



THE BRIDGE

The Newsletter of The National Catholic Committee on Scouting®

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NCCS outlines program to tackle issues of decreasing membership and meaningful revitalization of the Catholic Scouting program nationwide

By
Bill Guglielmi
Vice Chair for Membership

The next couple of years will be exciting ones for the future success of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. The Membership committee, under the leadership of Chair Joe Bouley and Adviser Father Donald Hummel, is embarking on an entirely new approach to stem the tide of decreasing membership and revitalizing the Catholic Scouting community nationwide.

Key elements of this effort include:

1. Repositioning the NCCS brand within the community to increase awareness, understanding, and affinity.
2. Strengthen relationships with charter partners and diocesan committees to forge meaningful relationships that expand Catholic Scouting's reach and impact.
3. Express the NCCS brand through the creation and use of relevant, appealing, and contemporary marketing.
4. Use the above elements to reverse the current decline in membership, and begin to grow Catholic Scouting throughout all US dioceses.

This effort will not be easy and will require a considerable amount of effort across the entire NCCS.

Key areas required include:

- * Initiatives designed to determine the real causes of membership decline by conducting causative research (hopefully in conjunction with a Training Committee initiative) that will provide NCCS leadership with accurate data (versus the wealth of anecdotal information currently available) concerning the root causes of our continuing decline.

- * Closer cooperation with other NCCS committees.

- * Promotion of new internal/external NCCS communications designed to deliver the Catholic Scouting message, to include membership initiatives to all involved or interested in the NCCS and Catholic Scouting in

general. These include, but are not limited to, reaching out to Regional and Diocesan members outside of such mechanisms as The Bridge, Facebook, and our website.

We are currently studying the shape and form of these new methods, so further information will be forthcoming in the future.

These constructs are not business as usual. The Membership Committee, and its leadership, are committed to make a difference over the next couple of years. I am fully committed to these efforts as well.

The time has come to stem our losses and move confidently into the future. The path will not be easy and cannot be accomplished without the dedicated support of all our Regional and Diocesan sisters and brothers to really make a difference.

Together we can support the National Chair's goals of Evangelization, Family life and Vocations.

In a time when Catholics are leaving the church at a younger age, it is important for us to be there for our Catholic youth and prepare them to lead productive Catholic lives.

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Catholic Scouting promoted at Catholic Youth Conference

By
John Doerr

The National Catholic Youth Conference, held in Indianapolis November 21-23, was attended by more than 20,000 youth, chaperones, and clergy. Members of the Region 7 Diocesan Committees and the National Catholic Committee on Scouting offered two booths to share information on the NCCS mission with attendees.

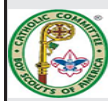
The Region 7 area focused around a version of the 'Spider Game' called "Team Leave No Trace", which challenged participant teams to work together to collect and dispose of objects that represented vices. Information and displays about NCCS Religious Emblems and Activities programs were abundantly available. Thousands of youth stopped by to take part in the Yo-Yo Challenge. They were each rewarded with a limited edition NCCS light-up yo-yo. By the start of the third day, 1,500 yo-yo's had been given out.



Father Gerard Gentleman, Associate National Chaplain demonstrates his yo-yo skills to the crowd.

The Region 7 staff also maintained a "Scout Camp" where hundreds of attendees relaxed and just hung out on camp chairs and hammocks around electric campfires.

The National Catholic Committee offered information about the St. George Trek, Scouting in the Catholic Church training, and the NCCS Scholarship Program. The next NCYC will also be held in Indianapolis in 2021.



