsignor Brady experienced the first U.S. national jamboree in Washington, D.C. in 1937 and has attended most of them since...
“Scouting develops generosity, service and fraternity, which are all values "our world sorely needs,"" the Apostolic Nuncio told the Catholic Scouts gathered for Mass on July 23 during the annual Boy Scouts of America National Jamboree.

by Jim Weiskircher

Every four years, the BSA holds the National Scout Jamboree. Taking care of almost 9,000 Catholics attending, or on staff, is a daunting task requiring enough priests and staff to man the sub-camps and the NCCS booth.

Mass was held in every sub-camp each morning at 6:30. Priests in the sub-camps were assigned to the medical group, to minister to the troubled Scouts, or just to be there to listen. The number of priests attending the Jamboree has declined over the years, so our priests were extremely busy.

This year, associate National Chaplain, Father Joe Powers put out a call to the priests to ask them to work at the NCCS booth if they could spare some time and the priests responded. When Scouts would make a rosary, they were able to get them immediately blessed and spent time talking to the priests. Scouts were not only making the rosaries for themselves but also for family members, sick friends, and fellow Scouts. The number of rosaries made this year was up more than over 40% from previous years. This is a remarkable increase given the fact that we lost a day with the visit of the President of the United States. One of the reasons for the increase was the number of priests that spent time in the NCCS booth.

Eagle Scouts Auxiliary Bishop Richard Spencer, Episcopal Vicar for Europe and Asia, and Monsignor John Foster, Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia from the Archdiocese of the Military worked in the booth for several days. Scouts were amazed to see Bishop Spencer and other priests making rosaries and talking with the Scouts. When blessing the rosaries, Monsignor Foster would ask if the rosaries were for themselves or friends. If they were for someone else, he would ask them to pray with him to bless the rosaries. Several times the person would have tears in their eyes.

The booth allowed us to highlight the programs of the NCCS through the religious emblems and religious activities. The staff working the NCCS booth were not just there to help Scouts and Scouters to make a rosary but were there as youth ministers. Making a rosary would normally take about 25-30 minutes and during that time, they discussed their faith and what was going on in their lives. The staff was able to talk about saying the rosary and what it meant to us as Catholics. Every group that you worked with was different. Sometimes the conversations would be very light and other times very deep. One Scout had just lost his mother in the past year to cancer and was distressed that his father was getting married already. He just wanted to talk and to have someone just listen.

Scouts braved the light rain to attend the huge Sunday Mass at the Arena. Archbishop Christophe Pierre, Apostolic Nuncio to the United States, Bishop Guglielmone, and Auxiliary Bishop Spencer concelebrated Mass for more than 8,000 participants. Archbishop Pierre spoke of what Scouting meant to him as a youth in France and the impact that it had on his life. His full homily is reprinted in this issue of the Bridge.

Thank you to all that gave of their time, talents and treasures to help the Scouts at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree to understand that Catholic Scouting is Youth Ministry.
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski

In 1972, Pope Paul VI authorized the NCCS to name our new unit recognition in his honor. Today, 45 years and four popes later, quality Catholic-chartered Scout units still can qualify for this recognition.

This year the qualifications have been expanded and for the first time, the NCCS, like the BSA, will recognize three levels of accomplishment. This newly re-titled recognition is now the National Catholic Unit Excellence Award. Pope Paul VI’s coat of arms continues to be used.

The program challenges units to set yearly goals emphasizing use of religious programs and activities and then accomplish them during the year. Are you meeting your unit’s goals for 2017? Scouting is Youth Ministry!

Wonder if we will see a new patch (or three) for this?

St. George Trek crews find Faith on the trail

By Elizabeth Harper

As the sun set behind a ridge in the distance, a group of eight Crews gathered in an open field in front of a semicircle of totem poles. The sky was still full of clouds from the heavy rain that had been falling all day, but the participants were in good spirits, laughing and joking around with each other. The rendezvous was the first time the eight crews, part of the St. George Trek, had seen each other since hitting the trail a week earlier.

The St. George Trek, sponsored by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, is meant for Catholic Scouts who want to hike Philmont in a religious context. Up to two Scouts can be nominated by each diocese and apply to go on the trek. Father Gerard Gentleman, the director of the trek, selected applicants who have the physical capabilities and the emotional and spiritual maturity to fulfill all trek requirements.

