THE BRIDGE

The Newsletter of The National Catholic Committee on Scouting®

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International Catholic Conference of Scouting celebrates 100 years of service to the worldwide Scouting Movement

By Phil Krajec
NCCS International Committee Chair

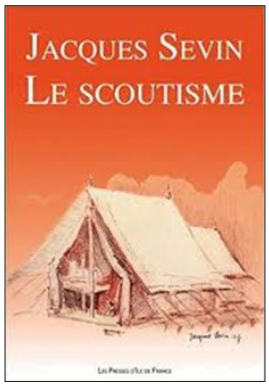
When the founder of the worldwide Scout Movement Lord Robert Baden-Powell was asked where religion came into Scouting, he replied, "It does not come in at all. It is already there."

Almost from the beginning of Scouting in 1907, there were Catholic Scout troops. By the time Baden-Powell visited South America in 1909, Scouting had already started in Argentina and Chile. In 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was incorporated and the first known Catholic Scout Troop in the BSA was formed in St. Paul, Minnesota. Catholic troops formed in Belgium in 1910 and in Austria in 1912. In 1916, an Italian Catholic Scout association was founded.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the international structure that unites all Catholic Scouts around the world, the organization we now know as the International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS).

Father Jacques Sevin, considered by many to be the Father of Catholic Scouting, was born in and became a **Jesuit** novice in 1900. While preparing for his ordination, he became interested in the Scouting movement that was gaining strength in the United Kingdom. However, many in religious circles were critical of Scouting, and he obtained permission from his superiors to investigate the movement. He attended a scout rally in London in September 1913, where he met Baden-Powell himself.

After meeting Baden-Powell, Father Sevin wrote his classic ocumentary study called *Le*



Scoutisme, attended Wood Badge at Gilwell Park, and started adapting its applications for French Scouting. In 1918, he established the first Catholic Scout troop in France and, in 1920, founded Scouts de France, an organization of French Catholic Scouts. Its program focused on

responsibility, dedication, education, and the natural world but also included a spiritual component.

Father Sevin was able to demonstrate to skeptics that Scouting could meld Baden-Powell's model and the Christian Gospel. Baden-Powell said that no one turned his thoughts into reality better than Jacques Sevin.

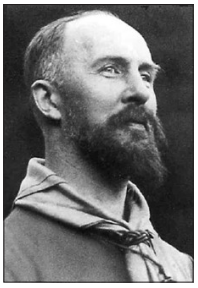
Father Sevin met Jean Corbisier of Belgium and Count Mario Gabrielli di Carpegna of Italy at the 1st World Scout Jamboree in London in1920. Professor Corbisier was at the time the Chief Scout of The Association of Baden-Powell Belgian Boy and Sea Scouts. Count di Carpegna was a politician, soldier, and the founder of the Associazione Scouts Cattolici Italiani (ASCI).

(continued on page 2)

ICCS celebrates 100 years (continued from page 1)

Together they decided to create an international group to bring together all Catholic Scouts, an idea supported by Pope Benedict XV. Their dream became a reality later that year with the creation of the International Catholic Office of Scouting. A new charter was approved by the Holy See and the umbrella organization of Catholic Scouting took the name International Catholic Conference of Scouting/Conférence Internationale Catholique du Scoutisme (ICCS/CICS) in 1977.

Father Jacques Sevin died in Northern France in 1951. The cause of his beatification was introduced in 1989, and he was declared Venerable on May 10, 2012.



Father Jacques Sevin

Today, his legacy lives on as ICCS provides the opportunity for its over 60 member organizations from four regions to gather as friends and share their experiences. It still has its headquarters in Rome, at the offices of Associazione Guide e Scouts Cattolici Italiani (AGESCI), the successor to ASCI, just a short walk from the Vatican.

A traditional Italian birthday toast wishes the recipient 100 years of life. Here's to another hundred years of Catholic Scouting – ***altri cent' anni, ICCS!***

National Catholic Committee on Scouting

FROM THE CHAIR
Jim Weiskircher

The coronavirus continues to challenge us. The hotel that we booked for our annual meeting came to us and said that they could not guarantee that we could hold our meeting there because of social distancing requirements that may or may not be in place at the time. They recommended that we move the meeting from 2021 to 2023. The Executive Committee agreed so we will be having a virtual meeting during the same time period in April 2021.