National Catholic Committee on Scouting



FROM THE CHAIR Jim Weiskircher

On Monday, November 11th, the NCCS once again hosted a Bishop's breakfast at the USCCB Fall meeting in Baltimore. At the meeting, Bishop Conlon, John Doerr, and Fathers Joe Powers, Kevin Smith, and Gerard Gentleman spoke of the progress the NCCS is making on promoting Catholic Scouting as a Youth Ministry. They touched on the St. George Trek, chaplaincy, family Scouting, the growth of the scholarship program and **Evangelization, Family Life and Vocations.**

On November 21-23, 20,000 high school-aged youth assembled in Indianapolis for the biennial National Catholic Youth Conference. I did not know what to expect, since this was my first time at NCYC. I was expecting a 20' x 20' booth where we would be using two Brown Sea Island Challenges to bring youth into the booth and speak to them about the St. George Trek and the scholarship program. John Ribar, Julie & John Doerr, and Father Gerard joined me in working the booth.

I had no idea that Region 7 would be also have an impressive presence at the NCYC. Bob & Ben Rogalla, Theresa Dirig, Deb Sitz, Susan Barriball, Steve Chatot, and John Stockrider had set up a Scout camp with folding chairs, camp fires and tents to give youth a place to crash and rest. In a separate area, they had assembled what they called Spider. Participants at the end of 4 ropes, worked together to lift 'sins' and put them in the basket of reconciliation. They had set up a wall of Eagles and were able to do a great job in promoting religious emblems and activities. It never ceases to amaze me at the tremendous pool of talent that we have that volunteer their time, talents and treasures to form our youth.

Speaking of volunteering the BSA has just announced they are opening up applications for the 2021 Jamboree and I hope some of you will think about applying for serving in the NCCS booth at the Jamboree.

The entire Executive Committee would like to wish you a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Yours in Catholic Scouting as a youth ministry,

Jim

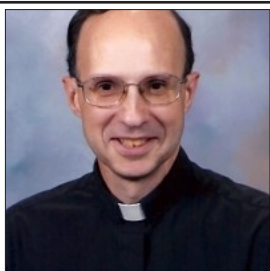
Wishing You a Blessed Christmas



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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The Chaplain's Corner

Father Joe Powers
National Chaplain



Dear Scouters,

Brother priests, believe it or not, it's time to begin the recruitment process for BSA's 2021 National Jamboree at the Summit in West Virginia. The dates are July 21-30, with staff reporting a few days earlier. My goal is to recruit a minimum of 20 chaplains to serve in various capacities. The majority will serve as Subcamp chaplains and live among the troops to provide daily Mass, hear confessions, provide counseling and guidance. Please watch for my email: powersjoe79@gmail.com. You can call me as well to express an interest: (816) 273-4193.

A group of Executive Committee members traveled to Baltimore in November to assist at the NCCS Episcopal Breakfast hosted by our USCCB liaison, Bishop Daniel Conlon (Diocese of Joliet). The breakfast is an opportunity to keep our bishops updated on Catholic Scouting and the BSA organization – and to answer questions or concerns. The bishops were told of our 3-year theme of Evangelization, Family Life, Vocations. Additional updates included chaplaincy at Philmont, the St. George Trek, and our training programs for adult leaders.

Two reminders: 1) the 2020 St. George Trek has slots available for qualifying youth. 2) I invite you to join us for the 2020 Biennial meeting in Chicago, April 23-26. A discount is to be given to first-time attendees.

May you enjoy a merry and blessed Christmas and a peace-filled New Year.

NCCS welcomes Scouts from Parma Eparchy

Recently the National Catholic Committee on Scouting received a letter from the Most Reverend Bohdan J. Danylo, Bishop of St. Josaphat Ukrainian Catholic Eparchy in Parma. In his letter he stated: "We believe that we need to reach out to the boys and girls within our community that are part of the Scouting movement and support Catholic programs/activities as developed and managed by the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. This outreach will be part of our eparchial youth ministry managed by the Eparchial Youth Committee."

He further stated that the eparchy would like to be actively involved in NCCS. The new chaplain is Fr. Vsevolod Shevchuk, and Andriy Harmatiy has been selected as the new chair. Currently the eparchy has forty -six parishes throughout the United States.



