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Conférence Internationale Catholique du Scoutisme
International Catholic Conference of Scouting
Conferencia Internacional Católica de Escultismo

A Catholic vision on the relationships between Scouting and the religions

This text from the ICCS is on the role of religions within Scouting. We are handing it over to the Vatican, who keeps the Church in the truth of the Gospel. We share it to the Interreligious World Scout Forum of WOSM; because Catholic Scouting has two roots, World Scouting and the universal Catholic Church.

It is aimed at the Catholic Scouts of our Conference and all the Catholic Scouts. However, we would like our brother scouts from other religions to know about it, because a scout is the brother of any other scout. We wish to share our vision with all, and gather the lights their vision can bring us. We are asking their testimonies on the scout commitment as lived in their own religion and the place of the spiritual in their scouting. When scouts from the religions from our world are making their promise, they do not quit their spiritual communities to become scout; on the contrary, they take their communities as witnesses. They are consolidating them within scouting.

In Scouting, we get a taste of the friendship of religions, this friendship knots the family unity of humanity, a hope for peace. This counts in the confidence we put into our educational movement.

We know there is not *one* scout vision on the position of the religions in Scouting. Our Catholic vision is not the unique vision, but it is ours. It is a denominational vision. The spiritual and religious inspirations are not the same, from one scout to another, but they want to be together, and they get a great benefit out of it. With this document, as Catholics, we wish to contribute actively to the unity of the Scout movement.

Since Scouting is the fruit of the spiritual and religious history of humanity.



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Due to the health circumstances, we celebrate the centenary of the ICCS later than planned. This is an opportunity for our Conference to express itself on the relationships uniting Scouting and the religions as well as on the spiritual life.

1]- The ICCS found its roots during the International Scout Gathering at Richmond (England) in 1920, under the name of International Organization of Catholic Scouts, from the initial desire of Jean Corbisier, General Commissioner of the Scouts in Belgium, Mario di Carpegna, General Commissioner of the Scouts of Italy, and Father Jacques Sevin, who had just founded the Scouts de France.

2]- The ICCS is the expression of the commitment of the Catholic Church within the scout movement. A commitment approved by all the popes, from Benedict XV who nominated Fr. Joseph Gianfranceschi as national chaplain to the young Catholic Association of Scouts of Italy (1916), up to Pope Francis who confirmed the leaders of the ICCS in their orientations during a private audience (2014), without forgetting Pius XII, who sent an autograph letter of blessing to the Jamboree of Peace, the Jamboree at Moisson (France) two years after the end of the war (1947).

3]- The Catholic Church recognizes in Scouting - as an integral educational movement - a path that can help develop and deepen the Christian experience. Scouting does not ignore what St. Paul said: "If I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor. 13:2). Scouting offers the path to brotherhood to the believer. We learn to be at the service of *the sole family of humanity in all its diversity*. This is what it means to follow the Gospel, the one who looks at the whole of humanity as wished by God.

4]- This document is a follow-up of the 1977 Catholic Charter of Scouting and the 1992 Appendix to the Catholic Charter of Scouting, which had not been reworked when we amended the ICCS statutes in 2017, and of the 2013 document *The Adventure of Faith in This Plural World*, signed by twenty-three of our associations.

5]- The ICCS wants to reflect again on the place of the religions in Scouting, and on the difficulties that Scouting has encountered since the beginning to face its responsibilities concerning the spiritual life of young people. It takes into account the changes that have taken place over the last twenty years.

In particular, it seeks to bring some clarity into the discussion that has arisen about the connection between spirituality and religion. These discussions are an expression of our times. The world appears to be less a long history of indigenous cultures and distant civilizations, it is the world which is fully connected, the world where we can feel the others live, the world of the pandemic. We are beginning to see it as a family, a plural family, the human family. The old words of religion, faith and spiritual life are forced to apply on the human space, at the risk of being rejected.

We do not believe that the religious act is passing away, or that Scouting is trying to do without the religions. The intimate relationship between Scouting and the religions must be looked at again with children's eyes, children of the family-humanity. However, this is not easy for everyone, and especially not in countries with a long and radiant Christian history, which are caught off guard by the other religions they are visiting and are bursting into their space. Yet this is where Scouting can help us.



