ROME — Pope Francis told a group of young women and men that as Catholic Scouts they have a “noble mission” to witness to the Gospel with their faith, service and care of creation.

The French Scouts, with their commitment to helping others, are also “called to work for a more ‘outgoing’ church and for a more human world,” the pope told the young people May 14 at a Vatican meeting celebrating the 50th anniversary of the founding of the French national organization for Catholic Scouting.

“I urge you to be both dynamic Christians and faithful Scouts,” he told them.

“In a world where interpersonal relationships seem to be difficult and where young people seem to lack ‘trustworthy role models, Scouting helps.”

Even during the coronavirus pandemic when it wasn’t always possible to meet in person, Scouting has been “a sign of encouragement to young people, because it invites them to dream and to act, to have the courage to look to the future with hope.

“I ask you not to be discouraged by the selfishness of the world, not to close in on yourselves, not to be inert young people, without ideals and without dreams,” he told them. “Never lose sight of the fact that the Lord is calling you all to fearlessly carry the missionary message wherever you are, especially among young people, in your neighborhoods, in sports, when you go out with friends, when you volunteer or at work.”

“Always and everywhere share the joy of the Gospel that makes you live,” Pope Francis said.”

“The Lord wants you to be his disciples and to spread light and hope, because he counts on your boldness, your courage and your enthusiasm.”

Scouting’s outdoor activities are very important, too, he said.

“Thanks to your relationship with nature, you carry the message that respect for others and for the environment go hand in hand and that therefore we cannot delude ourselves that we can heal our relationship with nature and the environment without healing all fundamental human relationships.”
New ways set for young Scouters to be involved in all NCCS Ministries

By John Doerr

Two exciting new ways are available for young scouters to join the National Catholic Committee on Scouting and become involved in fulfilling its mission to promote Catholic Scouting as youth ministry. Approved by the Executive Board last fall, starting July 1, 2021 Catholic scouters, 30 and under, can join the NCCS as Young Scouter Associate Members for just $20 per year. Catholic scouts, ages 18-21, who are involved with their local diocesan committees, are St. George Trek participants, or Doerr Scholarship applicants are now granted complementary memberships as Youth Associate Members during their college careers. The goal of these membership changes is to encourage younger Scouters and youth to learn more about our mission, engage in diocesan and national committee activities, and expand our base for future years. These levels, like all Associate memberships, have non-voting status.

Also, effective July 1, 2021 NCCS membership dues will be increasing. Annual memberships will change from $35 to $40/year, Lifetime memberships from $350 to $400. The increase is needed to cover membership administrative costs for business systems, communication tools, and to ensure data integrity. Please help NCCS fulfill its mission by becoming a member or renewing your membership each year. You can join, renew, or update your membership at www.nccs-bsa.org/index.php/join-nccs

New Vice-Chairs and Regional Leaders elected

Bill Guglielmi and Ann Marie Ellingham, long-time members of NCCS have been elected to serve two-year terms as Vice Chairs and were inducted at the annual meeting in April. Regional Chairs and Chaplains were also elected for 3-year terms and include:

Region 4 Chair: Pat Berney
Region 5 Chair: Jams Hickey
Region 10 Chaplain: Fr. Pat Garrett
Region 11 Chaplain: Fr. Norman Supancheck
Region 12 Chair: Scott West
Region 13 Chair: Joseph Bouley
Region 14 Chaplain: Fr. Jason Adams
Region 15 Chair: Deacon Myron Spalk

The following new members were appointed to serve on the Advisory Board for a 5-year term: Matthew Alpaugh, James Cordek, Joseph Daniszewski, William Davies, Ethan Draddy, Keith Douglass, Robert Lane, Jerry Lupien, David Moskal (renewal), Robert Oldowski (renewal), Gerry Quinlan, John Ribar Jr., John Richers, Allison Tate and Dr. Arnold Traupman.
As of this writing, mandates for face masks are being lifted throughout the country. Many venues are opening to full capacity and travel. The year-long exile from normal activities has been very difficult in so many ways. A proverb says that absence makes the heart grow fonder. One of my hopes is that Catholics will have a deeper appreciation for the Mass and raise their level of participation. My bishop, Bishop James V. Johnston, Jr. of Kansas City-St. Joseph, wrote a pastoral letter on the ‘Importance of Sunday in the Life of Every Christian’, along with a study guide. Bishop Johnston reminds us that Sunday should be celebrated as a day of rest and rejuvenation, a day for worship of God at Mass and a day for connecting as a family.

Pope Francis recently addressed the Scouts Unitaires de France on the occasion of their 50th anniversary.

Here are some key points from his address, which is very relevant to all Catholic Scouts.

