

A Saint George Trek Story

by Austin Canon

In the summer of 1995 two young men attended the Saint George Trek at Philmont Scout Ranch in New Mexico. One, Thomas Coogan, was a seminarian and the other, Jason Gries, a high school student



Bishop Daniel Conlon, Crew Advisor (Standing 5th from left). Seminarian Brian Roeseler, Crew Advisor (Seated right).

interested in having a good time at Philmont. Fate brought them together in the same crew with Tom as Advisor and Jason the Leader of that crew. At the end of the trek and after many long conversations, Jason gave his Crew Leader's American Flag to

Tom in appreciation for his friendship and interest.

Three years later the two came together again at Philmont for the Saint George Trek. This time however, Tom was now Father Tom and Jason was a seminarian. After a very successful journey through the mountains of New Mexico both went off to their lives as priest and seminarian. Again many hours of



Father Jason Gries, Crew Advisor (Standing left) and Father Tom Coogan, Crew Advisor (Standing Right)

conversation and prayer had brought them together.

Over the next seven years, Father Tom served as an Associate Pastor in a suburban New York Parish and recently became Director of

Vocations for his Diocese while Jason continued his studies and was ordained a priest by Bishop Gerard Gettelfinger, Bishop of Evansville, his Ordinary, in the spring of 2004. As his first priestly assignment, Father Jason was assigned by his

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Father Kevin Smith, Course Director, conducts a group conference at the end of the trek.



St. George Trek 2004: 63 Scouts and Trek Staff, Philmont rangers and Philmont Chaplains

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Chairman's Message

by Bray Barnes



Robert Kennedy once said, "Some people see things the way they are and say 'why'. I see things the way they could be and say 'why not'." Senator Kennedy had a

vision. We have seen many other people with vision, the founding fathers of this country, Lord Baden-Powell and Pope John Paul to name a few. But there are also many visionaries among us. You do not have to be famous or have your name become a household word to be a visionary. You just have to have the desire to help make a change.

Now is the time for us to start thinking about summer camp. Although the snow is on the ground in many parts of our country, it is now the time to have the vision to assure that our Scout camps have chaplainry services, and, at the very least, Sunday Mass. Diocesan chairs and chaplains, should be talking with their local council executives now about assuring that Catholic Scouts can fulfill their "Duty to God." If you happen to serve on a council or district committee, do not hesitate to assist in insuring that there are chaplains for summer camp. NCCS is very proud to say that for more than

50 years, there has been Catholic Chaplainry at Philmont. You, too, can have a tradition of long time Catholic Chaplainry at your camp.

Speaking of Philmont, have you been to the "Scouting in the Catholic Church" training course? If not, you should have the vision now to attend. Thanks to the hard work of National Vice Chair Ed Martin and National Associate Chaplain Father Ray Fecteau, the course has been updated and last year was the first time the new course syllabus was used. The feedback that has been received has been very positive and the "new" course will be offered again this year. Another exciting faculty has been assembled and I am sure that you will not be disappointed. I have talked with Scouters throughout this country who have attended the course and each has said what a wonderful experience it was. They have prepared themselves to better work with their diocese and local Scout councils to provide youth ministry through the Scouting program. They have a vision!

The meeting of the national board and committees will take place in Reno, Nev. from April 5th to April 9th this year. Not only will your committees be meeting to discuss topics of interest to the way we provide youth ministry to Catholic

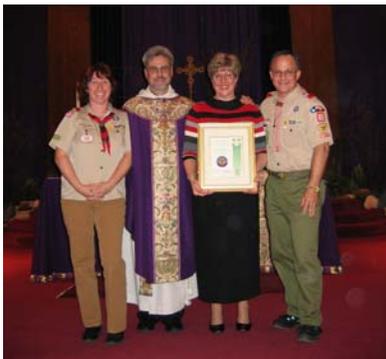
Scouts, the national board will meet to provide leadership for the next year. Our committee members work hard and have committed themselves to our mission. They are visionaries who continue to give leadership to the NCCS. Why don't you join us? Stop in at the committee meetings and rub elbows with these visionaries. It will be catchy, so don't be surprised if you find an area of interest and you, too, become a visionary for Catholic Scouting.

NCCS will provide the resources to help you have a vision. Our web site is a great source of information and should always be the place to start. "The Bridge" also provides insight into what is going on around the country and provides valuable material. Diocesan and regional meetings are always a source of good information and training as well. The NCCS standing committees as well as your regional chair and chaplain, are there to answer any question you may have or lend assistance.

Mother Teresa once said, "God does not require us to succeed, He only requires that we try." Are you ready to try? Are you ready to join your fellow Catholic Scouters and become a visionary? Are you ready to look at things the way they could be and say, "why not"? Do you have a **VISION**?

Texas Parish Honors Supporters

For the past two years, Troop 89 at St. Louis parish in Austin, Texas, has awarded the Order of the Golden Bow to show appreciation to those adults who are not directly involved in Scouting, but have played a significant role in supporting Scouting within the parish community. Shown in the photo are (from left): Nancy Dillingham,



Troop 89 Committee Chair; Father Larry Covington, Pastor at St. Louis and recipient in 2004; Judy Bonham, parish Business Administrator and this year's recipient; and Kirk Overbey, Troop 89 Scoutmaster. The award was presented at the annual Scout Sunday Mass on February 13. Kirk

learned about the Golden Bow at the *Scouting in the Catholic Church* training course during the summer of 2003. "The award has been a great way to help promote Scouting at the parish and community level and to show appreciation for the many folks who help make Scouting happen for Catholic Youth," Kirk said. St. Louis maintains an active Cub Scout Pack and Venture Crew in addition to the 47-year-old Troop.

