



Nine New Religious Activity Patches Now Available

**By Chuck Lamb
Religious Activities Chairman**

Nine new religious activity programs are now available. Four have been added to the Marian Series: Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Lourdes, Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, and Our Lady of Sorrows. Four have been added to the Footsteps of American Saints Series: Rose Philippine Duchesne, Marie-Rose Durocher, Mother Theodore Guerin, and Miguel Pro. One has been created for a new Faith Series: Corporal Works of Mercy.

The use of NCCS religious activity programs has increased significantly over the past 15 years since the first one was developed. In 2003, the Rosary Series patches were introduced. The content and value of the activities, with the beauty and appeal of the 5” patches, immediately made the Rosary Series patches popular and appreciated.

Five years later, in 2008, a group of Footsteps of American Saints programs were introduced. These were also well received for the content and value these opportunities provided for youth and adults to learn more about their Catholic faith and heritage.

The NCCS plans to develop additional programs for the Marian, Saints and Faith Series. While these religious activity programs were developed to aid Scouts in the formation of their Catholic faith, one not need be registered with the Boy Scouts of America to participate in the programs and order the patches.

NEW MARIAN SERIES



NEW FOOTSTEPS OF THE AMERICAN SAINTS SERIES



New Faith Series Activity



Program requirements and order forms may be found on the NCCS website at <http://www.nccs-bsa.org/activities/index.php>

NCCS Hosts Breakfast for Bishops at USCCB Fall General Assembly

Each year Bishop Robert Guglielmo, as the Bishop Liaison from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), along with the NCCS National Chaplain and the National Chairman host a breakfast for the United States Catholic Bishops as part of their annual fall general assembly. This year, at the Baltimore meeting, more than 100 bishops from the various dioceses across the United States attended the breakfast to learn about how local parishes and dioceses are utilizing the programs of the Boy Scouts of America to minister to Catholic youth.

For the first time the NCCS honored two diocesan bishops who have contributed to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. The first honoree was Bishop William Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Centre, New York. Bishop Murphy has encouraged his priests who were interested in Scouting to be involved in various leadership positions on a diocesan and national basis. The second honoree was Archbishop Michael Sheehan of the Archdiocese of Santa Fe. Archbishop Sheehan has supported the activities of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and the Catholic chaplaincy at Philmont Scout Ranch in Cimarron, New Mexico.



Archbishop Michael Sheehan (second from right) with Fr. Michael Hanifin, National Chaplain; Bishop Robert Guglielmo, Bishop Liaison; and Fr. Stephen Salvador, past National Chaplain.

NOTES FROM THE NATIONAL CHAPLAIN



Dear Catholic Scouters,

I returned October 7th from my 500 mile walk across northern Spain on the Camino Santiago de Compostela (The way of Saint James of the field of stars). I began the trek in Saint-Jean-Pied-de-Port in France arriving on August 27th. I got a good night sleep at an Albergue, rose early in the morning before the sun rose and began walking. I had to climb over the Pyrenees Mountains (18 miles) in order to reach the first destination called Roncesvalles which literally means Valley of Thorns. Legend had it that the monastery that was once there had some of the thorns from the crown that Jesus wore on the day of his execution. I spent three days on the *Camino Santiago de Compostela* picking up trash that *peregrinos* (pilgrims) left behind. I met a Scouter from Australia while I was picking up trash and he joined in in an attempt to "LEAVE NO TRACE."

Each morning I would rise about 5:30 AM, get my pack ready, wash up and brush my teeth, comb my hair and by 6:00 AM I was on the *senda* (trail). The sun did not rise until about 8:15 AM and so the first few hours was walked in the dark. I am grateful for the headlight that I wore allowing me to walk with my *bastones* (hiking poles) and still see where I was going. I enjoyed the early morning hikes because it gave me some time to reflect, pray and think without the distraction of fellow pilgrims.