Scouts are a sign of encouragement in society because the movement invites them to dream and to act. There is a willingness to serve neighbors. Scouts carry a message that respects others and the environment. The Holy Father invited the Scouts to not be discouraged by the selfishness of the world. Be sowers of hope.

A very special “thank you” to everyone – national and local - who found ways to continue meeting and training and having fun.

Summer is time to work on religious emblems

By John Savag
Chairman, Religious Emblems

Summer makes a great time to earn a religious emblem, especially for Cub Scouts who complete the requirements at home with their parents. Why not pick up a Light of Christ or Parvuli Dei workbook and take a look?

Older Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts members can also start work on Ad Altare Dei, Light is Life (for Eastern Rite members), or Pope Pius XII. These are done with a counselor/facilitator. Many dioceses have groups forming during the summer months. Your local Diocesan Catholic Committee on Scouting can help you find a group. Now is a good time to look into the program so you are ready to go as soon as a group forms in your area.

Remember, if you have trouble finding the workbooks in your local Scout Shop they can always be ordered directly from NCCS at www.nccs-bsa.org/store/product-category/workbooks/.
NCCS Awards $22,000 in Scholarships This Year
by Julie Doerr

We are announcing some good news after another difficult year. In 2021, the National Catholic Committee on Scouting has awarded eight scholarships totaling $22,000. Due to the pandemic, many of this year’s applicants faced unique challenges in fulfilling the scholarship requirements. To reward these dedicated Scouts, the Scholarship Committee requested authorization of an additional $2,000 NCCS Scholarship from the National Chairman, Jim Weiskircher for this year.

Congratulations to the eight exceptional Scouts who have been awarded Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scout Scholarships in 2021. Each winner demonstrated outstanding leadership and service in four areas: Church, Community, School and Scouting, earned the Eagle, Summit, or Quartermaster award, and at least one of the following, Ad Altare Dei, Pope Pius XII, or Light is Life (Eastern Rite) Religious Emblem.

The 2021 Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scout Scholarship Recipients are:

$5,000 - Fox Melo of Burbank, Calif., Archdiocese of Los Angeles
$4,000 - Joshua Royal of Omaha, Neb., Archdiocese of Omaha
$3,000 - Elaine Smith of Columbus, Ohio, Diocese of Columbus
$2,000 - David Hoyt of Jacksonville, Fla. Diocese of St. Augustine
$2,000 - Logan Goodbred of Oswego, Ill., Diocese of Joliet
$2,000 - Isaac Caron of Faribault, Minn., Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis
$2,000 - Joseph Bowers of Silver Creek, N.Y., Diocese of Buffalo
$2,000 - Julia Amendola of West Nyack, N.Y., Archdiocese of New York

Since 2005, NCCS has awarded a total of $193,000 in scholarships to 89 Scouts nationwide. Thank you to all NCCS members and volunteers for helping to make this possible and continuing to spread the word about the scholarship. Recipients of the Emmett J. Doerr Memorial Scholarship are chosen because of their commitment to making a difference for good in the world through service and leadership. These young people will enrich our future.

For additional information about the scholarship, check the NCCS Website at http://nccs-bsa.org/index.php/college-scholarship. If you would like to donate to the scholarship fund, please contact John Doerr, NCCS Finance Chair at finance@nccs-bsa.org.
Eagle Scout project - “a very admirable endeavor”

By Jennifer Neville,
Reprinted with permission from the Catholic Virginian

Before 16-year-old Kody Kopacki started his Eagle Scout project, many at his parish, Our Lady of the Blessed Sacrament (OLBS), West Point, didn’t know that St. John of Kanti Cemetery exists because it is tucked away in rural New Kent County. Some didn’t know a church of the same name once stood beside the cemetery. Others may not have known the parish existed at all.

“It was like an unknown entity for a long time,” said Linda Drexler, parish historian. “It was a story that got lost through the cracks.” Kopacki, a junior at King William High School in King William County, changed that with his Eagle Scout project — renovating the cemetery on the 1800 block of Polish Town Road. The project entailed clearing trees and brush, landscaping and other improvements on about an acre of land.

He refurbished the flagpole, gave it a new flag, installed a solar-powered light to illuminate it at night and moved the pole so it can be seen easily from the road. He made a metal cross, which he placed at the top of some concrete steps — the only remaining structure of the church that was destroyed in a fire in 1935.

His project created a 250-foot gravel path that loops from the entranceway to the steps and back. Other improvements included staining an existing sign at the entrance, installing a historical marker and adding three benches.

“It’s such a quiet and peaceful place there,” said parishioner Margaret Mountcastle. “You just get this special feeling when you go there. It’s just a nice place really to go and sit.”

Kopacki, who is active in the OLBS youth group and is an altar server, wanted his Eagle Scout project to benefit his church community. After touring the cemetery and talking to Bob Ryalls, OLBS business manager and cemetery committee member, Kopacki decided to spruce it up.