Kirk Overbey
Troop 89 Scoutmaster
kirk.overbey@sbcglobal.net

Link Between Scouting and Future Leaders for the Church

by Bishop Gerald A. Gettlefinger, Episcopal Advisor

"The Catholic Church is fortunate to have in the Scouting movement so apt a vehicle for Christian development. It can be noted that many Church leaders today, clerical, religious, and lay, have come from the ranks of Scouting." (Excerpt from "SCOUTING FORMS CHRISTIAN LEADERS")

The NCCS Vocations Committee program "**Catholic Scouting provides opportunities to hear God's Call**" began at the NCCS Biennial Conference in St. Louis in April 2004. The theme of the Conference was "**A Time for New Discovery**" and was appropriate for launching this program to show that "many leaders in the Church" today have strong ties to Boy Scouts of America and Scouting under the auspices of the NCCS and the United States Council of Catholic Bishops. In previous issues of

Requests have been made for priests, deacons, and religious men with a positive story in their Scouting experience and connection to their discernment of a Church vocation. A compilation of the stories will be published in a booklet to be distributed at the 2005 Jamboree and posted on the NCCS Webpage later this year. One of our NCCS chaplains, Father Glenn Harris, Diocese of Peoria, Ill., caught the value of this project and shared his story and photos. Over 40 priests, deacons or religious men have taken time to participate as of February.

All priests, deacons, and religious men serving in the NCCS are strongly encouraged to participate. A copy of the survey was printed in the September 2004 issue of *THE BRIDGE*. If a request was sent to you via e-mail, please contact the Vocation Committee, hradford2@comcast.net .

USCCB Vocation Committee's *Pastoral Plan and the NCCS Vocations Committee (V.C.) Goals* will provide support and encouragement for each DCCS to be a part of the national strategy for Church vocation. The focus is on young people. The youth ministry we offer through Catholic Scouting for our youth to grow in faith and service is unmatched. The priests' stories booklet given to the Catholic Scouts at the 2005 Jamboree will show the strong link between Catholic Scouting and discernment of a vocation to serve the Church.

ASK THE GURU

There are many frequently asked questions regarding certain aspects of NCCS programs. This "Ask the Guru" column will attempt to clarify any questions you may have about these areas. Please send your inquiries to: Ask the Guru, NCCS, P.O. Box 152079, Irving, TX 75015-2079 and we will respond in future issues.

S. B. from Pittsburgh asked, "Under what circumstances can we, as a unit, present the Duty to God patch?"

The Guru replies, "Almost any. The use of this patch can be for many reasons such as recognition, appreciation, perk, achievement and promotional purposes. This is NOT a patch that needs to be earned for fulfilling a list of requirements. It is a beautiful patch, fully embroidered, with a loop on top to hang from a pocket button. Use it in as many situations as you see fit. Please refer to the NCCS website, www.nccs-bsa.org and click on "Awards/Recognitions/Patches" for complete information. If you desire further clarification, please contact us at the address above or e-mail: nccs@netbsa.org.

Friends and Family

Continuing with this issue, we will be informing you of items of interest of those we work with. This will make everyone aware of those with sickness and need our concern and prayers, those who have been given awards or promotions, retired, those who have passed away and other information that needs to be passed along. Please send your comments to John Ribar, ribarr@aol.com or mail to 9328 Springbrooke Circle, Louisville, KY 40241.

Please keep in your prayers and thoughts:

- **Jack Thompson** who is recovering from illness at home.
- **Carol Oldowski** whose stepmother passed away recently.

Please be aware that:

- **Father Don Hummel**, Past National Chaplain, has been appointed by the Archbishop of Newark to become Director of Continuing Education and Formation of Priests for the Archdiocese. Congratulations, Father Don.
- **Father Randy Cuevas**, formerly a National Chaplain, has returned to his assignment as Director of Catholic Ministry at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, LA. He has just completed a tour of duty in Afghanistan as the only Catholic Priest in the country. Colonel Randy is in the Air Force Reserves. Welcome home Father Randy and thank you.
- **Bob Mazuka**, formerly Scout Executive in Pittsburgh, has been promoted to be the new Director of Development Group for the Boy Scouts of America. Bob was on the NCCS staff at our Philmont Training Course in 1990. Congratulations Bob. We look forward to working with you.

The Year of the Eucharist: A Potential Religious Activity

By Edward P. Martin, NCCS Vice-Chair

Are you looking for a topical theme for your next diocesan religious activity? If you've been reading the Catholic press lately, you probably know that Pope John Paul II has inaugurated a Year of Prayer on the Eucharist and has asked us to promote relevant initiatives. Following are some ideas to consider.

Part of this Year of the Eucharist is a call to prayer and adoration centered on the Eucharist. Tim Wenzl, a member of the Dodge City diocesan Catholic committee on Scouting, was inspired during such an adoration. He developed a patch program promoting the Year of the Eucharist. Requirements and other information can be had by contacting Tim at (620) 227-1556 or twenzl@dcdiocese.org.