“It’s similar goals,” said Gentleman about why Scouting and the church work together so well. “We’re providing young people with skills that they need to grow into adulthood. So even in the sense of faith life, growing up in your faith, we’re about the same thing.” Although each Crew is given a separate itinerary, a crucial part of the St. George trek is a two-night layover at Cimarroncito where all 78 participants catch up and participate in faith-based programming together. “I think we are trying to figure out who we are every single day and how to become a better person,” said Sam Lewis, from the Diocese of Cincinnati.

On their second day in Cimarroncito, a torrential downpour forced the St. George Trek to rearrange their schedule. Instead of having Mass outside, the staff allowed them to use the indoor bouldering gym. It was a tight fit, squeezing that many people in the small building, but the participants were cheerful and eager to have Mass.

The juxtaposition of High Adventure Scouting and Catholic living is highly appealing to those who apply for the St. George Trek.

“What interested me was the fact that I’d be in a Catholic environment in Philmont,” said Sean McCabe, from the Diocese of Palm Beach. “Just going to Philmont alone is a magnificent thing, but then being in a Catholic environment inside of the best Scout Camp in the world. That’s just a once in a lifetime opportunity.”

The trek is also a unique way to introduce participants to discernment. The presence of the religious Advisors allows the participants to see vocations in a new light and to ask questions they might not have had the opportunity to otherwise.

“For me, it was primarily that it was a vocation/discernment retreat, and that it was a big backpacking thing. I’d never done anything like that, so that was interesting,” said Anna Blanchard, from the Diocese of Phoenix.

Gathered in the field on their first night in Cimarroncito, Program Director Father Mike Santangelo talked to the participants about sin and forgiveness. Following the talk, the ten priests present spread out to give everyone the chance to go to Confession.

“The St. George Trek is the only High Adventure Catholic leadership opportunity in Scouting, which makes it a unique opportunity for Catholic Scouts. “It really combines two of my favorite passions,” said Nicholas Starvaggi, from the Archdiocese of Baltimore. “You’ve got Boy Scouts of America, which I love. I’m an Eagle Scout. I’ve been involved with Scouting for the past 11 years or so. And then you’ve got something that’s very dear and close to my heart, which is my Catholic faith. I was brought up Catholic. I love my faith. And the fact that there was something like this that combined these two things really stuck out to me and I knew it was something I had to go for.”
My dear friends in Christ, I am very happy to be with you this Sunday to celebrate this Mass as you gather for this National Jamboree. I am grateful to Bishop Michael J. Bransfield, Bishop of Wheeling-Charleston, for hosting us. I also wish to acknowledge the presence of Bishop Robert Guglielmone, Bishop of Charleston and Episcopal Liaison for the National Catholic Committee on Scouting, my brother bishops, and the priest chaplains. As the Pope’s representative to the United States, I want to express the Holy Father’s personal closeness to all gathered here and to assure you of his prayers.

I am particularly happy to be here as this jamboree brings back a flood of memories from my youth. I was a scout for five years, right up until I entered the seminary. I know the value of scouting in my own life as I have traveled all over the world serving as a diplomat, and I have seen the real fruits of scouting in my own family, especially in the lives of my nephews and nieces. Scouting develops those values which our world sorely needs: generosity, service, and fraternity. These values are the antidote to the selfishness and individualism of our society. Scouting also encourages you to work together as a team, to share adventures, and to have a greater vision of life and creation.

Amid the beauty of creation, Scouts ponder the God who made all things and who invites us to a relationship with Him. Scouting demands that we do our duty toward God, including worshiping Him. The first reading from the Book of Wisdom declares that “There is no God besides you who have the care of all.” Yes, we have a God who cares for us. He is a mighty God, but his might is the source of justice and His mastery over all things makes him merciful to all. God the Father has revealed Himself not only in creation, but also by sending His Son to be born, not in power and majesty, but in poverty and weakness – as a child.