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The Origins of Scouting

6]- The founding story of Scouting is the story of Mafeking (South Africa) under siege in 1900. We see Baden-Powell saving the town using young indigenous people of Mafeking among the fighters, integrating young indigenous people from southern Africa among the "cadets", and giving them rather perilous missions. The interest of Baden-Powell for the young people from the traditional tribes and the trust he gave them, exercised some kind of fascination. He appreciated the way of being men in the indigenous groups, their customs, the religion they had; he appreciated their religious conviction in the action. Holding the committed and useful young people of Mafeking, with one hand, the young Westerners came and took the other hand. They would have like to be these little ones that Baden-Powell used for the good of all! They were looking for a way to be sons of this world that was opening to them at the beginning of the 20th century; they wanted to commit who they were into it. Seeing this, reading their letters, Baden-Powell ended up accepting to have *scouting camps* in England. The first one took place in Brownsea, in 1907.

To be a Scout is to promise

7]- To be a pathfinder (*a scout* in English) is to participate in what is happening in the world which we are. Whether you are a native of Mafeking or a London boy, it is to be in it, and be in it with honour. You do not ask a young person to understand everything in order to get involved. How could he? However, you ask him to put in some effort, to take on some of the vision of the life of those who are in charge of his life, to bring the religion that is at his home, to bring what you can. Here is one of Baden-Powell's (many) statements on this matter:

8]- I was asked to describe more thoroughly what I had in mind with regard to religion when I founded Scouting and Guiding. The question I was asked was: 'Where does religion fit in?' Well, my answer is the following: it doesn't fit in at all, it's already there: it's the fundamental underlying factor of Scouting and Guiding¹.

9]- The whole spirit of Scouting is concentrated in the promise. It is the hinge between the community where the young person has grown up and the troop. It connects the Scout law with the religion of his family. The scout promise takes its inspiration in the Bible. But what does the Bible teach us about the promise? God makes promises. God is promise. This is one of the ways that God is presented in the Bible. Abraham believed in the promises of life, which insist in the heart... he recognized God as their author.

To recognize that the promises of life are God's promises, to believe in him, who makes us believe in them, to answer. To Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Jacob, David... God makes promises.

God keeps his promises: the Gospel is the book of promises kept.

The Scout responds to God's promises with his promise. Already, the parents of the young person have welcomed the promises of life, they have trusted their author; be it only for trying and believing in this child until now. At the Scouts, the young person takes his turn. He comes forward, he expresses some confidence in life, the willingness to take part into it. What does he know about God? He is too young

¹ *It does not come in at all. It is already there. It is a fundamental factor underlying Scouting and Guiding. In: "Religion in the Boy Scout and Girl Guide Movement", an address by the Chief Scout to the Joint Conference of Commissioners of both Movements at High Leigh, 2 July 1926*





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to tell. Confident in those who have watched over him, he places himself under God's gaze, facing the troop, he promises.

The place of religions in Scouting

10]- We see that Scouting engages a recognition between people of different religions. The first international Scout meeting took place in 1909, two years only after the Scout Camp at Brownsea. There was no interreligious dialogue at that time, no set-up "ecumenical movement", no theology of the religions. Among the eleven thousand Scouts gathered, there were some of non-Christian religion. At one point, it was necessary to pray, because the scouts are praying. The founder made a Christian prayer, because he is a Christian. The non-Christians had to be taken into account into the prayer. This was an interfaith ceremony, the first in the history of scouting, at a time when it was not done. They called it a *Scout Own*, because they did not know what it was. This had in fact never been done before. The multi-denominational aspect of Scouting was thus recognized.

11]- Following this event, Scout leaders in consultation clarified that Scouts of different religions have to live their own religion. Baden-Powell never refrain from repeating it: "the boy must observe and practice the religion he professes, whatever it may be"².

The place of the Catholics in Scouting

12]- We insist on the fact that there have been young Catholics in Scouting from the very beginning. The increasing number of groups in minority Catholic parishes in the United Kingdom was not a problem for the Archbishop of Westminster, Cardinal Bourne.

13]- Yet very quickly, as if by an invincible contagion, Scouting took off on the continent, in the Latin countries, predominantly Catholic countries. This is where the efforts of the Venerable Jacques Sevin took place. In gathering Catholic Scouting in France, in structuring it, in overcoming an opposition within the episcopate of his country linked to the fundamentally interreligious dimension of Scouting (more profoundly than to its Protestant origins), he won the recognition of Scouting by the universal Catholic Church and this greatly contributed to the global development of Scouting.