Years ago in 1976, a group of Catholic Scouts from the Diocese of Columbus (Ohio) attended the International Eucharistic Congress in Philadelphia. They were so inspired by what they heard and experienced that they developed the St. Tarcisus religious activity emblem program for other Boy Scouts in their diocese. The program invites Scouts to renew their fervor for the celebration of the Eucharist through an understanding of the hungers the Eucharist satisfies. Kevin Miller, Chairperson for the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting in Columbus, says the program is still popular today nearly 30 years later!

Last November, the Holy Father blessed six monstrances that will be circulated throughout the world calling people to pray before the Blessed Sacrament. Check when one of the monstrances may be visiting your diocese and organize a special adoration time for Scouts. Serra International is actively promoting this effort, so you may want to contact your local club to explore ways in which your Scouts can participate.

Here's a thought for developing

a vocation promotion tie-in: the Holy Father has said that the Eucharistic Prayer for Vocations will be a great source of inspiration and encouragement for our young people. Lives centered on prayer and adoration will give them the openness and strength to "make courageous choices" like priesthood and consecrated life. Make copies of this prayer and say it at Scout meetings, Masses, and Eucharistic adorations.

Eucharistic Prayer For Vocations

Lord Jesus Christ,
Son of the Eternal Father,
Son of the Virgin Mary,
we thank you for offering
your life in sacrifice on the Cross,
and for renewing the sacrifice
in every Mass celebrated throughout the
world.

In the power of the Holy Spirit
we adore you and proclaim
your living presence in the Eucharist.
We desire to imitate the love you show us
in your death and resurrection
by loving and serving one another.

We ask you to call
many young people to religious life,
and to provide the holy and generous priests
that are so needed in your Church today.

Lord Jesus, hear our prayer. Amen.

-- Composed by Justin Cardinal Rigali

Again, Pope John Paul II's hope for this Year of the Eucharist is to strengthen the awareness of the faithful that the Eucharist is the "source and summit" of the life of the Church:

*Above all, love the Eucharist,
never tire of celebrating it...
know how to put it at the
center of your personal and
community life so that
communion with Christ will
help you make courageous
choices.*

Surely, other diocesan committees can do the same, or something similar, to promote a focus on the Eucharist this year. And not just for Boy Scouts, but for Cub Scouts, and Venturers, too! I'm sure there must be others who have

conducted similar events. Should anyone be interested in sharing their programs or ideas, please send them to me at martinedp@hotmail.com and I will see that they are made available.

More information on proposed activities to celebrate the Year of the Eucharist may be found by searching the internet using "year of the Eucharist", and at the following Web addresses:

www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20041014_anno-eucaristia_en.html

www.catholicculture.org/year_eucharist/eucharist_main.cfm

www.adoremus.org/Bishops_Yr_Eucharist.html (List of activities and pronouncements by diocese)

www.cdeducation.org/oym/dccs/local.htm (Columbus Diocese St. Tarcisus emblem program)

www.dcdiocese.org/swkregister/Jan_30_05/scoutpatch.htm (Dodge City Diocese patch program)



St. Tarcisus
religious activity patch

My Invitation to You... Philmont 2005 – Scouting in the Catholic Church

By Gordon P. Stiefel, 2005 NCCS Course Director

Regardless of how you are involved in Youth Ministry, consider reading this as a sign of your call to be a participant in the 2005 National Catholic Committee on Scouting® Course at Philmont Scout Ranch, Cimarron, N.M.

The course is designed to improve your understanding of and participation in the mission and programs of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting® as you minister at your local level to the youth you serve.

This year the date of our course is sandwiched in between the BSA National Jamboree and World Youth Day, Cologne. Please accept my personal invitation to be with us at Philmont, arriving at the ranch on Sunday, August 7, 2005. Maybe this is the year you will make the commitment to this awesome mountain top Scouting as-youth-ministry-experience.

After last year's successful start, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting® is continuing the process of revising the course. This year the goal is to replicate the success of 2004 and make it even better.

Our course title "Scouting in the Catholic Church" attempts to meet the needs of all who labor in the field of Scouting as Youth Ministry. Laity, clergy, religious, youth ministers, Scout Execs, members of the Council/District Key 3, council membership chairs, vocation directors, youth ministry directors, CYO Directors, pastors, COR -- all who seek to better serve our youth through Scouting as Youth Ministry are welcomed and encouraged to attend.

The theme of the course is to share the vision that Scouting is Youth Ministry in our Catholic Church as well as share ways to better grow and deliver the message that Scouting is Youth Ministry. Come prepared to learn and share some of the tools of this important work as well as have a good time doing it.

We have a great faculty staff in place to deliver to you this beautiful mountaintop training experience.

The 2005 Faculty Team:

Ms. Susan Barriball, Chair, NCCS Training Committee

Father Ray Fecteau, Associate National Chaplain

Mr. Ed Gargiulo, Immediate Past National Chairman

Mr. Gordon P. Stiefel, National Chair, Religious Emblems Committee and 2005 Course Director.

All members of this team have previously served on the NCCS Philmont Faculty. Combined, they have over 100 years of service in Scouting in a wide array of parish, diocesan, regional, and national positions.

If you have never been to Philmont – this is your year. If you have been to Philmont, this is the year to answer the call back. Getting to Philmont requires significant commitment and planning. Start today. Start by visiting <http://www.scouting.org/philmont/ptc/attending/index.html> to get all the details about attending a Philmont conference. Then make your travel plans to get to the ranch.

Space is limited. Be a part of this select group answering the call to Philmont this summer by asking your council or diocese today how you can participate in a Philmont Training Course. Invitations to apply are also available from Barb Nestel, nccs@netbsa.org, at the NCCS National Office.

Come to the mountains of Philmont and sing with us this summer. Join us August 7 – 13. Email or call **now** for your invitation to apply. Answer the call... Sing... here I am Lord, going to Philmont this summer..

DID YOU KNOW...

Orders for supplies and merchandise from NCCS must be made by mail, email or fax. No phone orders will be accepted.

NCCS does not bill and payment is required with all orders. All email and fax orders must include credit card information.

All orders requesting expedited delivery service will be charged an additional \$20 fee. For Saturday delivery the fee is \$35.



On the Road to Sainthood

Stephen Kaszap was a Hungarian Boy Scout who entered the seminary. He dedicated his life to God, but died at age 19. Read his story and how Catholic Scouting organizations are trying to have him declared a saint by the 100th anniversary of Boy Scouting. He is likely the first Boy Scout to be considered for sainthood.

Read more at the NCCS web site: www.nccs-bsa.org.

The Ten Commandments Hike VI

"In the early hours of dawn, amidst the pouring rain, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub's, their Leaders and Parents, braved the adverse weather to attend the Sixth annual 'Ten Commandments Hike' of the San Gabriel Valley Council of the Boy Scouts of America."

Approximately 150 participants joined together to explore each other's religions and to gain respect and understanding for each other's beliefs on the morning of Monday, February 21, 2005. They met in the middle of lightning, thunderstorms and downpour at St. John Coptic Orthodox Christian Church in



Scouts carrying in the Ark.



Monsignor Alexei Smith, Rabbi Gil Kollin and Father Augustinos Hanna

Covina, to hear various members of the Clergy explain the tenets of their individual faiths and how the Ten Commandments apply to their

lives as Scouts. Normally the Scouts would have hiked about 5 miles, in the course of the day, to the various participating worship centers in the area, but due to the inclement weather the hike was altered to have the speakers come to them.

Host was Father Augustinos Hanna, St. John Coptic Orthodox Church. Invocation was by Reverend Dr. Thom Johnson, Prince of Peace Lutheran Church. Those that came with less than one notice on the

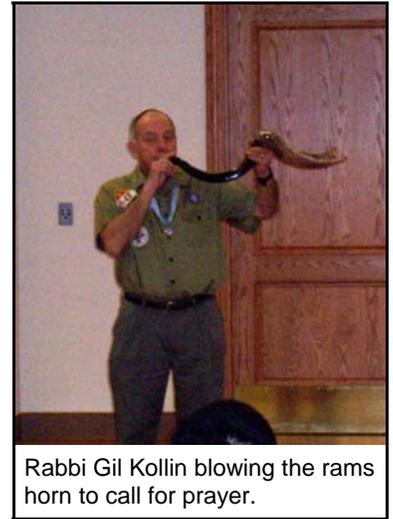


Assistant Pastor Ernie Johnson, First Presbyterian of Covina with the ark in the back ground with the Scouts in the lower level meeting room.

reschedule were Father Peter Stratos, St. Nectarios Greek Orthodox Church and Shrine, Sr. Crnich and Sr. Tate, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; Rabbi Gil Kollin, Pasadena Jewish Temple and Assistant Pastor Ernie Johnson, First Presbyterian Church.

Dignitaries present, included L. A. County Supervisor Mike Antonovich and his family, the Mayor of Covina, His Honor Kevin Stapleton, and David Olivas a representative from U. S. Congressman David Drier's office. Also present, representing the Archdiocese of Los Angeles, was Monsignor Alexei Smith, Office of Ecumenical/Interreligious affairs.

This annual event has "spun off"



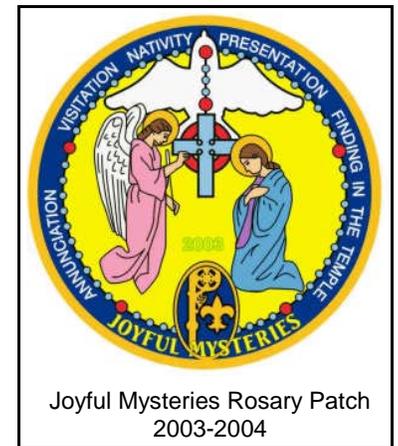
Rabbi Gil Kollin blowing the rams horn to call for prayer.

similar events at 18 different Councils from the Dallas area to the Aloha Council, in Hawaii. "Everyone agreed that the event was a moving and meaningful experience for all!" commented event organizers Jim Shivers and Reverend Dr. Paul Clark.

ROSARY PATCH PROGRAM

by Sam Bridgeman

The Rosary Patch Program is a religious activity. It will feature four different five inch patches, one patch for each set of Mysteries covering a period of four years.: 2003-2004 the Joyful Mysteries; 2004-2005 the Luminous Mysteries; 2005-2006 the Sorrowful Mysteries; and 2006-2007 the Glorious Mysteries. Some of the questions may require some research (biblical references are made in some cases). However, the purpose of earning the Patch is to further your understanding of the birth, ministry, passion and resurrection of Jesus



Joyful Mysteries Rosary Patch 2003-2004



Luminous Mysteries Rosary Patch 2004-2005

Christ with the hope that the Rosary will become a part of your daily prayer life.

