



Scout Sunday, February 10, 2019

To the Faithful Orthodox Christians and Scouts:

We now observe another Scout Sunday where we pause from our busy routine to remember the many contributions that the Scouting Community has made to make our world a better place to live. It is fitting that our churches especially remember the Scouts as many of our Parishes are home to Scout Troops. Answering the call to have “Duty to God”, our churches are an integral part of what makes Scouting such a valuable institution. Always remembering that “A Scout is Reverent”, these young men and their leaders offer a path to holiness that

is grounded in the good works and learned skills that can only be found in Scouting.

I remember my youth and being a part of Troop 19 in Mahaffey, Pennsylvania and how much I gained personally by being a part of that troop. I remember the summers spent at Camp Mountain Run, outside DuBois, Pennsylvania where we honed our skills of living in the woods. Living here in Alaska now, those skills come in very handy some times. There is not a time that goes by when I find the need to tie a knot, or rig a line, or other outdoor activity that I do not harken back to what I learned so long ago. In short, I am a more confident person today thanks to Scouting.

In 1960, the Standing Conference of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas [SCOBA] endorsed Scouting as viable part of their youth ministry and created the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting [EOCS]. This was the first agency created by SCOBA and presently an agency under The Assembly of Canonical Orthodox Bishops in the Americas.

The EOCS Executive Board encourages all Orthodox Churches to recognize and celebrate this Scout Sunday on February 10, 2019 even if their church does not sponsor a Scout unit. I am sure there are Scouts in nearly every Parish in the United States. Living in a world that constantly seems to want to attack the family and the ideals of Scouting, either directly or indirectly, I find our Scouting troops to be a good place to support the ideas of Reverence and Duty to God. Anyone interested in their good work can go to the EOCS website at www.eocs.org to learn more about Scouting and the Orthodox Church. This year will be the World Scout Jamboree at the Summit Bechtel Reserve in West Virginia from July 23. Once again the EOCS will be sponsoring an Orthodox booth, holding services and meetings with Orthodox Scout from around the country and around the world. I would encourage all Orthodox Scouts to attend and be involved at the Jamboree.

Some Scout Sunday Ideas:

- If your parish sponsors a Scout unit have them arrive in full uniform.

- If the church does not have a Scout program, have the Scouts come in uniform. Many priests are aware of Scout Sunday and will discuss Scouting at some point of the service. You can have the uniformed Scouts:

- Serve at the candle table in the narthex
- Serve as Ushers
- Help pass the collection tray
- Help serve during the coffee hour

And any suggestions from the parish priest

- Present Eastern Orthodox Religious Scout Awards and/or any other Scout Awards earned.
- Have a Scout Display and recruitment.
- Think of sponsoring or establishing a Scout unit in your parish.
- Approach a local Scout unit and give them ideas for service projects which can benefit your parish and community.
- Look at the many Orthodox Scout awards and encourage your Scouts to earn them. Scouting has proven to develop stronger church membership and it is a natural fit. Good Scouts make better Church members and good Church members make better Scouts.
- Volunteer to assist the local Scout troop/pack/crew.
- Take a collection and contribute funds to the EOCS so they can continue their good work. Think about establish a local EOCS committee so all Orthodox Scouts in the region can gather and support one another.

May the Lord God send His Blessings upon our Scouts, our leaders and the many volunteers across the United States of America.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial 'D'.

+ Bishop David

Bishop of Sitka and Alaska

Episcopal Liaison to the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting