



## Archdiocese of New Orleans

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April 16, 2014

TO: Pastors, Principals, Youth Ministers, Campus Ministers, Respect Life Leaders, and Scout Leaders

FROM: Archbishop Gregory Aymond *G.A.*

RE: Questions regarding Girl Scouts

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops through its Committee on Laity, Marriage, Family Life, and Youth has released a resource to assist dioceses in evaluating our relationship with Girl Scouts USA. It emphasizes the many positive aspects of the long relationship between the Catholic Church and the Girl Scouts, reviews key questions about the relationship today, and advises that each diocesan bishop has final authority over what is appropriate for Catholic scouting in their diocese. The resource can be found at [www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/youth/catholic-scouting-questions.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/who-we-teach/youth/catholic-scouting-questions.cfm).

At this time, the Archdiocese of New Orleans is maintaining our relationship with Girl Scouts USA through hosting troops at churches, schools, and institutions in the archdiocese, through support of the annual cookie sale, and through administration of the Catholic patch recognition program provided by the National Catholic Committee on Girl Scouts and Camp Fire (NCCGSCF.) The NCCGSCF relates to the USCCB through the bishop-liaison of the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry (NFCYM,) the national organization made up of Catholic diocesan youth ministry offices.

Both Girl Scouts USA and our local council, Girl Scouts Louisiana East, reject any relationship with Planned Parenthood and take no position on matters pertaining to human sexuality, contraception or abortion. Girl Scout cookie fundraising proceeds stay with the local council and are not given to any outside organization. (Girl Scouts Louisiana East has a statement "Girl Scout Truths" available at <http://www.gsle.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2013/12/GSTruths.pdf>.)

In light of unresolved concerns at the USCCB regarding the membership of Girl Scouts USA (as an organization) in the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), Girl Scout troops hosted by entities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans may not participate in WAGGGS events or WAGGGS fundraising and individual girls in our troops should not wear the WAGGGS pin on their uniform.

I encourage all scout leaders to remember that scouting is a valuable form of youth ministry, and that incorporating the available Catholic religious recognition programs (for both Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts) is an important way in which scouting can be infused with Catholic faith and values.

Both John Smestad, Jr., director of the CYO/Youth & Young Adult Ministry Office which oversees our Catholic Committees on Scouting, and Peg Kenney, director of the Respect Life Office, are collaborating closely and staying informed on this topic so that necessary updates can be communicated as needed. Please contact them if they can be of assistance to you in your efforts to support scouting as youth ministry. Thank you for your care of our youth and their spiritual formation.