At the NCCS Conference in Reno, Nev. the first week of April, the patch and program material will be proposed for approval for the Sorrowful Mysteries. When approved, it will be available for distribution as of July 1. Contact the chairman of your local diocesan Catholic committee on Scouting. Additional information is available on the NCCS website at www.nccs-bsa.org.

Bishops' Dinner

by Bray Barnes



Bray Barnes congratulates Supreme Knight Carl Anderson

The air was chilly and crisp, the leaves were off the trees and the town was still buzzing about the recent elections. It was November in Washington, DC. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops was about to begin the annual meeting. On Sunday evening the National Catholic Committee on Scouting hosted a dinner at The Kennedy Center. This year's honoree was the Knights of Columbus who, through their councils and assemblies sponsor more than 40,000 Catholic Scouts.

The evening started on the box tier level at the Eisenhower Theater where guests were entertained by members of the National Symphony Youth Orchestra. Dinner was then served in the "Bird Room", where a large collection of rare porcelain birds and other rare antiques are on display. During dinner, there was a

special harp presentation by another young member of the Orchestra. This was immediately followed by a solo violin rendition by a young 15-year-old Orchestra member who received a standing ovation. National Chair Bray Barnes presented a special recognition to Bishop John M. Smith, Diocese of Trenton, for his long time support of Catholic

Scouting in the diocese. Recently, Bishop Smith, an Eagle Scout, rearranged his schedule in order to be able to say Mass at the New Jersey State Police/ Boy Scouts of America Camporee for more than 500 Catholic Scouts and Scouters. Also present at the dinner was Major James Grant from the State Police and a Co-chair of the Camporee.

Chairman Barnes then spoke of the long relationship between the NCCS and the Knights of Columbus and how it has grown over the years. In response, Supreme Knight Carl Anderson said the Knights were proud of their work with Scouting and pledged to continue to grow the relationship between the two organizations. The Supreme Knight also spoke of the many benefits of Scouting and the impact Catholic Scouting has had over the years. Supreme Knight Anderson, a First Class Scout, recited the Scout Oath and Law, and told of the many values that have been taught throughout the years.

Along with the Supreme Knight and the National

Chair, also in attendance were the Supreme Chaplain Bishop Daley, NCCS Episcopal Liaison Bishop Gettelfinger, National Chaplain Father Roger LaChance, Past National Chaplain Father Don Hummel, Associate National Chaplain Father Ray Fecteau, Virginia State Deputy Raymond Wycoff, Supreme Council Member George Hanna, Supreme Council Member James McClusker, BSA Regional Director Larry Otto, Relationships Director Don York, Associate Director George Sparks, National Capital Area Council Scout Executive Al Lambert, along with



(Left to Right) BSA Regional Director Larry Otto, Bray Barnes, Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger, Father Don Hummel, Father Roger LaChance in front of the Presidential Box at the Eisenhower Theater at the Kennedy Center

members of the Federal Administration, USCCB, Knights and Scouting.

In recognition, NCCS presented the Knights with a mantel desk clock and those in attendance each received a special gift in remembrance of the evening.

The evening concluded with the view of the Washington skyline from The Kennedy Center observation deck. Although the air was cold, everyone enjoyed the warmth of the Knights and Catholic Scouting fellowship.



Father Roger LaChance, Knights of Columbus Supreme Knight Carl Anderson and Bray Barnes.

ANOTHER SMOKE SIGNAL FROM MY TEEPEE!

By Gordon P. Stiefel, Chair, NCCS Religious Emblems Committee

Thanks, again, to all who shared a story or two about the great value of our NCCS Religious Emblems program when we were together in Pittsburgh at the NYCFM National meeting in December. Wow...time flies when you're doing Scouting as Youth Ministry!

Evening comes, morning follows...it's almost Easter! Soon and very soon RENO!!!

Lent is a great time for your diocesan religious emblems committee to review and reflect on what you have done well and what maybe your team could do better to encourage, support, and minister to more kids in your local diocese in Scouting through Youth Ministry.

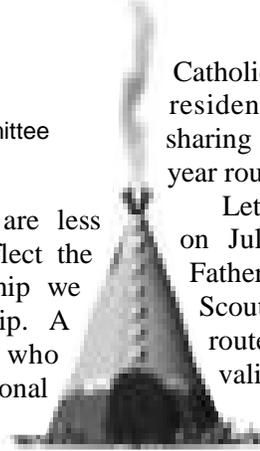
May I share with you just a few of our religious emblem success stories for 2004? We estimate based on actual emblems sold that over 13,000 youth completed the Light of Christ; over 10,500 youth completed the Parvuli Dei, 3662 youth completed Ad Altare Dei and almost 1250 finished the journey in completing Pope Paul XII. Together, we were of service in Scouting as Youth Ministry to almost 30,000 Catholic Youth. WOW! Great job!! Thanks be to God. Amen!

St. George, pray for us, as we now relook at those numbers over

years past. The numbers are less now than before. They reflect the same decline in membership we see in council membership. A colleague and friend who happens to be a professional Scouter, too, says it's the fumes that causes the drop. Fumes? As in perfume and car exhaust fumes! Ok, I'll buy that for PPXII! Kids have many options today!