14]- Thus, the Catholic Church confirmed the initial Christian inspiration: it is committed into it, it takes its rightful, important and original part into it. As Catholics, we put a strong spiritual commitment into Scouting. This is appreciated by Scouts of other denominations, and it increases the value of Scouting.

15]- With our founder Baden-Powell, an Anglican, the son of a particularly spiritual and free minister, we consider the Scout goal of a fraternal life as the realization of the Gospel project. With him, we say that Scouting is learning to live in the Kingdom of God inaugurated by Jesus Christ.

With our father, Jacques Sevin, we take Scouting as a way to be disciples of Jesus Christ. A Scout song says: "A path of love that makes you grow". We are taking Scouting as an offer to go to the end of our

² "It is certainly very difficult to give a precise definition of religious training in our Movement, as some very different denominations are co-existing. This is the reason why the details of the expression of the duty to God have to be left mostly into the hands of the local leaders of the Movement. However, we insist on one point: the boy must observe and put into practice the religion he professes, whatever it is" - Guide of the Scout Leader, 1919.





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Christian faith - to take, as we say, the road to holiness. In our 21st century, for many young people under the influence of the Western culture, faith is more difficultly represented as a path of life that one follows. As Catholic Scouts, we do not give up, we say: "If you are missing the road, make it".

16]- Trust was present between Baden-Powell and the Catholic Church. Since the very first years, the question of the place of religions in Scouting was answered in consultation with some English Catholic personalities. Baden-Powell came back from time to time on the fact that Catholics were found to have "the most intimate and profound application of the Scout method and ideals"³. Speaking to Catholic Scouts in the United Kingdom who were traveling to Rome, he encouraged them to walk as Catholic pilgrims, not as ambassadors of Scouting's diversity.

At a meeting with Pope Pius XI in Rome in 1933, he expressed his gratitude to him for having blessed the pilgrimage to Rome of the English Catholic Scouts four years earlier. In the report that he wrote about his visit, it is clear that he was following the development of the Catholic Scouts, that he was aware of the concern of some of them to lose their Catholic identity in the cooperation with other Scouts. He took up then the thoughts expressed by the Pope in their meeting and in his encyclical, asking them to unite among Scouts of all religions in order to "unite in withstanding the forces of disruption"⁴.

Spiritual sources

17]- Recently, the World Scout Conference reiterated that "duty to God" is indeed the first principle of Scouting and we must not forget to look after the spiritual development of young people.

"[The World Conference] recommends greater support from the World Scout Committee to Member Organizations in improving their youth program and leadership training in the field of "spiritual development - duty to God".

18]- At the same time, national leaders confess that it has become more difficult. These difficulties are not because scouts who are not evolving well, or religions that are outdated. They are the difficulties of an era, and this is our era. Let's look at the thoughts inspired Pope Francis in his last encyclical:

Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all. [FT8]

As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity. We are certain that "only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another" [FT272]

Baden-Powell's thoughts in 1922 were not so different:

³ Said to the apostolic vicar in Denmark, Monsignor Brems, during the Jamboree in Ermelunden - In *L'Esploratore* September 7th, 1924.

⁴ "in accordance with his Encyclical, which urged 'all people of good will and who believed in God to unite in withstanding the forces of disruption so dangerous today'". in: *Jamboree*, n°51, p. 290.





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When young men and women from all countries will be educated to look upon their neighbours as brothers and sisters in the human family and will be united by the common purpose of service and readiness to help one another, they will no longer think, as they have up to now, in terms of war, but in terms of reciprocal peace and goodwill. This is the spirit in which all people on earth, Christians and non-Christians alike, should live, as members of one family and children of one Father.⁵

19]- Going to the spiritual sources, not losing contact with the millennial spiritual experience of humanity? Scouting tells to do so. Scouting loves its sources. Scouting loves to be cared for by religious communities.

Every succeeding generation is in contact in a million ways with the whole human family: through the collective organization of life, through the variety of goods, through the wrapping of the web, through studies, through solidarities that are imposing themselves: looking after the planet, wanting peace. It is true that the vital landscape is from now on wider than the national horizon, or the belonging to a single human and religious community. Rather than speaking about religion, some people prefer to speak of spirituality, a word that joins us to the whole of humanity, to the religious history of the world.