One author suggested that the best preparation for walking the *camino* (way) was not preparatory hikes but to have someone beat the bottoms of your feet with a rod. My feet took a beating and even with hiking shoes, my feet were sore and I had a few blisters. I even got a shin splint outside of Leon Spain. I learned to walk with the discomfort of pain.

I arrived in Santiago de Compostela on Wednesday October 1st. I visited the Cathedral of Santiago and prayed at the tomb of Saint James the Apostle. It took me 34 days to reach this destination. I had only five days of rest during the six-week pilgrimage. I met a good number of pilgrims from various countries including Australia, Poland, Spain, Canada, Central America, Japan and even the United States. Hiking the backcountry of Philmont Scout Ranch was a great preparation for walking the Camino because it helped me to know how to organize my mochila (backpack) and how to hike long distances. Now I am back to work as the pastor of Saint Joachim Church in Costa Mesa grateful for the experience of walking the way many pilgrims traveled for over the last 1,000 years.

Saint George, Patron Saint of Scouting (and Saint James the Apostle and Pilgrim), Pray for us.

Fr. Mike

Father Michael P. Hanifin
NCCS National Chaplain
(2013-2016)



This past October, the Hudson Valley Council BSA inducted Bishop Dominic Lagonegro into their Eagle Hall of Fame. The Bishop was also awarded the first Council Outstanding Eagle Award. He is a life-long scout/scouter and has served on the Council, and its predecessor Executive Boards, for nearly 20 years. Cardinal Dolan has assigned Bishop Lagonegro, an Auxiliary Bishop of the Archdiocese of New York, as his representative to both Scouting and CYO.



Reflections on Serving As A Philmont Chaplain

Text and Photos by Father Matthew Gray (Philmont Chaplain—Summer 2014)

So, there I was, reflecting back as I prepared to write this article and all I could think was..... *“I want to go back to Philmont where the old Rayado flows, where the rain comes seepin’ in the tent where you’re a sleepin’ and the waters say hello. I want to wake up in the morning with my socks all wringing wet, for it brings back fondest memories, that a Ranger can’t forget. I want to hike once more the canyon floor from Scribbins to Old Camp, with my pack sack a creakin’ and my back with sweat a reekin’ and my legs beginning to cramp. I want to hike again with such great men as made those famous treks, from Beaubien to Porky and from Cito to Car-Max”*. These are the words of the Rangers’ song. They echo now in my mind as I reflect on my experiences at Philmont Scout Ranch.

So what is so special about Philmont? Well, if you have never been there you will never truly know. Philmont must be experienced in order to fully appreciate it. If you have never been to Philmont or are unfamiliar with Philmont then allow me to introduce her to you.

Sprawling vast in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of northern New Mexico in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains are 137,500 acres of scouting paradise, or as we Chaplains call it, “God’s Country”. Philmont is a place unlike any other youth camp in the world. In the summer, over 25,000 Scouts and adult leaders backpack in the backcountry. They hike over rugged mountains, wade across the gentle Rayado river that winds its way through serene valleys where bison graze and the mighty Tyrannosaurus once hunted its prey. Silver gilts the sage in the white Aspen-covered hills. Whispering pines blanket the purple mountains as they reach toward the azure sky. In the evening Scouts find rest beneath the starlit sky in one of the 34 staffed camps or 77 trail camps. Around the camp fire’s flickering light stories are told and songs sung of mini-bears, mountain lions, miners, and loggers. Philmont is a place where young men mature in body, mind, and soul. Obstacles are overcome and virtues are instilled within them as they hike in this rugged land. This is Philmont and I was lucky enough to be a Chaplain there.



I was one of nine Chaplains of various denominations, age, and background. We rotated our duties in order to care for the spiritual well being of the Staff and Scouts. Equipped with four-wheel drive Chevy Suburbans that were marked with a shepherds crook, we roamed the backcountry bringing joy, encouragement, mail, food and supplies up to the backcountry camps or returning staff, mail, and trash back to base camp.