Based on our estimate, over 15,000 youth who earned Light of Christ in 2002, the 2004 Parvuli Dei numbers at just over 10,500 look even more anemic. But if we do not have the kids in Scouting as Youth Ministry, how can they grow and develop in their faith through our Religious Emblems program. Easy, they can not.

Our strong emblems program is for naught unless we all continue the important work of our NCCS membership efforts, continue to partner with our councils for membership and unit growth, as well as grow all of our local diocesan programs in support of Catholic Scouting. Increase the education of coordinators, counselors and facilitators! Be of service to units! Have promotional brochures at all summer resident camps! Support a



Catholic chaplain for your summer resident camp programs. Faith sharing through emblems promo is year round!

Let us heed the message shared on July 30, 2003, by Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, "The Scouting experience, a privileged route for spiritual growth, is a valid path that favors the total education of the person. It helps to overcome the temptation to be indifferent and egotistic and to open oneself to one's neighbor and to society. It can effectively promote the demands of the Christian vocation: to be *"salt of the earth and light of the world"* (cf. Mt 5: 13-16)."

I challenge your diocesan Scouting team to hike the path to make no little plans for your religious emblems program for the year ahead as we all celebrate the season of renewal and new life at Easter! In 2003, we had 13,964 kids earn Light of Christ. Join me in being a beacon striving one youth at a time to reach at least 13,964 + 1 kids in 2005 to earn Parvuli Dei!

As your national religious emblems team gathers in Reno with a full agenda of work, please keep us in your prayers. Watch this teepee for a smoke signal in the next edition of all we were able to achieve!. Until we gather at the Lord's table... go talk to someone, anyone new about Scouting as Youth Ministry in our Church! Peace.

Rejoice! He is risen!

Doerr Memorial Scholarship Funds Available for St. George Trek

Chairman Bray Barnes is pleased to announce the establishment of the **Emmett J Doerr Memorial Scholarship**. Emmett Doerr, long time Catholic Scouter and the recipient of the first Brother Barnabas Founders award, passed away a few years ago and part of his last wishes was to continue to support Catholic Scouting. Barnes pointed out that Mr. Doerr has been the largest single financial supporter of the NCCS over the years. Because of his generous donation, NCCS has been able to create the St. George Fund which helps support and provide scholarships to the St. George Trek, Barnes said.

There will be three independent scholarships each year ranging from \$1000.00 to \$2500.00. Among the requirements, candidates have to be Catholic, high school seniors, and active in their parish, community and Scout unit. Additionally, they have had to have earned the religious award as well as the highest rank of their respective Scouting program.

Applications are to be submitted along with recommendation letters, school transcripts, and other supporting information to the Scholarship Committee, NCCS office in Irving, Texas. **The application can be obtained by downloading it from the NCCS web site.**

John Halloran, National Vice Chair-Finance, will chair the committee and it will be comprised of NCCS members as well as at least one member of the Doerr family. "I am pleased that NCCS is able to offer this opportunity to Catholic Scouts," Halloran stated. "I am looking forward to seeing the first set of applications that must be received no later than April 1st 2005," he continued.

"Once again, the entire Catholic Scouting family owes the Doerr family a deep debt of gratitude for all

Vocations Committee Believes Catholic Scouting Provides Opportunities To Hear God's Call

by Father Glenn Harris

Editor's Note: The vocations committee is seeking information from priests who were in Scouting as a boy. You will find their request on the following page. *The Bridge* will publish these stories as received from the vocations committee.

I received my Eagle Scout Award in 1982. In 1983 I became a Vigil Honor member of the Order of the Arrow. In 1984 I received the Ad Altare Dei Emblem. In the 1980's I was an active member of the Order of the Arrow, serving as treasurer and Vice Chief of my lodge in 1982 and 1983. In 1985, I had the privilege of participating in a Philmont trek.

I have worked in council summer camp programs for a total of 17 years, with the last 6 being camp chaplain. After my ordination in 1992, I became a member of the NCCS and served a year as Advisor to the Vocation Committee. In 1993 I was appointed the Catholic Scout Chaplain for the Diocese of Peoria.

It was Catholic Scout leaders



Ad Altare Dei presented to Glenn by Father Francis Kasperski

who proved to be the pivotal influence in my decision to pursue a vocation to the priesthood. Like many young men, I did not take my duty to God all that seriously. It was the Scout leaders at my Eagle Board of Review who first challenged me to see the importance of going to church. It was my Order of the Arrow advisor who first suggested that I might think about the priesthood.

If it weren't for those leaders being God's instruments, I probably wouldn't be a priest today.

Yours in Scouting,
Father Glenn Harris

1216 N. 6th ST
Chillicothe, IL 61523
Phone: (309) 274-3809
e-mail: ghh091764@msn.com



Fr. Glenn Harris recognized with the St. George in 2000 for his dedication to Catholic Scouting in the Diocese of Peoria.

that it has done in the past and continues to do for the youth of this country," Barnes stated. Barnes went on to say that he would be remiss if he did not thank John Halloran and

Finance Committee Advisor Father Dennis O'Rourke for all for their hard work in helping make this a reality.

International Committee

by Joseph DeStefano

One of the objectives of the NCCS International Committee is to maintain a close working relationship with ICCS (International Catholic Conference on Scouting).

The mission of the ICCS is to bring together national Scouting associations and committees, offering to the worldwide Scouting movement those values which characterizes our way of living as baptized Catholic Christians. Father Leo LeBlanc of the NCCS, is the Regional Ecclesiastical Assistant America.