Bishop Danylo



Time running out to apply for St. George Trek

By
Fr. Mike Santangelo

Time is running out! The deadline to submit applications for the 2020 Saint George Trek is January 15, 2020. Those who are accepted to participate on the Trek will need time to ensure that they are ready for the physical requirements of a Philmont Trek. I currently have approximately 45 participants and there is a limited number of spaces still available. Those participants represent 30 different dioceses including the Archdiocese of Military Services.

Regrettably I have received only two applications from female participants and we therefore will not be able to field a female crew.



I am still in need of a few Advisors. Advisors are priests and seminarians who will accompany the crews into the back country and play a critical role on the Trek.

Philmont is still working hard at recovering from the Ute Park fire. Recently the management staff held a live streaming news conference giving an update on the efforts. It continues to be a major undertaking and will be ongoing for some time. Having been present during the fire and again this past summer I can attest to the hard work that is taking place. Although the burn scar remains, the fire did no damage to the spirit of those who call Philmont home.

The 2020 St. George Trek will be the same life changing experience for its participants as previous Treks were for those participants.

NCCS Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scholarship recipient: Eagle Scout Keegan Benfield of Salt Lake City

Keegan Benfield of Salt Lake City, Utah, member at St. Ambrose Catholic Church, Diocese of Salt Lake is a \$2,000 recipient of the NCCS Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scout Scholarship. He says, ***"I am committed to living a life of service and will continue to do so throughout all of my years. I think it's unfortunate that so many people choose not to volunteer or help others. Can you imagine what we could do if we all join together to accomplish what the individual could not?"***

Keegan began Scouting as a Bobcat and worked his way through the ranks to Eagle, Order of the Arrow and now Venture Crew. He also achieved Rank 1 in the Western Australia Bushranger Cadets, an environmental group, while living in Australia. He held numerous troop leadership positions and completed a Philmont Scout Ranch Trek. His Eagle Scout Project was developed after attending a community council meeting where the mayor discussed the homeless issues in the community. After conferring with a shelter and Catholic Community Services, Keegan organized the *Winter Warmth Clothing Drive*. His group collected 2,300 pounds of clothing from more than 650 homes. They sorted and organized the clothing and delivered it to homeless shelters.



Through his church Youth Group and Scouting he volunteered with Ronald McDonald House and the Good Samaritan Program House. He was also a volunteer teen counselor for Vacation Bible Camp and was selected to speak about his faith at the Salt Lake City Youth Rally.

Keegan is a member of the Millcreek Youth Council that works with city government. He has volunteered with Cottonwood Conservation and worked at food drives, pancake breakfasts and other community projects. Serving others outside his community is important to Keegan. He and his family have hosted students from both Japan and France. From 2017-2018, Keegan participated in Nepal Service Year through Youthline, assisting refugee students and their families, throughout the year, to transition to our culture. He then traveled to Nepal to serve the people there where he participated in a variety of construction, education, cultural exchange, community health, vocational and business development initiatives.

At Skyline High School, he will earn an International Baccalaureate and is a Joanie Day Service Scholar. Keegan is a member of the National Honor Society, Robotics, Gaming, Chemistry, Physics and Chemistry Clubs. He volunteers in the library, tutors his peers and gives IB new student orientations. Keegan will attend the University of Utah this fall.



NCCS Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scholarship recipient: Eagle Scout Declan Coster of Pittstown, N.J.

Declan Coster, of Pittstown, N.J., member of St. Catherine of Siena is a \$2,000 scholarship recipient of the NCCS Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scout Scholarship. Declan says, ***"I have transferred what I have learned in Scouting and my religion into all aspects of my life. This incorporation has helped me be a better person, leader and friend. I strive to be my best in everything I do."***



In Scouting, Declan was involved in restarting his inactive troop. Throughout the years, he has held many offices and led one den as their Den Chief from Tiger Cubs to Boy Scouts. Declan conceived the idea for his Eagle Scout project after several people were diagnosed with skin cancer at his former elementary school. To make the project successful, he worked with local professionals and a dermatologist, raised funds, built two twenty by twenty-foot pavilions, planted shade trees and built eight picnic tables. The area continues to be used as an outdoor classroom and shaded relaxation area during recess.