We were also the ones called upon to help with a crisis. A number of times I was tasked to deliver death notices to Scouts and/or their advisors. These were times of profound difficulty but also of profound grace. In these instances, Chaplains are the bearers of bad news but also of loving concern. In that moment we are family. Our shoulders are the ones

scouts and advisors cried on; our hands are the ones who helped them get home. With their packs on our backs we returned to basecamp together.

While it was difficult to go on these assignments, most of our trips into the backcountry were happy ones where we would either encourage a Scout to persevere and continue his trek or reunite an injured Scout with his crew. Bringing encouragement to the exhausted or returning an injured scout back up from the base camp infirmary meant that the Scout would complete what he’d begun.

We were the counselors, mailmen, trash service, delivery drivers, taxi drivers, and good humor men. But wherever we went, in whatever capacity, we were treated as family by staff and Scouts alike. Having the opportunity to be a Father to them was an experience I will never forget and for which I am forever grateful. The men and women on staff at Philmont are truly the best anyone could hope to have watch over the Scouts. I encourage any Troop to send Scouts to Philmont each year if possible.

When Scouts go to Philmont, they start as a group made up of individuals but return as a single crew having completed a trek together. After 14, 10, or 7 long days of high adventure, and after having formed lifelong bonds of friendships, the Scouts come down as one united crew wearing their accomplishments with pride saying “We all made it!”. How rewarding it is to see them return! The night of their arrival in basecamp, having had a warm shower and attended the closing campfire, they lay safe in their tents with the words of the ol’ Ranger Song echoing in their minds “I want to go back to Philmont....”

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Ad Altare Dei Was First Religious Emblem Program Approved by Boy Scouts of America

The Rev. Msgr. James E. Dolan (1899-1974), of the Diocese of Los Angeles/San Diego, was ordained in 1925. For most of his 49 years as a priest, Msgr. Dolan was actively involved in youth ministry. In 1928, he started the first Catholic summer camp in his diocese. Eight years later he became archdiocesan director of the Catholic Youth Organization, and for 37 years was archdiocesan director of the St. Vincent de Paul Society.

Sensing a need for more spiritual development in the Scouting program, Msgr. Dolan created the Ad Altare Dei program, which successfully blended Scouting with religious activities in a program that quickly became very popular. The aim of the first program Fr. Dolan developed was to recognize those First Class Scouts who had served "with loyalty and fidelity" as altar boys during their tenure as Scouts. He named the program Ad Altare Dei and created the AAD Cross as its emblem. The English translation of the name means: "to the Altar of God." The Latin phrase comes from the 42nd Psalm and it was also part of the preparatory prayers the priest said at the beginning of the Tridentine Mass: "Introibo ad altare Dei" ("I will go up to God's altar").



Fr. Dolan presented his program to the Annual Scout Chaplains Conferences in Peoria (1933) and again in Chicago (1938). Many of the other chaplains were eager to use Fr. Dolan's program in their own diocese.

His reports provided the necessary impetus to obtain approval of the Catholic Committee. They also spurred action by the National Council of the BSA, permitting it to be worn on the uniform. These approvals were given following the majority opinion and recommendation of the Annual Scout Chaplains Conference in Savannah (1939).

Ignacio La Russa was born in Italy and moved to New York City. He was a trained classical painter that was renowned for his ecclesiastical paintings and murals. In 1941, he was commissioned to do a painting representing a scout receiving his Ad Altare Dei emblem. This is believed to be the first painting ever commissioned to show a Boy Scout receiving his religious emblem of any faith. The first requirements for Ad Altare Dei were tied to the Catholic Scout's service to the church on the altar.



Did You Know...?

By Bob Oldowski

In the last several issues of *The Bridge* we have re-published an overview history of Catholic Scouting up to 1978. Another good source of our history was written by Rev. Louis P. Barcelo, C.S.C. back in the early 1940s. He authored "Scouting for Catholics", a 156-page booklet that describes in detail those early years. He also wrote a monthly Scouting article for *The Catholic Boy* magazine. A Scout since age 12, Eagle Scout and a National Field Scout Commissioner, in 1984 Msgr. Barcelo was presented the Silver Buffalo. I was fortunate to be at that event. I wonder what other early historical accounts exist?

