



August 6, 2015

RE: BOY SCOUT LEADERSHIP

Dear Pastors,

You may be aware that on July 27 the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America ratified a resolution stating that no adult may be barred from registration as an employee or “non-unit serving volunteer” because of “sexual orientation”. However, all units (Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Exploring, and Venturing) are to remain free in selecting their own adult leaders in accord with the values of the chartering organization (church, school, civic organization, etc.).

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the matter as it applies to the Diocese of Joliet, especially in our parishes and schools.

First, I personally consider Scouting to be a valuable tool for the formation of our youth that dovetails well with our other youth formation efforts. Scouting was an important part of my growing up, and I will always be grateful to the adults who took the time and used their talents to help me. I am also grateful to our parishes and schools who charter Scout units, all the more so in these challenging times. I encourage our parish leaders to assure that capable, qualified Scout leaders are in place. They should be viewed as part of the youth ministry team.

Second, the standards expected of our Scout leaders apply to all of our other youth workers. We need men and women who exemplify Christian morality in their own lives and who can inspire the same in the youth they serve. We are not looking for perfection. On the other hand, blatant behavior that is inconsistent with Catholic moral teaching, whether in word or deed, and which is resistant to fraternal correction, cannot be tolerated. Pastors and other parish staff members must exercise due diligence in the selection and supervision of those who work with our young people.

Third, the Church’s moral standards with regard to human sexuality apply to everyone. However, given the recent decisions of the Boy Scouts and the U.S. Supreme Court, and the general trend in our society, it is clear that we must be vigilant to uphold our teaching specifically about homosexuality, especially where our young people are involved.

Finally, we must maintain a clear distinction between sexual *attraction* and *activity*. The BSA resolution, like much of contemporary society, blurs the issue. We must also be cautious in our own speech, whether with other adults or youth, when speaking about these matters. All human persons deserve respect. All human behavior requires discernment.

I appreciate your attention to this matter, even if you are not directly associated with the Boy Scouts of America. We all work together for the good of God’s people. Thanks for your service.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Daniel Conlon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet-in-Illinois