Through his school and community, Declan has worked with the United Way and raised money for Breast Cancer Research and Leukemia. Through Relay for Life he has led his team over the past four years and together they have raised over five thousand dollars for the American Cancer Society. Recognized for his service to the community, Declan was awarded the Union Township PTA Service Award and was a Union League of Philadelphia – Citizenship Award Recipient. In addition to his volunteer positions, Declan has taught tennis to young students and works as an Ocean Lifeguard for Long Beach Township Beach Patrol.

At his parish, St. Catherine of Siena, Declan not only earned the Ad Altare Dei Religious Award, but also returned the following year to assist with the retreat for other Scouts. He received the Archdiocese of Philadelphia Catholic Scout Award for completing all four religious emblems. He has also been an altar server and a leader in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

As Class President, all four years, at North Hunterdon High School Declan worked with the Student Council and school administration to make his school a better place.

He has served as a Peer Leader, assisting new students to adapt to the many changes experienced in high school. His awards include AP Scholar with Distinction, National Honor Society, Spanish, Math, Science, and Social Studies Honor Societies. Declan is a student at Lehigh University.



Did You Know...? By Bob Oldowski NCCS Historian

There is a little-known BSA recognition available that has been presented to only 18 individuals since its initiation in 2016. Three of those honored were NCCS' Fr. Don Hummel, Bray Barnes and John Halloran. These are awarded at the BSA's national annual meeting in May.

Titled the "National Duty to God Award", this recognizes "adult individuals who have demonstrated an exemplary history of transformational leadership in supporting and promoting the spiritual formation of Scouting". Nominations are open to candidates from all faiths and religious groups chartered by the BSA. More information is available at www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/



USCCB Cardinal Bernardin Leadership Award Winner — Fr. Matt O'Donnell, will serve as keynote speaker at NCCS Biennial banquet dinner in April

Father Matt O'Donnell will be the keynote speaker Saturday night at the biennial meeting in Chicago in April. He was named as the winner of the 2018 Cardinal Bernardin New Leadership Award, sponsored by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the anti-poverty program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"The Catholic Campaign for Human Development has been an important part of my life since 2005 when I served as the CCHD intern for the Archdiocese of Chicago, Father Matt said. I recall visiting housing projects with Cardinal Francis George, sitting with residents at kitchen tables and listening to their stories.

I remember reviewing grant applications and visiting community organizations committed to justice. I was inspired to be a part of a cohort of other young Catholics who desired to spread the message and work of CCHD as interns, and it was during my time as a CCHD intern that I discerned my vocation to the priesthood," he added.

As a seminarian at Mundelein, Father Matt was a part of the Peace and Justice/Gospel of Life Apostolate, which exists to spread the Good News of God's love for all mankind by promoting human life in all stages, especially for the most vulnerable,

poor, and marginalized. He also volunteered with Kolbe House Jail Ministry, spending time visiting the Cook County Juvenile Temporary Detention Center. His dedication to the poor as a seminarian even took him to the Archdiocese of Jos in Nigeria, where he lived for one month with the Our Lady of Apostle Sisters in the village of Zawan, volunteering at the orphanage and hospital there.

Registration information for the 46th biennial meeting is available at the NCCS website www.nccs-bsa.org. Register soon as rooms at the conference's discounted rates are limited.

Currently, Father Matt serves as pastor of St. Columbanus Parish on the South Side of Chicago. He has helped the parish food pantry become the one of the city's largest, distributing 2.5 million pounds of food to neighbors, and implemented numerous efforts to address the systemic causes of poverty. At St. Columbanus, Father Matt O'Donnell has built a living example of Pope Francis' vision of a field hospital church that exists to serve humankind and spread the Gospel of a loving God.