We are entering into our annual campaign. Both the chaplaincy at Philmont and the St. George Trek will be going strong next year and will need our financial support. Please be generous with your year-end giving.

If your unit or diocesan committee is doing anything creative, please let us know so that we can pass along those ideas to others through The Bridge I encourage all to submit articles or ideas to Mike Gannon at scouttrain@aol.com.

Thank you for your continued support of Catholic Scouting as a Youth Ministry.

Yours in Catholic Scouting as a youth ministry,

Jim

Unit Excellence award has been revised for 2021

Using the BSA Journey To Excellence (JTE) recent revisions as a guide, the NCCS Pope Paul VI National Catholic Unit Excellence Award has been revised for 2021. Historically, only about one percent of Catholic scouting units have submitted applications for the Pope Paul VI award. In an effort to increase participation and simplify the paperwork for submission, the requirements and methods have been changed starting on January 1st, 2021. See the NCCS website **http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/catholic-quality-unit-award** for details on the revisions.

The Bridge is an authorized publication of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS). It is published quarterly to provide news and information to members of the NCCS, diocesan Catholic committees, youth ministry personnel and Boy Scout councils.

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To submit items for future editions of *The Bridge* please contact Mike Gannon at scouttrain@aol.com. Photos are acceptable and should be in a jpeg format. Please ensure all people in photos are identified and the subject matter is fully described.

The Chaplain's Corner

Father Joe Powers

National Chaplain

In early November, I hosted a TEAMS meeting for all chaplains involved with Catholic Scouting. It provided an opportunity to share chaplaincy and training opportunities for diocesan chaplains. These included chaplaincies next summer at Philmont with (Father Kevin Smith) and the St. George Trek (Father Mike Santangelo). New priests were encouraged to attend *Scouting in the Catholic Church* and *Scouting in the Local Church* whenever the programs are offered.

Covid-19 has severely limited events in our respective dioceses. I encourage you to find a way to honor those adults who are worthy to receive a Bronze Pelican or St. George Emblem. The same goes for acknowledging religious awards earned by Scouts. It is important that we find safe ways to carry out Scouting in the Catholic Church. My sincere 'thank you' to the priests and deacons who are serving as chaplains for diocesan committees or for NCCS. Also, to all adult leaders who make Scouting a reality for our youth. God bless and keep everyone safe.

Scouting in the Catholic Church training set for Philmont Training Center this July

Whether a newbie or a veteran to Catholic Scouting, consider attending the NCCS' Scouting in the Catholic Church this July 18-23 at the Philmont Training Center. In the words of the Philmont Hymn, you'll be in "Scouting Paradise," "out in God's country," enjoying mountains "against an azure sky" during the day and "starlit skies" at night. This is the setting for a training conference that brings together laity, clergy, and religious, from around the country for a week of learning, faith, fellowship and fun!

The goals of the conference are to help participants understand how Scouting is Catholic youth ministry, gain knowledge about Catholic Scouting resources and use the training to promote Catholic Scouting in their home dioceses and councils.

The Philmont Training Center (PTC) is also a great family vacation spot! The PTC offers a full, organized, program for every member of the family from infants to spouses through its Family Conference Programing and Family Adventure Camp. Or, you may choose to plan your own sightseeing in the Cimarron, Taos, and Santa Fe areas. Whether staying in a tent, deluxe family tent, or roofed housing, participants will find PTC facilities clean and comfortable. The PTC conference and all activities will follow COVID protocols to keep participants safe and healthy.

Please spread the word about Scouting in the Catholic Church and encourage others—(arch) diocese Catholic committee on Scouting members, Catholic Scouters, charter organization representatives, chaplains, and youth ministers—to seize this opportunity for an inspirational fun-filled week in "God's Country." For information about the Philmont Training Center's conferences and family programs, visit the Philmont website at **www.philmontscoutranch.org/ptc.aspx.** (A registration link is coming soon.). For questions on the course contact **NCCS@Scouting.org.**

