



## **Allentown Diocese**

### **Catholic Committee On Scouting**



Website: [www.adccos.org](http://www.adccos.org)

Email: [info@adccos.org](mailto:info@adccos.org)

Committee Chair: Fred Flemming

Chaplain: Rev. Eric Tolentino

December 19, 2024

#### **For Immediate Release**

### **SPECIAL COUNSELOR REQUIREMENT FOR THE CITIZENSHIP IN SOCIETY MERIT BADGE FOR UNITS SPONSORED BY THE DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN AND ITS PARISHES**

**Effective immediately, all scouts or venturers in Catholic-sponsored units in the Diocese of Allentown who want to or must earn the Citizenship in Society merit badge must use one of five designated priests as the counselor.** Bishop Alfred Schlert, the head of the Allentown Diocese, supports Scouting as an important form of youth ministry at the parish level. He has designated five priests within the diocese who have become merit badge counselors for this badge. No other adults may counsel this merit badge for Catholic-sponsored units. This policy applies to both Catholic and non-Catholic scouts within a Catholic-sponsored unit. The use of one of the five designated priest counselors is strongly recommended to Catholic scouts in nonCatholic-sponsored units. This policy is not retroactive for those who have completed the merit badge before November 20, 2024. To be clear, those who completed the merit badge before November 20, 2024, do not have to repeat it with a diocesan-approved counselor.

Two years ago, Scouts BSA released a new merit badge called Citizenship in Society and made it a required badge to attain the Eagle rank. It deals with the area of human relations called, "diversity, equity, and inclusion". It has no merit badge booklet because the scout is directed to use the internet to research these terms and topics. The independent internet research and suggested websites allow for the promotion of ideologies contrary to Catholic faith and morals, leaving impressionable youth vulnerable to social contagions that are contrary to Catholic faith and morals. The parish-sponsored units are Catholic youth ministry. Parish-sponsored scout units should form their youth in accord with Catholic faith and moral teaching. The five approved priest counselors have been working with Rev. Eric Tolentino, Diocesan Director of Catholic Scouting, to develop a list of authentic Catholic references, such as the Catechism of the Catholic Church, to provide guidance as they counsel this merit badge.

The five approved priest counselors are:

Rev. Eric Tolentino, Pastor Annunciation BVM Parish, Catasauqua  
([etolentino@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:etolentino@allentowndiocese.org))

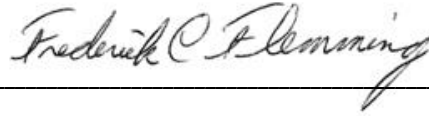
Rev. Alexander Brown, Parochial Vicar, St. Anne Parish, Bethlehem  
([abrown@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:abrown@allentowndiocese.org))

Rev. Joseph Ganser, Pastor St. Frances of Assisi Parish, Allentown  
([jganser@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:jganser@allentowndiocese.org))

Rev. Matthew Kuna, Chaplain for Berks Catholic H.S., Reading  
([mkuna@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:mkuna@allentowndiocese.org))

Rev. Phillip Maas, Parochial Vicar, St. Thomas More Parish, Allentown  
([pmaas@allentowndiocese.org](mailto:pmaas@allentowndiocese.org))

More information, including details on the implementation of this requirement, the list of five priest counselors, and FAQs, can be obtained by contacting the Chairman of the Allentown Diocese Catholic Committee On Scouting, Fred Flemming, at [fcflemming@gmail.com](mailto:fcflemming@gmail.com).

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Frederick C. Flemming". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

---

**Frederick C. Flemming**  
**Chairman**  
**Allentown Diocese Catholic Committee on Scouting**