With this in mind, the NCCS International Committee, in coordination with ICCS, developed the International Awareness Recognition Activity program in order to further the work of the ICCS by enabling representation of the NCCS chaplains at ICCS meetings and at International Scouting events.

The pin, patch and medallion insignia of the ICCS are being offered to any Cub, Scout, Venturer or Scouter (and others) in recognition of demonstrated awareness of Scouting in the Catholic Church throughout the world.

Note: This recognition activity is "NOT RESTRICTED" to persons involved in the BSA or to Catholics. The activity pin/patch/medallion may be earned by any other youth or adult, male or female, Catholic or not, who wishes to participate in this activity and recognition. For further information and application, log onto the NCCS Web @ www.nccs-bsa.org.

The International Committee encourages your participation in this activity for two reasons: First, to assist the ICCS in its effort to more effectively support the worldwide Scouting movement; and second, to gain some knowledge of International Scouting. Hopefully, this will increase your interest in worldwide Scouting and inspire you to learn more and possibly establish communication with a troop from a country of your interest.

The King is Dead

Whenever I see someone carrying a sign that proclaims, "The World is Ending Tomorrow" I tend to smile, hoping that's a bit premature. Knowing that the Membership Initiative (MI) ended December 31, 2004 makes me smile because I know it did..... or did it? Well, yes it did..... kinda. Officially, the MI did expire in December but it wasn't the beginning of the end, it was the end of the beginning.

While the MI did not reach its goal of 10,000 units, it did register a gain in total units. This was done during a period of some of the worst BSA recruiting years which, for many reasons, reduced its growth. Frankly, playing the "numbers game" was never the real purpose of the MI. Strengthening and growing the diocesan committees were of primary concern. Using our MI theme, "Scouting as Youth Ministry" has greatly helped this development with parents, chartered partners and parish youth ministers becoming more aware of NCCS programs, plans and procedures. We are seen not as a competitor to parish youth groups, but more as a good resource for activities, building youth leadership, training, youth protection programs and a multitude of other services.. "Duty to God" emphasis triggers much attention from parents searching to provide more and better values in the moral development of their children.

So where do we go from here? At the Standing Committee Meeting scheduled in Reno, Nev. during the first week of April, much discussion will likely focus on integrating the MI into the Membership Committee and exploring how best to continue the successes we had and minimize deficiencies. With the BSA introducing some new programs of their own, such as the collaboration with General Motors and the "Race to Scouting, "Soccer and Scouting" campaign, "Give every Kid a Chance program, Scoutreach and Hispanic Outreach we can do wonderful things for the youth of our dioceses. Wrap that all together with our Scouter Development course, Philmont Training experience, Jamboree and local area plans and we have active diocesan committees committed to support stronger Catholic units which is where the "rubber hits the road."

"The world is ending" and "The Membership Initiative is over" sound more like "The King is dead; long live the King."

Upcoming Events:

World Youth Day-Cologne, Germany-08/11/05 to 08/21/05

I would like to hear from any Catholic Scouters who will be attending this event and also to receive some feedback on your experience upon your return. Email jvdestefano@cox.net.

World Youth Day-Assisi, Italy-2007

It is never too early to start planning to attend this WYD. When detailed information is available, the details will be posted on the NCCS Website. Catholic Venturers ages 17 to 21 are encouraged to participate as young leaders.

Information regarding the NCCS, the International Committee and the ICCS is available on the NCCS website www.nccs-bsa.org.



Bethlehem's Peace Light Burns Brightly in Brooklyn

by Marie Elena Giossi

"Let there be peace on earth and let it begin with me," sang representatives of the Boy and Girl Scouts of America as an international symbol of peace and friendship arrived at JFK International Airport in Queens on December 4, 2004. Gathered in JFK's Our Lady of the Skies Catholic Chapel were two dozen uniformed Scouts from New York and New Jersey, representatives of the Catholic Committee on Scouting in the Diocese of Brooklyn and members of the Boy Scouts of America International Division. Together they anxiously awaited a Peace Light from Bethlehem. The Austrian Broadcasting Company began the Peace Light from Bethlehem program in 1989 as a charitable relief mission to help needy children in Austria and abroad. Each year, for the past 15 years, Austrian Boy Scouts and Girl Guides have traveled to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem a few weeks before Christmas to fetch a light from an eternal flame in the grotto of Christ's birth to bring back to Austria. Then Scouts representing more than 20 European countries go to Austria and carry the Peace Light from Bethlehem back to their homelands with a message of peace. The Peace Light came to New York in 2001 by Canadian Scouts who brought it to Ground Zero. In 2002, DHL delivered the Peace Light as a gift from Belgian Scouts and Guides to the Boy Scouts of America in NY. Last year the light didn't make it to the U.S. Fortunately, members of the diocesan Scouting committee had kept the 2002 Peace Light burning and spread that around the diocese.

This year, the Austrian Scout Movement, Austrian Airlines and Boy Scouts of America International Division arranged to bring the 2004 Peace Light to New York on Dec. 4. Two security guards and Dr. Thomas Ertlthaler, international commissioner of Austrian Scouting, flew from Vienna with the Peace Light in two

explosion-proof, British mining lamps, fueled by smokeless paraffin oil. Just 11 days earlier, Austrian Scouts had extracted the light from the eternal flame in Bethlehem.