(Editor's note: Send any other known histories to Bob Oldowski at oldowski@juno.com)

NCCS New-Unit/Membership Initiative Update

The NCCS New-unit/Membership Initiative will officially kick-off on January 1, 2015. It is never too late to get on board and participate. If your diocese is not listed below, please give serious consideration to joining the cause and e-mail George Sparks at georgesparks@verizon.net with your commitment! **Every youth deserves a Catholic Scouting chance!**

The following dioceses have committed to setting and sharing membership goals to help NCCS meet their goal of 300 new units in the next three years:

Region 1:

Hartford, Conn.
Bridgeport, Conn.
Norwich, Conn.
Worcester, Mass.
Providence, R.I.
Burlington, Vermont

Region 2:

New York, N.Y.
Albany, N.Y.
Buffalo, N.Y.
Ogdensburg, N.Y.
Rockville Center, N.Y.

Region 3:

Newark, N.J.
Camden, N.J.
Metuchen, N.J.
Paterson, N.J.
Trenton, N.J.
Philadelphia, Penn.
Allentown, Penn.
Altoona-Johnstown, Penn.
Erie, Penn.
Greensburg, Penn.
Harrisburg, Penn.
Pittsburgh, Penn.
Scranton, Penn.

Region 5:

Birmingham, Ala.
Louisville, Ky.
Covington, Ky.
Lexington, Ky.
Owensboro, Ky.
Alexandria, La.
Baton Rouge, La.
Houma-Thibodaux, La.
Lake Charles, La.
Shreveport, La.
Biloxi, Miss.
Jackson, Miss.
Knoxville, Tenn.
Nashville, Tenn.
Memphis, Tenn.

Region 6:

Detroit, Mich.
Grand Rapids, Mich.
Kalamazoo, Mich.
Lansing, Mich.
Saginaw, Mich.
Cincinnati, Ohio
Cleveland, Ohio
Columbus, Ohio
Steubenville, Ohio
Toledo, Ohio
Youngstown, Ohio

Region 7:

La Crosse, Wisc.
Madison, Wisc.
Superior, Wisc.

Region 8:

St. Paul & Minneapolis, Minn.
Winona, Minn.
Bismarck, N.D.

Region 10:

Oklahoma City, Okla.
Amarillo, Texas
Dallas, Texas
Fort Worth, Texas
San Angelo, Texas

Region 11:

Los Angeles, Calif.
San Francisco, Calif.
Fresno, Calif.
Monterey, Calif.
Oakland, Calif.
Orange, Calif.
Sacramento, Calif.
San Bernardino, Calif.
San Diego, Calif.
San Jose, Calif.
Santa Rosa, Calif.
Stockton, Calif.
Honolulu, Hawaii
Las Vegas, Nev.
Reno, Nev.

Region 12

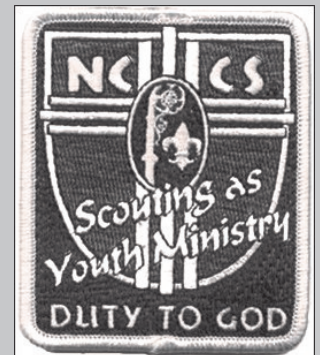
Anchorage, Alaska
Boise, Idaho
Seattle, Wash.
Spokane, Wash.
Yakima, Wash.

Region 13

Phoenix, Arizona

Region 14

Miami, Fla.
St. Petersburg, Fla.
Atlanta, Ga.
Charleston, S.C.





National Catholic Committee on Scouting

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December 2014

Dear Friend of Catholic Scouting,

Because you care, the NCCS has been able to continue to provide a Catholic emphasis to over 225,000 youth and 8000 units of the Boy Scouts of America. Here are some of the highlights of 2014:

Provided 4 full-time Catholic chaplains at Philmont Scout Ranch and replaced a SUV they use in the backcountry and around HQ.