Henry Franzyshen, whose grandfather and great uncle were among the first families in the parish, called Kopacki’s project “a very admirable endeavor to save the cemetery and also recognize the old church that was there.” His wife, Natalee, praised the project for “bringing a greater awareness of the cemetery and its long history.”

When Kopacki pitched his ideas to the OLBS cemetery committee in January, he thought the renovation would be completed within three to four months, but COVID-19 slowed things down. Mandates to stay at home, maintain social distancing and limit group gatherings meant the Scout couldn’t do fundraisers nor schedule workdays until summer’s end. Nevertheless, some progress was made by adult volunteers who could work alone such as those who planted flowers and removed trees.

Kopacki organized a total of four workdays in August, September and October during which 10 to 15 volunteers, mostly Scouts, worked together for three-and-a-half hours doing yard work and making other improvements. He estimated that the entire project amounted to 390 volunteer hours.

Kopacki raised the $3,500 for the project by appealing to the Knights of Columbus, speaking at Masses, putting information in the parish bulletin and manning a display in the church lobby. The cemetery committee also contributed.

About two years ago, OLBS assumed the upkeep responsibilities of SJK cemetery. Kopacki’s project went beyond the improvements the cemetery committee was considering, said Gary Silvia, OLBS cemetery committee chairman.

“Truthfully, he deserves an unbelievable amount of gratitude from the church and this committee for the work he’s doing out there,” Silvia said. “He’s just done an outstanding job.”
Many thanks to those of you who participated in the recent survey to give the Vocations Committee some direction. We received 81 responses as of the writing of this article. The survey is now closed.

Your responses to the poll helps us with direction. Both the promotion vocations by highlighting priests and religious who were active as Scouts in their youth and formation for unit chaplains and chaplain’s aides were seen as the most pressing directions. The third option: create a list of priests and religious who are willing to share their vocation stories for the Pope Pius XII religious emblem, was seen as of lesser importance.

Some of you replied in the comments that two of these options, the promotion of vocations by highlighting priests and religious who were active as Scouts in their youth and the creation of a list of priests and religious who are willing to share their vocation stories for the Pope Pius XII religious emblem could be done simultaneously. This is our plan, as is recruitment to assist the local Catholic Committees on Scouting as well as the NCCS. We plan to attend two major conferences this year: NCYC and SEEK. We will collect data from participants that will assist in connecting Scouting and vocations, finding unknown voices for local Pope Pius XII groups, and recruiting new members for the local and national committees. We hope to see you there.

On May 6 – 8 a crew from the Archdiocese of Santa Fe Catholic Committee on Scouting traveled to Philmont Scout Ranch in Northern New Mexico to provide a service project to Catholic Scouting. The purpose of the project was to refurbish the back-country Catholic Chapel at Ponil. The crew was led by Chair Felipe Rael and also included Dennis and Tristan Howard, John Snider and Gerry Quinlan. The work covered two full days. The chapel was completely cleaned of debris and dirt that had been washed or blown into the chapel. All wooden fixtures (altar, ambo, pews, and kneelers) were refurbished by sanding, cleaning, sealing and painting. The area in front of the chapel and the trail leading to it were cleared of shrubbery. The Committee hopes to make this an annual project.
Did You Know…?
By Bob Oldowski
(NCCS Historian)

There’s a hustler in our NCCS ranks. And he’s a priest!
From his days as a Scout in the Bronx and later a Scout chaplain, former NCCS National Chaplain Father Joe Carroll earned that label early in his career and it stuck.
On to San Diego, he broke new ground and crossed the lines when necessary to get things done to support neighbors-in-need experiencing homelessness.
Now there is a book of stories from Father Joe’s interesting life, heart-warming and heart-wrenching, while also head-shaking and hilarious. You’ll come to understand that “hustler” does suit Father Joe well.
The website link for the book, Father Joe: Life Stories of a Hustler Priest, is: https://fatherjoehustlerpriest.com/ For a great story—get it!

International Catholic Conference on Scouting launches new communications initiatives to promote and demonstrate the hard work and efforts of Catholic Scouters and Scouts