A VOCATIONS REFLECTION

By

Br. Andrew J. Kosmowski, SM
Vocations Chair

During the first weekend of November, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati's Catholic Committee on Scouting hosted our annual Catholic Scout retreat/camp-o-ree. We had many prayer experiences using the Church's liturgies in addition to the practice of Scout skills. On Saturday evening, we had a vocation panel to assist Scouts in better understanding how Jesus calls them to holiness. One question that I get as a Brother is why did I not seek the priesthood. This is a good question. There is no pressure to be a priest as only 30 percent are ordained in my order. That said, I acknowledged that I would serve my Brothers better as a lay religious instead of a priest.

As a Brother, I serve the Church as a spiritual brother to the Family of God. As my brothers did to me growing up, we tease each other gently. (If you come to my dinner table, consider yourself forewarned.) At the same time, that also means that I will help you as I am able.

I write this because on February 2, the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, since the papacy of St. John Paul II the Church recalls the many monks, nuns, brothers, and sisters who have served the Church and promotes vocations to consecrated life in general. On May 1, the Feast of Saint Joseph the Worker, Pope Francis has asked the Church to remember and promote the vocation of the Brother, which we have done since 2017. Remember us Brothers in your prayers, especially on these days.

Scout Troop 19 chooses symbolic history for its troop number

Scout Troop 19, was chartered to St. Catherine of Siena in Austin Texas, officially on the earliest allowable date for girl troops, February 1, 2019, but its members had been meeting informally for several months before that date. The founding members came from two sources: an all-girl Webelos den at Pack 12, and a Girl Scout Troop whose members had a strong interest in camping, hiking, and shooting sports. The troop, one of 346 Catholic girl troops nationwide, has 35 girls, which makes it one of the top 5 girl troops in the United States, and is growing on a steady basis as news of the troop's presence spreads throughout the Southwest Austin community.

Troop 19 picked its troop number for two symbolic reasons: 2019 was the year the troop started, and in memory of the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, the one that guarantees women the right to vote in US elections.



The girls of Troop 19 have been busy this year, camping virtually every month but also doing service activities such as flag-raising ceremonies at the Texas Capitol (once to celebrate the founding of the Scouting program in the US, and again to commemorate Congressional passage of the 19th Amendment), opening flags at a Formula 1 race, and serving holiday meals to disadvantaged senior citizens in Austin.

Troop 19 offers its Scouts abundant opportunities for camping, hiking, shooting sports, climbing, water sports (canoeing, sailing, snorkeling, kayaking) and other outdoor activities. The troop is currently planning a week-long sailing and snorkeling trip for the summer of 2020 and hopes to spend two weeks hiking at BSA's famous Philmont Scout Ranch in the summer of 2021. The girls are also active in advanced training offered by the BSA, including the National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) program. Several Troop 19 Scouts have attended this course and two will be helping teach the course in the coming months.



Registration is now open. For registration please go to: http://weblink.donorperfect.com/ScoutingintheLocalChurch_Registration
For further information or questions, please contact Elizabeth Olivas,
at Elizabeth.Olivas@scouting.org or email NCCS@Scouting.org

SCOUTING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH - DIOCESAN COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

Date: June 22 - 26, 2020

Location: BSA's Summit Bechtel Reserve in Glen Jean, West Virginia

Housing: Pigott Bunkhouse (Single and Double occupancy available)

Fee: Single Occupancy Bunkhouse room - \$400; Double Occupancy Bunkhouse room - \$300; Yamagata Lodge (en-suite bathroom) - \$525

Who should attend: The conference is designed for any adult interested in using Scouting to help support Catholic youth ministry such as Scout chaplains, clergy, diocesan or parish youth ministers, and council, diocesan, regional and national Catholic Committee leadership and members.

Program begins at 1:00 pm on Monday, June 22nd and concludes Friday, June 26 at 12:00 pm.

Daily mass or morning prayers will be offered.

A half day program on Thursday allows participants to explore all that is Summit and the surrounding area in the afternoon. Extra fees apply for those various activities! Other restrictions may apply for various activities.

Fees include daily meals (exception for dinner on Monday and breakfast Friday), daily snacks and drinks, and course materials. Early arrival and late departure accommodations are available, additional fees apply.



Pigott Dining Hall



Bunkhouse