Jesus, the Son of God, wanted to be close to the people and to teach them about the kingdom of His Father. It was not a kingdom of power or violence, but one of justice, love, and truth. To teach the crowds, Jesus told parables – stories – just like we share stories in Scouting. Jesus’ stories point us to something new, something beyond this world. In our Gospel, Jesus compares the kingdom of heaven to three things: a field with wheat and weeds; a mustard seed; and, finally, yeast. Before considering these, let us first consider that the kingdom of heaven itself points to the lordship of God Himself and His will as the guiding principle of our lives. With Him, our lives are filled with joy, blessing, and fruitfulness.

Before we can make known to others this joyful message of the kingdom, we must first attend to the “field” of our hearts. Jesus uses the image of the field of wheat to speak about the kingdom to show us that something small, even hidden, has been sown within us – the seed of faith and the power of the Holy Spirit whose temple we became in baptism. However, Jesus warns us that there is an enemy who has sown weeds among the wheat while the men were sleeping. Jesus reminds us of the need to be vigilant – to stay awake, to be vigilant and keep watch, to be ready to preserve the grace we first received in baptism. Scouts know about staying awake and keeping vigil by the camp fire; about being ready and alert; about watching for danger. We need to do the same with our souls, guarding them from the enemy.

After keeping watch over our souls, we can look to the needs of others, as a Church that goes forth. We need to keep watch but not only for our sake but for the sake of those around us. Our own commitment to holiness, to our neighbor, to the environment, and to being honest and decent can be an antidote for our culture and world. We all know people who do not know the Lord or who have fallen away from Him or the Church. How has this happened? Who has done this? An enemy has done this. Even though there are weeds among the wheat, we cannot lose heart. Pope Francis tells us:

An evangelizing community is always concerned with fruit, because the Lord wants her to be fruitful. It cares for the grain and does not grow impatient at the weeds. The sower, when he sees weeds sprouting among the grain does not grumble or overreact. He or she finds a way to let the word take flesh in a particular situation and bear fruits of new life, however imperfect or incomplete these may appear. (Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium, 24)

The Holy Father is asking you, the Scouts, to be vigilant – to look out for your brothers and sisters and to be patient. The important thing is to persevere, to not give up in your mission and to not give up on others, hoping that they might have new life.

Jesus next uses the example of the mustard seed, which grows from the tiniest seed into a large tree, so that even the birds can rest in its branches. This is one of the great values of scouting. Early in life, your scoutmasters and leaders plant the seeds of virtue within you and nurture those seeds, pushing you to work harder, to work together, to develop certain skills. Each day you strive to be better and better, refusing to settle for mediocrity. Gradually, just like the tree, you grow in maturity and become strong.

(continued on back page)
Homily of His Excellency Archbishop Christophe Pierre (continued)

Even when you struggle in faith or in prayer, trust in the Holy Spirit, who is showered down upon you and who not only intercedes with inexpressible groanings but who also intercedes for the holy ones according to God’s will. Confident in the Spirit, we can go forth on our mission. The Holy Father constantly refers to all the baptized as missionary disciples. A disciple is one who learns. We are taught about heavenly things by Jesus, the Divine Teacher, and by the Holy Spirit.

Only after learning from God, we can go forth on a mission. Scouts cultivates in young people a real spirit of adventure, a zeal for exploration and for mission. The Lord is counting on you. Jesus describes the kingdom of heaven like yeast mixed with flour which makes the whole batch of dough rise. You are the leaven which gradually ferments the dough – all those around us in society. We live in the midst of the world, described as wheat flour, in the parable. By our word and example, trying to be holy and just right where God has planted us, we can make the whole batch – all those around us – rise! Our world today is plagued by isolation, selfishness and individualism. In contrast, Scouts know something about being together, including others, and teamwork. Everyone must contribute something. What is the Lord asking you to contribute to the mission?

Your presence here gives me confidence in the success of our mission. As I said, the scouts have been a blessing in my life and in the lives of so many others. The values I learned in scouts have supported my faith and supported me in my mission. I imagine all the adults here would say the same. One of the things that I found most impressive about scouts is their spirit of commitment and generosity. I would like to conclude with a prayer for generosity – the Scout Prayer – which I learned many years ago and invite you to make this prayer your own.

O Lord,
Teach me to be generous
To serve You as You deserve
To give and not to count the cost
To fight and not to heed the wounds
To labor and not to seek for rest
To toil and not to seek any reward
Except that of knowing that I am doing your holy Will.