By Phil Krajeck
NCCS international Chair

The International Catholic Conference of Scouting (ICCS) has begun a new communications initiative to promote and demonstrate the hard work of Catholic Scouting youth and members.
The ICCS-CICS Facebook page has been available for some time and an Instagram account was recently created (https://www.instagram.com/iccscics). A new website will be launched shortly that will include a number of new and interesting features. All are useful tools to connect with youth and adult leaders.
Managing this effort is Marc O’Neill, an intern with the Scouts et Guides de France in Paris.
“After years of Scouting in my local Scout groups in Ireland, France and Germany, an unmissable experience presented itself to me; to volunteer on behalf of ICCS/CICS. This association was not new to me as both my parents also had the opportunity to witness the fruitful, inspiring, and encouraging work of the ICCS/CICS around the world,” said O’Neill.
“In addition to providing access to ICCS documents, the website and other social media will portray other aspects such as the Brotherhood of St. George, the Saint Paul Fellowship, and the newly created Sevin Foundation,” O’Neill added.
Part of his mission is to enable others to discover the work of the different regions and associations within ICCS. A team of young people will serve as regional correspondents to report on the many exciting projects being conducted by Catholic Scouts and Scouters. O’Neill hopes the team members’ journeys will enlighten them and give them valuable experience.
Ella Hirsch has volunteered to serve as the correspondent for the North American subregion. Attendees at the 2019 World Scout Jamboree might remember her as one of the lectors at the Sunday Mass. “My first experience with international Scouting was the World Scout Jamboree in Japan in 2015. I’d only been in Scouting a few months and didn’t know what I was getting myself into,” she laughed. “It was culture shock at first, but I’ve been interested in international Scouting ever since. “Even though we’re from different countries, I love meeting other Scouts that share the same faith. It’s been wonderful getting to know and work with Marc and Juan Pablo, my counterparts from Columbia. My Spanish is really improving and I’m even picking up some French!”
Anyone interested in sharing a story for the ICCS website can contact Ella through Facebook or at ellahirsch.tx@gmail.com.
“I’ve wanted to get involved with NCCS for a while and the opportunity to work with ICCS at the same time was too good to pass up. It’s great to be able to get the word out and to be the face of Catholic Scouting in North America!”
CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 2020 QUALITY DIOCESE RECIPIENTS

In the final year of the Membership Initiative, a number of Dioceses qualified as Quality Dioceses Gold or Silver. Gold qualifiers receive a $250 credit to apply toward registration fees for the Annual Meeting, Philmont or Summit courses. Silver qualifiers receive a $100 credit. These credits must be used within two years of award. To apply a credit or if you have questions, please contact Elizabeth Olivas at elizabeth.olivas@scouting.org.

* Indicates Quality Diocese Gold Winner (Increase in membership from past year)  
# Indicates Quality Diocese Silver Winner (No membership loss from previous year)

Region 1: Diocese of Burlington; Archdiocese of Hartford; Diocese of Portland, Maine; Diocese of Norwich; Diocese of Providence; Diocese of Springfield, Mass; Diocese of Worcester; Archdiocese of Boston.

Region 2: Archdiocese of New York; Diocese of Albany; Diocese of Rockville Centre; Diocese of Buffalo; Diocese of Rochester.

Region 3: Diocese of Newark; Diocese of Camden; Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown; Archdiocese of Philadelphia; Diocese of Paterson; *Diocese of Allentown; #Diocese of Greenburg; Diocese of Harrisburg; Diocese of Pittsburgh.

Region 4: Archdiocese of Baltimore; Archdiocese of the Military Services, USA; Archdiocese of Washington, DC., #Diocese of Wilmington; Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston.

Region 5: Diocese of Baton Rouge; *Diocese of Knoxville; Archdiocese of Louisville; Diocese of Memphis; Diocese of Nashville.

Region 6: Archdiocese of Cincinnati; Diocese of Saginaw; Diocese of Youngstown; *Diocese of Kalamazoo; Diocese of Cleveland; Diocese of Grand Rapids; Archdiocese of Detroit; Diocese of Lansing.

Region 7: Diocese of Evansville; Diocese of Gary; Diocese of Green Bay; #Diocese of Joliet; Diocese of Springfield, IL; Archdiocese of Chicago; #Diocese of Ft. Wayne-South Bend; Diocese of Peoria; Diocese of Belleville; Diocese of Lafayette, IN; Diocese of Madison; Diocese of Rockford; Archdiocese of Indianapolis; Archdiocese of Milwaukee; *Diocese of Superior.

Region 8: Diocese of St. Cloud; Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis.

Region 9: Archdiocese of Dubuque; Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Region 10: Diocese of Austin; Diocese of Brownsville; Diocese of Ft. Worth; Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston; Diocese of Corpus Christi.

Region 11: Diocese of Fresno; *Diocese of Las Vegas; Archdiocese of Los Angeles; Diocese of Oakland; Diocese of Orange; Diocese of San Bernardino; Diocese of San Diego; Diocese of San Jose; Diocese of Sacramento.

Region 12: Archdiocese of Portland, Oregon.

Region 13: Diocese of Colorado Springs; Diocese of Phoenix.

Region 14: Diocese of Charleston; Diocese of Raleigh; Diocese of Savannah; Diocese of St. Augustine; Diocese of Venice; Archdiocese of Atlanta; Archdiocese of Miami.