



## ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS

*Cardinal Rigali Center  
20 Archbishop May Drive  
St. Louis, Missouri 63119*

Office of the Auxiliary Bishop  
Most Reverend Edward M. Rice  
*Phone: 314.792.7421  
Fax: 314.792.7422*

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Dear Pastors,

“In God we Trust” is printed on our currency. We pledge to be, “one nation, under God.” And the Declaration of Independence proclaims that citizens of the United States “are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights.” Taken on surface level these three examples would certainly give the impression that the United States is a religious country. And in many respects we are! Still, it is obvious that there has been a cultural shift regarding the status of religion in the public square. With that in mind, it is always good for the Church to seek new ways to evangelize so that, in the words of Pope Francis, “The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus.”

As you know, Fr. Brian Fischer is the Executive Director of the Archdiocesan Catholic Youth Apostolate, which oversees the Office of Catholic Scouting Ministry. **The office is not an extension of the Boy Scouts of America or Girl Scouts USA.** As a ministry, the goal of the Office of Catholic Scouting is to offer faith formation programs and retreats to our youth that enhance their encounter with Jesus. **We are excited to promote two faith-based programs that can enhance the formation programs offered through the Office of Catholic Scouting.** **Little Flowers** is a Catholic program that teaches the virtues through Scripture, the saints and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. **American Heritage Girls** is a Christian program whose mission is “building women of integrity through service to God, family, community and country.” The Girl Scouts USA is a secular organization. The Church offers faith formation programs to any scout. In fact, any youth can participate in the programs offered through the Office of Catholic Scouting. In the future we may consider changing the name of the office to more clearly express our mission.

As we see greater challenges to religious expression, it is providential that we can collaborate with these two faith-based organizations to assist in the faith formation of our youth. And, as we look to the future, I am sure that more such programs will develop. **At this time, I would ask all of our pastors to cooperate with any of our parents who wish to bring Little Flowers or American Heritage Girls to the parish.** At the same time, we await word from the USCCB regarding our longstanding cooperation with Girl Scouts USA. In addition, one hundred and twelve CEO’s of Girl Scouts USA will gather in Savannah, Georgia for their annual meeting next week. Nine of the CEO’s hope to express their concerns to GSUSA over recent trends on the national level. We await their report as well.

The St. Louis Review will have an article about the Little Flowers and American Heritage Girls in the upcoming edition. There you will find information to assist you. If you should have any questions please contact my office, 792.7421 or Fr. Fischer, 792.7602. With my prayers for a blessed Lenten Season, I remain,

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Edward M. Rice  
Auxiliary Bishop of Saint Louis