Religious emblem manuals now available for sale on NCCS website

By
John Doerr

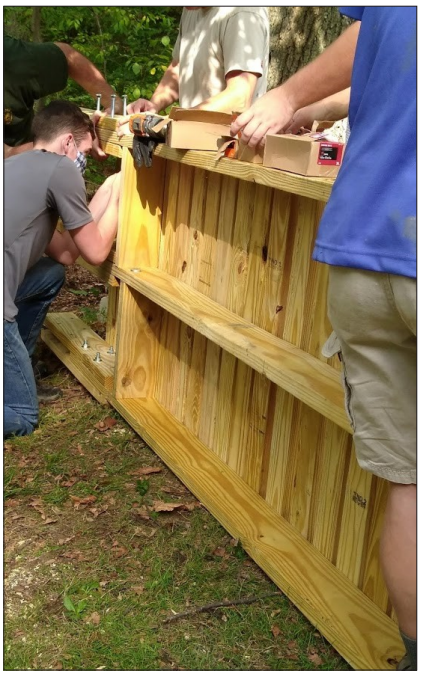
As of July 1, 2020, all NCCS Religious Emblem manuals (both hard copy and the electronic AAD version) are available for sale on our NCCS ***website***. This allows Religious Emblem Coordinators, parents, and scouts to purchase these manuals directly from NCCS and save a trip to the Scout shop or purchasing through BSA's website. All proceeds from these manuals go directly to NCCS and support of our Religious Emblems and Activities.

ESCO, our long time Religious Emblems supplier, has increased prices to NCCS for all Religious Emblems. However, NCCS is absorbing this increase on behalf of Diocesan Committees with the following exceptions: The Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei awards will increase from $12.00 to $12.50, effective March 1, 2021. All other emblems and pins remain at the same price. We wanted to give you as much lead time as possible so that you can place an order at the old prices to cover you through Scout Sunday. These prices are consistent with those of similar faith-based awards. This is only the second ESCO price increase in the last 11 years and represents just a 4% increase over the last 3 years.

ESCO, as part of each Ad Altare Dei and Pope Pius XII award order, will include a ***Doerr Scout Scholarship*** information card.

The Scholarship Committee requests that these be given to each award recipient to increase parents and scout's awareness of this program. Each year NCCS awards $20,000 in scholarships. Seven separate scholarships are awarded: 1st place $5000, 2nd place $4000, 3rd place $3000 plus four additional $2000 scholarships. Please help us promote this great program.

Eagle Scout project during pandemic shows “God’s will is important”



By

Kathleen Washy

“God’s will is the most important,” wrote Pittsburgh Scout Aleksander Serowik as he reflected on what went well on his Eagle Project, which he completed in the midst of a pandemic. Overcoming many obstacles and road-blocks, Alek was able to plan and execute the construction of a bridge for a nature trail that is part of the Sisters of St. Joseph of Baden’s ecology program. While working on a project that is in the spirit of Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Alek was concurrently taking part in a Pope Pius XII Religious Emblem with some of his fellow Scouts from Troop 368, chartered with St. Teresa of Avila Church, a part of Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish.

At the end of February when Alek agreed to the project with the Sisters, he could never have anticipated the hurdles that would come his way. With a focus on Care for Creation, the Sisters have a nature trail that serves as an educational and spiritual piece for their environmental program. Located in the woods at their Motherhouse, the trail requires three bridges, two of which had been previously constructed by Eagle Scouts in prior years, leaving the third one remaining to be built.

Accepting the challenge of planning and constructing a 30-foot long bridge over a creek, Alek began to work on his plan just as Pennsylvania was entering a shut down because of the pandemic. In spite of complications with items ranging from obtaining signatures to changes in the construction of the concrete pylons needed for the bridge, Alek forged ahead and focused on God’s grace. When he encountered the issue of a national shortage of pressure treated lumber, his Eagle Project Coach advised him “God will provide.” When he received a call from 84 Lumber with the report that they had received a shipment of the needed lumber, Alek understood that God was looking out for him and he was able to complete the bridge in September.

Over the summer months, while working on the bridge, Alek also was spending time reflecting on his faith as he participated with fellow Catholic Scouts on working on their Pope Pius XII Religious Emblem. With life being at a standstill, Alek and the other Scouts were able to focus on the emblem without distractions, resulting in very insightful discussion within the group. Upon completing the emblem, Alek felt that the program gave him a boost in his faith by being able to discuss his faith with others, which allowed all involved to grow in their own faith.