American Scouts celebrated the light's arrival in New York with a prayer service, led by Father James Devine, Chaplain of Our Lady of the Skies; Father Daniel Weiscopf, Chaplain, Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting and the Rev. Patricia Evans, Chaplain, JFK Protestant Chapel. Ertlthaler presented a Christmas gift that needed no wrapping - the golden lamp containing the Peace Light - to Brian Long, coordinator of the Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting.

"We are one big family, especially in Scouting," said Ertlthaler. "This is a symbol of friendship, peace and Scouting."

Scouting is recognized as a worldwide force for peace, noted Paul Stanton, international representative for Boy Scouts in NYC. He informed the boys and girls that they're "peace ambassadors" who are working in unity with 48 million boys and girls in the Scouting program around the globe.

"We as Scouts in this area of the U.S. can participate in letting this light be a symbol of peace," noted Monsignor Robert Guglielmo, World Chaplain of the International Catholic Conference on Scouting and pastor of St. Francis de Chantal, Wantagh, L.I.

"Peace is possible but it doesn't happen like that," he said, snapping his fingers, "unless we're willing to make that happen." He recommended prayer as a path to

peace and handed out cards printed with St. Francis of Assisi's peace prayer.

The Peace Light was then distributed to 10 hurricane lanterns, which Scouts conveyed to locations in Brooklyn, Queens, Long Island and New Jersey. The light will go to Manhattan, Staten Island, Connecticut and could go to any number of other states.

In the Brooklyn Diocese, the flame will symbolically light Christmas displays at Visitation Monastery, St. Patrick, Our Lady of Angels and St. Anselm in Bay Ridge; St. Athanasius, St. Finbar, St. Rosalia-Regina Pacis and Our Lady of Guadalupe in Bensonhurst; Mary Queen of Heaven, Old Mill Basin; and St. Cecilia, Greenpoint.

The Peace Light is also available for distribution to other parishes, community groups and individuals. The light can be retrieved from St. Athanasius or Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, Forest Hills. Advance arrangements must be made and instructions for safe transport of the light are available at www.peacelightusa.org.

St. Rose of Lima Church, Rockaway Beach, will give the Peace Light a permanent home in their perpetual adoration chapel.



Caption - WARM WELCOME: Members of Boy Scout Troop 99 and Girl Scout Troops 2399 and 2095 from St. Athanasius were on hand to receive the Peace Light from Bethlehem at JFK Airport on December 4.

(Continued from page 1)

bishop to be a Crew Advisor on the 2004 Saint George Trek.

Father Kevin Smith, Course Director, knowing about Bishop



Father Leo McDowell, Crew Advisor (Seated, fourth from left). Father Gerard Gentleman, Crew Advisor (Seated, fifth from left).

Gettelfinger's intention to bring Father Jason to the Trek had invited Father Tom Coogan to come back and join with Father Jason as Crew Advisors. Once again the majesty, beauty and charisma of Philmont played its magic and the eleven young men assigned to their crew experienced an enjoyable and fruitful



Seminarian Javier Rivera, Crew Advisor (Standing left). Father David Vincent, Crew Advisor (Seated, center)

Calendar of Events

2005

March 22-27	An Easter Meeting	San Diego
April 509	Board/Committee Meeting	Reno, Nev.
July	Jamboree 2005	Fort A.P. Hill, Virginia
August 7-13	Philmont Training Conference	Philmont Scout Ranch
August 16-21	World Youth Day	Cologne, Germany



Father Tom Coogan presents a flag he received in 1995 to Father Jason Gries.

Saint George Trek experience.

At the closing Liturgy in Albuquerque, Father Tom had a special treat for Father Jason. He returned the flag he had originally received in 1995 to Father Jason in a frame with a picture of the two of them at the opening 2004 Liturgy and a picture of their original crew from 1995. Both have since returned to their responsibilities, Father Tom to his Vocations ministry and Father Jason to the ministry of a parish priest in Indiana.

50th Anniversary Celebration

The Catholic Committee on Scouting of the Diocese of Springfield, Massachusetts celebrated 50 years of organization and the 50th anniversary of the first presentation of the St. George Emblems in the diocese with a banquet in November, 2004. Bishop Timothy A. McDonnell presented two St. George emblems, two Bronze Pelican awards, and four St. Anne medals at the banquet. Over sixty past St. George recipients were present and they represented about one half of the living St. George awardees. Earlier in the day, the annual youth awards Mass was held at St. Michael's Cathedral in Springfield. Forty-five Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts from 16 troops throughout the diocese were presented Catholic Religious Emblems at a ceremony during the Mass. Scouting is sponsored in 40 parishes of the diocese with 68 units that include about 1700 youth and 800 adults.



David Garrison (center) of the Constantianian Order of Saint George congratulating the St. George Trek participants at the closing Liturgy in Albuquerque. He is joined by Father Kevin Smith, Course Director, (standing) and Archbishop Michael Sheehan, Archbishop of Santa Fe (Seated); Bishop Rene Gracida of the Constantinian Order and Bishop Gerald Gettelfinger of the Catholic Committee.

Questions or comments for the Bridge Editor?
Chris Hoelle
cdhoelle@tampabay.rr.com

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Questions or comments for the NCCS Webmaster?
Tony Madonia
Webmaster@nccs-bsa.org