Granted \$2,000 college scholarships to each of five Catholic Eagle Scouts.

Promoted awareness at meetings of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM) and LaRed, a Catholic Hispanic organization dedicated to the formation of Hispanic youth in the United States

Provided funding to allow clergy to participate in meetings and activities of the International Conference of Scouting (ICCS), BSA's Hispanic outreach, the NCCS biennial conference, and the BSA's Religious Relationships Task Force

Offered "Scouting in The Catholic Church", our advanced course for preparing adult leaders to promote Scouting as youth ministry, at Philmont Scout Ranch Training Center. Twenty five individuals attended the week long course.

Hosted breakfasts for the US bishops at their General Assemblies to have the opportunity to share with them the value of Scouting and how the programs of the NCCS assist in fulfilling the components of comprehensive Catholic youth ministry.

In order to insure that these programs continue and improve in 2015, we ask you to join your fellow Catholic Scouters in donating to this year's Annual Appeal in support of the work of the National Catholic Committee on Scouting®. Any amount you give is appreciated! Please note account 64003-4810 on your check, or you may give on-line using a credit card at www.nccsannualfund.kintera.org/bsa.

We know these activities and many others are made possible by the generous contribution of time, prayer and financial support of Catholic Scouters like you. Your donations enable Scouts and Scouters to experience the presence of Catholic religious men and women in their lives and to learn how one's spirituality is integrated into everyday life. For your support, we are grateful!

Yours in Catholic Scouting,

Edward P. Martin
National Chairman

Rev. Michael P. Hanifin
National Chaplain

Annual Meeting Slated for Tampa, Florida from April 16 to 19

Make plans now to join fellow Scout Chaplains, Scouters, and spouses in Tampa, Florida for the 2015 NCCS annual meeting. Standing committees, the Advisory Board, region leadership and the Executive Board will all meet to pursue their Plans of Action. The local diocesan committee of the Diocese of St. Petersburg is very excited about being our host committee and working with the NCCS Conference Committee to make your visit enjoyable and productive. There will also be plenty of time to network, visit some local attractions, and attend our Saturday night banquet..

Make your travel plans! The Executive Committee and several standing committee meetings, registration, and the Trading Post begin on Thursday afternoon, April 16 and the opening Mass is at 6:15 PM. Advisory Board meetings are on Friday morning, April 17, and Saturday morning, April 18. Region leaders meet on Friday morning & afternoon, April 17th. Standing Committees meet again on Friday afternoon, April 17th and Saturday afternoon, April 18. Bishop Robert Lynch of our host Diocese of St. Petersburg will be principal celebrant of a Saturday Vigil Mass for the third Sunday of Easter, followed by a reception and our Annual Banquet. The Executive Board meets on Sunday morning, April 19 and Region 14 will conduct its training program on Sunday morning & afternoon, April 19th and the Executive Committee also meets on Sunday afternoon, April 19th.

Airlines serving the Tampa International Airport include *Alaska Airlines, Air Tran, American Airlines, Delta Airlines, Frontier, Jet Blue, Silver Airways, Southwest Airlines, Spirit Airlines, Sun Country Airlines, United Airlines, US Airways, and WestJet.*

Our Conference Hotel! Our group room rate at the Doubletree by Hilton Tampa Airport/Westshore is \$99! The hotel offers registered conference participants who are also registered guests at the conference hotel with complimentary airport shuttle service! (*Our rate is good 3 nights prior/after the official conference dates, based on availability*). Hotel self-parking and in-room internet access will be complimentary. Our NCCS custom room reservations link is: <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/T/TPATLDT-NCC-20150415/index.jhtml> The room reservations deadline is March 25th

Conference registration information will be available VERY SOON on our website at www.nccs-bsa.org. See you in Tampa in April 2015.

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED