

**STATEMENT OF BISHOP MICHAEL SHERIDAN
REGARDING THE GIRL SCOUTS**

June 15, 2015

As many of you are aware, several parishes in the Diocese of Colorado Springs have strong relationships with various local Girl Scout Troops. I greatly appreciate all the good works and leadership opportunities these troops support. I want to specifically recognize all of the local troops in the Diocese. They have worked faithfully and well to incorporate strong Catholic values into their programming.

Unfortunately, the Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), the national and worldwide organizations that support local troops, have for years engaged in behaviors and entered into relationships with organizations that are in conflict with the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Some of my specific concerns regarding GSUSA and WAGGGS include the following:

- WAGGGS supports and promotes “sexual and reproductive health and rights” which includes artificial contraception, sterilization, and abortion.
- GSUSA pays at least \$1,000,000 to WAGGGS as dues each year. While this amount is paid from GSUSA investment funds, the funds are not restricted, so WAGGGS can use them to support programs that do not comport with Catholic teachings.
- GSUSA provides manuals to some troops containing views contrary to Church teachings.
- GSUSA permits membership and participation by boys who are “recognized by the family and school/community as a girl” and who “live culturally as a girl.”
- GSUSA permits local councils or troops to collaborate with Planned Parenthood or similar organizations that support and provide artificial contraception and abortion.

While the Girl Scouts provide many young women with leadership development opportunities, strong friendships, and opportunities to serve, these are overshadowed by those activities listed above. For this reason, I encourage our young Catholic girls to consider joining other groups that espouse authentic Catholic teachings and virtues.

Specifically, both the American Heritage Girls (Christian) and the Little Flowers Girls Club (Catholic) have been successful and growing for several years. Information about these groups can be found at www.ahgonline.org and www.beholdpublications.com/LFGC_home.htm, respectively. I strongly encourage parents and parish clergy to investigate these resources and prayerfully consider sponsoring and supporting them in our parishes.

If there are any questions concerning Catholic Scouting, please contact Curtis O’Connell, the Chair of the Catholic Committee on Scouting. Curtis may be reached at (719) 590-1104.