

TO: SCOUT LEADERS
FROM: OFFICE OF YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY
SUBJECT: CATHOLIC SCOUTING AWARDS PRESENTATIONS
DATE: FEBRUARY 23, 2015

The Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry seeks to minister to the young church with the goal of building strong disciples of Jesus Christ. We do this through school, parish, and regional youth ministry programming, retreats, conferences, rallies, and even through scouting. It is Catholic scouting that this memo addresses.

Over the past several years, participation in Catholic scouting in the Erie Diocese has diminished. Scouts (boy and girl) are not pursuing religious awards as they once were. Several years ago, St. Peter Cathedral was full of scouts, parents, and leaders for the Scouting Awards Day. It was there that the bishop would recognize the achievements of each scout and award their emblems. In May 2014, only the first few pews were filled; it was a very short ceremony.

Many scout troops sponsored by parishes have dissolved, causing scouts to join secularly sponsored troops. With this disconnect, there is often no interaction between the youth and his or her pastor in the scouting arena. Many pastors are unaware that their young people are working on Catholic awards. Many are not even aware that scouts are in their parish communities, making it impossible for a pastor to encourage the pursuit of the Catholic awards.

It is our hope that by making a few changes, we might help to bridge the gap between pastor and scout, build a dialog of faith, and encourage the development of young discipleship.

After careful thought and consideration and with the support of Bishop Lawrence Persico, the privilege for awarding Catholic religious emblems will now rest with the scout's pastor. The Scouting Awards Day at the Cathedral will no longer be held.

The process for award presentation is outlined below:

1. On behalf of the scout, the leader (often a parent) sends the diocesan Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry an application for the earned Catholic award.
2. As soon as the application is received, the Youth Office will process the application, and order the emblem(s).
3. The Youth Office will then send the emblem(s) with the scout's information to the pastor.
4. A letter will be sent to the scout leader notifying them that the application has been received, processed, and the emblem sent to the pastor.
5. The scout leader and pastor then work together to create a memorable presentation service for the scout. This would typically happen during a Sunday Mass so that the parish community can celebrate with their scout.

If you have any questions, please contact Kathleen Peterson, Coordinator, Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministry, 814-824-1218, kpeterson@eriercd.org.