In this year of a pandemic, Scout Aleksander Serowik has demonstrated that Catholic Scouting is as strong as ever, whether through acting on *Laudato Si'* or delving into one’s faith.

“For I was hungry and you gave me food” - Troop 416 of West Seneca New York collects 1,000 pounds of food for Thanksgiving food drive

In these troubling times food insecurity is a major concern in many areas. Scout Troop 416 of West Seneca New York, Chartered to Queen of Heaven Catholic Church, decided to combine the third point of the Scout Law “A Scout is helpful” with the first corporal work of mercy “feed the hungry” by conducting three food drives for the local area food bank. Their efforts in the last six months resulted in the donation of nearly one half ton of food.

Ben McCartan, Senior Patrol Leader with Mary Lou Dietrich, Director of the West Seneca Food Pantry

Tommy Cycon, Assistant Patrol Leader gathers donated food from residence

Foreground: Ben McCartan, Senior Patrol Leader and Michael Romance, Troop OA Representative sort canned goods for the food drive

Religious emblems programs appear to be highly effective despite challenges poised by pandemic

by
John Savage

Scouting under these unusual circumstances provides opportunities as well as challenges. One opportunity I want to mention is Religious Emblems. This is a perfect time to encourage all our Scouts to earn a Religious Emblem. Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei can be done in the family; all that is needed is a workbook and a little family time. Ad Altare Dei, Light is Life, and Pope Pius XII require a counselor/facilitator approved by the Diocesan Catholic Committee.

Many counselors/facilitators around the country are having great success conducting these programs virtually. When completed, all applications are sent to the Diocesan Catholic Committee for processing.

By the way, don't forget that all workbooks can be purchased directly from the NCCS store—and some (Light is Life and Pope Pius XII) are only available there. Light is Life and Pope Pius XII Participant workbooks are in print form. The PPXII Facilitator Manual is only available as a download from the NCCS store.

I want to thank Kathy Polowski and her committee in the Diocese of Phoenix for their work in developing the electronic AAD and getting it off the ground. It has proved to be a big hit since it was released in July. Finally, be sure to check out the message that National Chair Jim Weiskircher recently sent to all dioceses regarding the price increase for Light of Christ and Parvuli Dei.

WISHING YOU A VERY BLESSED CHRISTMAS AND GOD'S BLESSINGS IN THE NEW YEAR

SUPPORT OUR PHILMONT CHAPLAINS IS THEME FOR 2021 ANNUAL APPEAL

Thank you for your great support of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. This has been a very trying year for Scouts and Scouters alike. Our committees have been very creative in finding new ways to reach our scouts and leaders with virtual religious activities, the electronic version of Ad Altare Dei, and training for Scouters. During these difficult times, the sharing of your time and gifts is an invaluable resource that benefits the youth whom we serve.

We hope that our youth can count on the sharing of your fiscal treasure as well as we conduct the Annual Appeal for 2020. Please consider increasing your gift this year to meet our goal of a 10% improvement in annual contributions.

We are frequently asked what is provided by a membership or a contribution to our annual appeal. When you look deeper into our major initiatives you can see the benefits at an individual level.

Your generosity enables over 250,000 Catholic youth and adults to benefit from Chaplains at Philmont and Jamborees, Religious Emblems and Activities, training such as Scouting in the Catholic Church, the St. George Trek (participant fees cover less than 50% of the cost), scholarships and so much more. This year NCCS contributed $5,000 to the Catholic Scouts of Beirut to provide disaster relief from the devastating explosion in their city. We are also setting up a new initiative and relief fund to help diocesan committees and Catholic units expand their programs or mitigate damage related to wild fires, floods, and hurricanes.

It is more important than ever that Catholic Scouts and Scouters continue to receive quality programs and spiritual guidance. We encourage you to make your contribution online at **http://www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/contribute.** Any amount is appreciated and please consider making a monthly contribution. This year, the theme for our monthly giving program is ***Support Our Philmont Chaplains***, a critical ministry serving over 22,000 Scouts, Scouters, and staff annually. We are fortunate to have the support of so many fine priests that make our program unique. We are the only faith group that reimburses Philmont for chaplain stipends and other expenses such as vehicles.

Yours in Catholic Scouting as Youth Ministry,

Jim Weiskircher
Jim Weiskircher
National Chair

Father Joseph B. Powers
Father Joe Powers
National Chaplain

Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski
(NCCS Historian)

Do you remember reading the ***eBridge,*** the NCCS monthly eNewsletter? Back in late 2006, NCCS Webmaster Tony Madonia introduced a monthly supplement to The Bridge, our quarterly printed publication. This e-mail newsletter began going to a wider audience of Catholic Scouters and offered more timely and detailed information. Issues ranged from two to seven pages in length. They focused primarily on the operations of the national. regional and diocesan committees and was of more interest to those who were members of these committees.

In November, 2007, Karen Stone became the editor. Mike Gannon also supported this. I am aware of 27 issues being sent out through July of 2009,

The eBridge had a final mailing in July of 2010. At that time, the printed Bridge was available on-line, and by that time NCCS began using Facebook to reach out with timely information. Similarly, the printed version of The Bridge went to only an e-mail publication in the fall of 2019. Publication offerings continue to change.

Silver St. George Emblem awarded to five Scouters for service to NCCS

Five NCCS members were selected to receive the NCCS Silver St. George emblem. This recognition is given to Scouters for both their years of service as members of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and the impact they have made in the promotion of Scouting within the Catholic Church. Recipients are nominated by their peers. The 2020 recipients are:

Rev. Jason Adams Diocese of Savannah

Theresa Dirig Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Phil Krajec Archdiocese of Atlanta

Rev. Leo McDowell Diocese of Great Falls-Billings

Rev. Shawn Tunink Archdiocese of Kansas City

A VOCATIONS REFLECTION
BY
Bro. Andrew J. Kosmowski, SM

In the first week of November, the Church in the United States prayed in a special way for vocations to consecrated life and the diocesan priesthood and diaconate. The question becomes one of sustaining this prayer and forming our Church into a culture of vocational discernment.

As I have written in the past, many seeds land in good soil of our Scouts and Venturers, but they do not know to whom they should go for advice in sifting this. They might feel embarrassment if they bring it up to peers, so they deeply hide it. As Scouters, we need to see each of us in a role of youth minister.

"Renewing the Vision," we are called to draw our Scouts into responsible participation in the life, mission, and work of the Church. This means we as Scouters need to assist them in learning how Jesus is calling them to holiness. Two means to do this include the Scoutmaster Conferences and the Boards of Review. Both of these allow us to inquire about how Scouting has formed our Scouts into better disciples, and these are already a part of the program.

Our outdoors program is another part. We might not think of our outdoor activities as a way to assist in the call to holiness, but they can. Fr. Jacques Sevin, SJ, recognized this and strove to develop Scouting in France. In 1920, his work even impressed Lord Baden-Powell. He saw that the outdoors could bring awe back into our Scouts' lives, and that wonder for creation can develop deeper moments of prayer in our youth.

Our vocation as Catholic Scouters is to foster these experiences into the lives of our youth. We need to encourage them to have the adventures and then provide the means to reflect on them. We can ask questions of what their favorites sights were on the adventure, and then remind them to give thanks for the memory of that time.

Set your sails for Scouting in the Local Church course in March at Florida Sea Base Training Center

In person gatherings continue to be evaluated across the nation. Our Scouting in the Local Church at BSA's Florida Sea Base is no exception. Registration for the course, through NCCS' website, is still open and will be 100% refundable until we lock in our reservation at Sea Base. At this time we have a hold for Tuesday, March 2nd to Saturday, March 6th. We have three individuals registered so far and we need 7 more people to register to hold the course open. We plan to lock in the reservation by 1 February 2021. Once we lock in the date with the BSA there will be no refund at that time.

The cost is $450 which includes all meals and single room hotel-style housing. Participants are responsible for travel to Sea Base. The course starts on Tuesday, March 2 at 12:00 PM and ends at 12:00 PM on Saturday, March 6th.

Please check the NCCS website for more information about the course and accommodations.

If you have additional questions or concerns on the course, please don't hesitate to contact the 2021 Course Director Mark Kramer at **dccoscf.kramer@gmail.com.** General registration questions can be directed to Elizabeth Olivas at **nccs@scouting.org.**