Interiority, spirituality, religion

20]- In some countries, we find ourselves wondering: how can we provide our young people with a spirituality that our churches are no longer able to give them? Besides, would Scouting not be their spirituality? We know very well that Scouting is not a new religion. Scouting has never claimed to replace religions

21]- However Scouting feels sometimes distant from the religious communities. Sometimes, the depreciation of religions in the public discourse can discourage people from expecting anything from them. One then starts to speak of spirituality without religion. This is why we want to express again what we mean by spirituality.

22]- We cannot speak properly of spirituality without distinguishing it from interiority. The interiority consists in the fact that man is in contact with himself, inside of himself, in the present. This simple consciousness of oneself is already an acceptance of oneself: each of us lives in the company of oneself. Each one makes the difference between him-/herself and what is not him-/herself, in the middle of which he/she distinguishes him-/herself and sees him-/herself.

Touching the interiority, the spirituality is our appointment with what is greater, which comes and visits our intimate motivation. Interiority comes from the inside, when spirituality is coming from the inner self.

23]- The young person does not start from nothing: our great religions impregnate us. We know well that it is impossible to dissociate the history of humanity from its religions. Since the beginnings, the religions of the world have been the places where confidence in the destiny of humanity has been formed. When the spirit of our religious tradition and our Scout songs are meeting, our scout brotherhood is

⁵ *Jamboree, the universal scout journal*, October 1922. It is part of the inaugural speech at the 2nd International Conference on Scouting delivered by B-P at the Sorbonne on July 22nd, 1922





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blessed. All of a sudden, the creation is more beautiful in our eyes, we understand that it is given to us, we see the gift of life that is given to us.

24]- Our religions are different. Up to which point can we get nearer to the religious experience of other people from other religions? The confidence born from a true friendship can give us to see who they are, different from us, attracted by the same source of the being, that they do not pretend to possess, mysterious and unique. Their meditation concentrates on one or the other dimension of life in which they participate in something which is superior to themselves. For example, the renewal of nature, which carries us and nourishes us and of which we are a part; or the lineage of our ancestors in the wake of which life has come to us; or the wisdom that is passed on without being lost, we do not know how; or the multi-secular social organization that has protected the common life up to now and that we honour, etc. Religions are attached to these uninterrupted continuities, which make us participate in something sure, which offer themselves to live and inform of which we bow with piety. Through friendship, we slowly learn to think well of the great religions of the world, we enumerate them with fraternal sympathy. As Christians, we link to Jesus Christ. He is helping us to look at men's life as a participation in God's life. He is teaching us about God the Father, his Father and our Father. Scouts, in Latin America, call Jesus: *nuestro gran jefe*. In Europe, we are saying: "Jesus, the first Scout". Our Scout prayers are never tired of looking on his side.

25]- In believing that God is Father, we like to think that the religions of the world, by their appreciation of each human person, offer their contribution to the construction of the brotherhood. Baden-Powell says it, Pope Francis says it⁶ ;

26] Our religions offer each person their diverse and engaging spiritual weavings to clothe themselves in. When the person is dressed in spirituality, we see their nobility. You see their joie de vivre, something that radiates into the body, the heart and the mind and makes their face beautiful.

27]- Why are the present generations attached to the word "spirituality"? Religions are not coming from further away than where the culture got set up? We have started to notice it. As Catholic Scouts, our Church is universal. One Catholic scout today does not report only to the Church of his/her country, he/she has an interest in what the Pope says; he/she looks across borders. He/she sees him-/herself, without being able to explain it, as the heir of the spiritual history of humanity. As Catholic Scouts, we do not renounce to a community of belonging, but we are questioning ourselves on the relationship between the entire universal Church and the other religions of the world.

28]- The young person wants to grow up. In a Scouting program where spiritual activities are not offered, he will be disappointed without knowing why. There will be no spiritual life for him if nobody is offering it to him. It must be wanted by a leader who implements it. The leader also needs to be paid attention to, to be taught his spiritual role, to be moved closer to the Christian tradition upon which he can draw.

⁶ See over at number 18. As well as: « The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society (...) » FT 271.





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29]- The cooperation of Scouting and religions is a wonderful thing⁷. Religious institutions are often thought of as old ritualistic and dogmatic houses where there is no room for discussion, dialogue and changes.

