



ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LANSING

Office of the Bishop
300 West Ottawa Street • Lansing, Michigan 48933-1577

Fall 2012

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Both nationally and locally, there have been concerns raised by the faithful regarding Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and their relationship with other organizations, including Planned Parenthood, and the effect this may have on educational materials.

Our Diocesan Offices of Youth Ministry and Multicultural Evangelization have attended meetings, investigated links, reviewed resources and have been in communication with the National Federation of Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM), as well as others who are deeply concerned with these issues. We have done all we can to discern what is true in these allegations.

The GSUSA is a secular organization, which seeks a spiritual focus by partnering with religious organizations. Within the NFCYM, there exists the Catholic Committee on Girls Scouts and Campfire Girls (CCGSCG). This Catholic organization (operating under the auspices of the NFCYM), is itself affiliated with the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB), and has an Episcopal Liaison who serves on its board of directors. The CCGSCG works closely with GSUSA to address any concerns being raised. Over the years this Catholic scouting committee has helped Catholic girl scouts and camp fire girls to earn religious awards with excellent catechetical and service materials. They continue to do excellent and faith-filled work.

In the last few years, The Journey material (used with formation of girl's scouts, produced by GSUSA), did have questionable material and listed a person and resources that were objectionable. This was addressed by NFCYM Catholic Scout Committee, and the material was updated and these sources were removed. This remains a concern and there now exists a mutual agreement to review annually this material to guarantee that this will not happen again.

Another area of concern has been the GSUSA relationship to the World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and indirectly through WAGGGS, an *alleged* relationship with Planned Parenthood.

- WAGGGS is an international alliance made up of national Girl Scout and Girl Guides organizations from various countries.
- Inasmuch as that is the case, GSUSA is a member of WAGGGS. As a member of WAGGGS they pay national dues as a member organization.
- Planned Parenthood is not a member of WAGGGS and **does not** receive financial benefit from WAGGGS as far as can be determined.

- WAGGGS and Planned Parenthood have been invited, along with other non-Girl Scout organizations, to international conferences sponsored by the United Nations. Such an invitation does not dictate a relationship between the two organizations.
- At this time, there seems to be no evidence that GSUSA dues paid to WAGGGS has any connection to Planned Parenthood. Whether directly or indirectly, Girl Scout cookie sales do not make their way to Planned Parenthood, not even a small percentage.
- We do have concerns regarding WAGGGS, as an international organization, in so much as its agenda and values do not always reflect that of our Catholic faith. CCGSCG will remain vigilant in observation of WAGGGS and its influence on GSUSA and we will address concerns as they come to light.

Given the work of the USCCB and NFCYM I recommend:

- We remain engaged with GSUSA for the benefit of our Catholic girls who participate in scouting.
- We remain diligent in our ongoing investigation of any accusations or concerns.
- Where there are issues that cannot be resolved with non-parish based Girl Scout Troops, we encourage pastors to start a parish group, with parish control, with either GSUSA or American Heritage Girls
- If establishing a parish or school girl scout troupe, a parish is to use the Memorandum of Understanding which constitutes an agreement between the local parish, the Diocese of Lansing, and the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.

At our March 31 Diocesan Scout Committee meeting progress of this investigation was presented. American Heritage Girls (AHG) are members of the committee. Conversation included how their troop started in the Plymouth/Ann Arbor area. It was because of a presentation, at a local scout meeting, of material from Planned Parenthood and their ongoing relationship that AHG began there. We thank American Heritage Girls for their presence on our diocesan committee. We thank the whole committee for their wonderful working relationship. At this time we remain engaged with GSUSA in an ongoing ministry in which we hope to have influence on the faith formation of our young women. We also welcome American Heritage Girls as well as Girl Scouts as partners in our scouting ministry here in the Diocese of Lansing. We will continue to keep you updated and informed of any and all pertinent circumstances regarding these issues.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Earl Boyea
Bishop of Lansing