



## **Orthodox Scouting Sunday, 2020**

### **February 9, 2020**

*By The Most Rev. Archbishop David, Bishop of Sitka and Alaska*

Each year we come to this Sunday in February to celebrate Scouting in our communities. Throughout our country we will join in recognizing the contributions they have all made to our churches and various institutions through their hard work, dedication to duty and love of country and Faith. They have a comradery not found in any other organization. This idea of fellowship in Faith, love and respect for others is the guiding principle that makes their work so beneficial and important.

Today I address not only our Scouting Youth and Leaders who are before you, but I also address the Families, parents and children in attendance who do not yet know the values that Scouting offers.

We live in an age where it is becoming increasingly difficult to find a harmonious existence with others. Some are quick to judge those not like themselves and others simply want to avoid contact as much as they can. Neither of these options are suitable for a population to coexist. There must be an effort made to not only coexist, but to communicate with and learn from each other so that as a society we can all improve our way of life and social existence.

As our children grow, parents all ponder many questions about their future. Every effort is made to protect them from harmful situations. We all hope they will have a life more fulfilling than our own. In our pursuit for our children we enroll them in various things to aid their maturity and growth. It may be a sports team, or social club, or a hobby group of like-minded people. There is no shortage of organizations vying for their attention. These organizations have no respect for your preferences in Faith, in fact, many times practices or even games are scheduled for Sunday mornings; this leaves the parent with a very difficult choice. Sad to say more often than not, it is the church that seems to be left out. Add to this that other families involved in such organizations may have no pious life at all and it is reflected in the way their own children behave at times.

Scouting gives us all of the good behaviors we aspire our children to have, while minimizing the bad ones. In Scouting, all youth are taught the Scout Oath, which ends with this phrase, “To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.” Each and every Scout lives by this code in every aspect of their life. We can even say, the more involved they are in Scouting, the more likely they are to practice these virtues. Is this not a desire we would want for all young men and women? We can offer it to them with Scouting, BSA.

So today I offer my most heartfelt thanks to the Scouts who work so hard to deliver the good work of Scouting to your community. I extend an invitation to parents of all ages, and grandparents as well, to get involved in Scouting. To help improve the life of those you care so much about; whose futures you long to improve, to help them become the fine outstanding citizens we know they are capable of becoming. And to the youth, your future can be even brighter than you know through your participation in Scouting, BSA.

For more information on the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting and the work of scouting got to their website at <https://www.eocs.org>

God bless our Scouts and Leaders.

*Your servant of Servants,*

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

**His Eminence Archbishop David**

*Archbishop of Sitka and Alaska*

*Episcopal Liaison to the Eastern Orthodox Committee on Scouting*