Yet religious life carries a subjective dimension. There is room for crisis, discomfort and disagreements. Within an organized community, there is room for personal reversals, for greater freedom. Scouting is an excellent field for the Christian community to provide an authentic learning about freedom.

30]- Helping to make a spiritual path implies confidence which is built on healthy relationships. We notice that proselytism has no right to exist at home, that scouting does not lead to "spiritual illusions". On the contrary, life in contact of the creation and the honest exercise of a brotherly life can be a very interesting opportunity of return to the mystery of the origins and of the end of human existence. Baden-Powell never ceased to underline it.

31]- Helping to make a spiritual path implies to be in security. We are on alert on the dangers of abuses on under-aged people. They are also present in scouting, in particular as an educational movement. All the scout leaders are exposed to it. The Christian community and the scout leaders must be watchful together. We want scouting to take care of all the wounds which could have been inflicted. We want it to be a safe house.

Times, Gestures

32]- Spiritual life takes place in liturgies. A path which goes through what is historical and what is eternal, between what is from us and what is from the Creator, between our life together and the eternal fact of God, between what we say to God and what God says to us. We need our liturgies, from which Scouting and its three principles drink: duty to God, duty to the others and duty to oneself - we recognise here the commandments that Jesus recalls: love the Lord, love your neighbour as yourself (Mt 22:37-39). We need sacred art, to proclaim our holy texts, we are thirsty for songs of joy of living. We need to be gathered in the love that we have for each other and for God, in the rustling of nature, of the woods, of the shores. To be at the mercy of the rain, of the heat which express our fragility in front of God, our poor faith. Our liturgies are sometimes difficult to decide, difficult to succeed. However, if we want to do without, it is of God that will be depriving Scouting.

As Francis is saying:

Yet we Christians are very much aware that “if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman”. Others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, “for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with

⁷ Let's notice that the world scout movement listens to all the religions. When they are able to express their spirit of tolerance and mostly of brotherhood which renews its inspiration, it gives them a consultative status.





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the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all”⁸.

33]- We want to give the Catholic liturgical dimension the place it needs at the heart of Scouting life at the local, national, zonal, regional, and world levels in order to truly and certainly be brothers to every other Scout. How can we really be a brother to every other Scout if our Christian life cannot be lived, if it is not planned and organised?

34]- The spiritual life is reflected through the things we do and that are seemingly unnecessary, that identify clearly that you are my friend, by their sheer gratuity. God is not some help or need, it is love, which is expressed in historical acts, which we dedicate simply to be in a relationship. The life of the relationship with God are the acts that we have towards others, and towards God.

35]- The spiritual life wraps up the Scout life with trust. It gives happiness to have service, it makes us love him without having seen him, the one who gave it to us.

In the story of the flood, God offers the earth to humanity, wrapped by a rainbow. The dove flies up to Noah's arch with a branch in its beak which it took on earth, a *branch of peace*, to show where God wishes to lead us. For the joy of the journey is not only overcoming ourselves, and forging one's character and the joy of action is not only succeeding in doing what we set out to do, or in having done what should have, it is at the end of the path to find a higher intention that raises us to its goals. The New Testament says that we are pilgrims on the earth, walking to a better country, that has been prepared for us (Epistle to the Hebrews 11, 13-16).

Without action, spiritual life is an illusion, without spirituality, action does not bring what we wanted.

An interfaith program does not make a religious program

36]- This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... For the deeper, stronger and richer our own identity is, the more we will be capable of enriching others with our own proper contribution”.[279] We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbour, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion⁹.

37]- This fragment of *Fratelli Tutti* leads us, as an important clarification, to clear up a misunderstanding. An interreligious program is not a religious program. On the one hand, the reality of people of other religions matter, they have to be given all their space. At the same time, to live one's religion seriously matters, we have to give it all its space.

⁸ Pope Francis, FT 277.

⁹ Pope Francis, FT 282.





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38]- One realizes that this tension between welcoming other religions and the in-depth study of one's own religion has been present throughout the history of Scouting since the beginning.

On the Protestant side, Geoffrey Elwes, an Anglican, the old companion of Baden-Powell, used to said:

39]- If we had to refrain from explicitly mentioning Christianity, when we have to support each other, under the pretext that there might also be present someone of another religion, it will make it impossible to practice our religion, and we will not be able to bring into play the religious aspects that really matter to us.

40]- And on the Catholic side, our father Jacques Sevin, takes Scouting as a good way to be Christian. The Venerable has never been a separatist: he wants scouting to be opening to Catholicism the path of the whole human family. However, in Scouting, he anchors Catholicism. What else can we do better for scouting than to commit ourselves to progress in the Catholic faith?

41]- One precept sums up our aspiration as Catholics: Scouts one, Catholics strong. We wish to live a fulfilled Catholic life in a completely fraternal Scouting. We place ourselves in Scouting to say yes to the family humanity. We commit to Scouting the best of who we are.

Scouting and Catholic Associations

42]- Today, Scouting is growing rapidly again, it develops itself. This inexhaustible breath is linked to its *global* scope and to this good understanding between the religions in the initial scouting which put at ease the present generations without a need for explanations. We see that the Catholic Conference is developing, the increasing number of members, in Africa, in Latin America, in Asia, is a sign of a more global Catholic life, guided by Pope Francis. The presence of all the big religions in our movement matters, the friendship expressed by the scouts of other religions matters for the Catholics.

43]- It is in welcoming all the differences in a single association that scouting started. In the United-Kingdom, Christianity has been deeply stirred by a powerful Anglican establishment and sovereignty disputes; various protestant faiths and the minority Catholicism lived together. The founder of Scouting went further into the *ecumenism de facto*, with his brotherly look on those who were not Christians. In *The Boy Scout Association*, they were well received, with their religions. Other single associations were getting born, through an obvious kinship, in the United-States, in countries under the influence of those two big powers.

44]- If we cross the Channel, the life of religion was not the same. Catholics and Protestants were facing each other. Even three centuries after the War of Religions, when the royalties threw them against each other, there was nothing better for Catholics and Protestants than getting organised separately¹⁰. Some tried to start an association gathering all the religions in a space of tolerance, to do as in England.

¹⁰ Up to the First World War, which marks the end of Pius X's pontificate, the Holy See was against the interdenominational associations. See on the topic the encyclical *Singulari quadam* (1912).





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However, there was no similar development as was expected from scouting in the continental countries¹¹. The Catholic and Protestant denominational communities carried the development of Scouting in developing contingents separately. Baden-Powell did not see any problem in this. As for the Jewish Scouts, when you think of the antisemitism in *continental* Europe in the first half of the 20th century, we can see it could not only start in having their own organisation. All those denominational scouting gathered together in the form of federations¹². The colonies depending on them and countries under their influence did the same.

45]- Another phenomenon which model world scouting in many countries in the five continents: spiritual crises, authoritarian regimes, and wars cause all kinds of serious divisions in the populations. When peace comes back, some separate scouting groups in disagreement are emerging *de facto* in one single country. There is then the difficult problem of setting up a national organisation which does not discourage the one or the other community that everything opposes, to invest in scouting.

46]- We see that scouting is growing and becomes beautiful, protecting the initiatives of minority communities and allowing majority communities to realise their potential. Scouting needs the spiritual resources of the communities which provides the numbers, otherwise the family unity of scouting will deteriorate. A national scouting succeeds in finding a shape that suits itself. We want to be besides scouting to find this shape, in each country, according to its history.

Some needs of Catholic Scouts and of Scouts from other denominations

47]- We do not want to develop only our Catholic Committee or a multi-denominational Committee in which motivated scouts discuss about spiritual matters. We want to organise scouting with others. We want to be there, with our vision of Scouting as a path of Christian accomplishment, when national and world scouting are taking orientations. Even in countries where the Catholics are the most numerous, the Catholic inspiration is sometimes struggling in the life of the national scout organisation.

48]- How will we make Scouting our path of faith if the relationships with the Catholic community is not set up at all the levels: local, diocesan, national and world? As ICCS, we want to take care of the relationships between Scouting and the Catholic Church at all levels. The consolidation of the

¹¹ Those associations could see perfectly that scouting was gathering people from different religions, but in order to put everybody together, they tried to do as in the United-Kingdom. They all have a place in scouting, even if they do not give scouting the means to succeed quantitatively. In France, Jacques Sevin did not want to count without them. With times, they met difficulties, because the "neutral" side is getting bigger, the absence of religions in the activities is becoming systemic and can even become the rule.

¹² A single association of scouting really existed in continental Europe, in the Great Germany before the war, it is the DPB, Deutscher Pfadfinderbund. But it is a particular case, its success was dependent on the military ambitions of Germany before the war, it was getting away, in this sense, from the Scouting of Baden-Powell whom it was recommending itself lightly. Read on the topic Jean-Jacques Gauthé "De Mafeking à Bruxelles, les Scouts allemands en Belgique occupée, 1914-1918" in *Cahiers d'histoire belge du Scoutisme* (Bruxelles), n°21, March 2017.





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relationships between the World Organisation of the Scouts Movement and the Holy See must give landmarks to manage the relationships between Scouting and Catholicism in each country.

49]- Two laws operate in Catholic Scouting commitment: the civil law and the canon law of the Church, which regulates the relationship of the Catholics between themselves and to the others. A Catholic Scout is under the authority of the national scout organization which he belongs to, and of the Catholic hierarchy that approves the Scouting movement and is going to help.

50]- There is no Catholic community life without a pastor mandated by the Church gathering the Catholic Scouts. Chaplains, especially the national chaplain supported by international chaplains, are in charge of building and protecting the living relationship between the Church and Scouting.

51]- The regulation of the common life of the Catholic Church and Scouting in each country is a matter for the Bishops' Conference and the national scout organisation in the state where it is finds located. The ICCS can help, as it is mandated by the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life and is listened to by the World Organisation of the Scout Movement (WOSM).

52]- We invite the Catholic Scouts to develop a Catholic Scout education program, in making good use of youth program of World Scouting. We should not be afraid to preserve our religious difference. We must not be afraid of defending our anchor into world Scouting.

53]- Besides the times of prayer and celebration and the elements in the program that are really denominational, the Catholic must commit in the elaboration of scout activities in particular in the scout training, at national and international level, bringing their spirit and taking advantage of the others' spirit.

54]- More largely, the spiritual life lavished by the denominational communities must interact with the leadership of the national organisations. A *vivre ensemble*, which allows the scouts to live as brothers in the well-affirmed difference of religions, has something which is resplendent. Between the model of denominational associations gathered in federation and the one of the single association, the variety of "vivre ensemble" can be found, with the help of WOSM *and* of the religious organisations, all welcomed partners.

55]- We would like that each national scout organisation gets organised to take responsibility of the religious context of the country, to favour the implication (and sometimes the re-implication) of the various denominational communities which make it up. The ICCS, when it invites national associations to join in, never forgets to make it known to the other world conferences of the other religions which are present in the country, in particular those in which the scout movement is usually taking advice from.

56]- the ICCS is encouraging its member to write a spiritual charter approved by the national scout association, the Catholic church and the other communities which engage their children into Scouting. Those charters show their usefulness with time, to make the desired progress in the common life, to address the challenges which pop up, to go to the end of the necessary transformations.



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57]- The ICCS wants to call the Catholic Scouts of different sensibilities to keep unity, according to Christ's request to his disciples in the Gospel according to Saint John. May Scouting be a place of peace of the Church. When we are dis-united, we do not bring to our brothers what they liked to find into Catholic Scouts.

58]- We want to say that Scouting is a chance to fraternise with the other religions. Francis shows the example in mentioning the meeting with Patriarch Bartholomew which inspired him in the writing of the encyclical *Laudato Si*, and the meeting with the Great Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb which inspired him in the writing of the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*¹³. In the plane back from Iraq, he quotes the great Ayatollah Sistani who "make him good" when he said: "all the men are brothers by religions; or [at least] equal through creation"¹⁴. "Brother by religions", this is what the scouts are. Following suit to each other, in our educational activities for the youth, we can do it.

59]- Scouting is a wonderful field to allow the pastoral actors to knot some freedom relationships with the youth, for some good quality effort. Scouting is gaining a spiritual richness, due to the passion that the Catholic Church can put into scouting, it is a factor of growth.

With our Father Jacque Sevin, a model for our chaplains, the Catholic scouts are praying with recognition for the whole of scouting. They are confiding it to Mary, a star in the Sea. They tell again the Scout prayer to Jesus.

¹³ FT5

¹⁴ Press Conference of Pope Francis, in the plane between Bagdad and Rome, Monday, March 8th, 2021.

