July 5, 2018

Dear Brothers,

Once again, I write to you as the USCCB Liaison to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. The issue involves a recent story being circulated about condoms being distributed at a Scout jamboree.

Here are the facts. Every four years the World Organization of the Scout Movement organizes an international Scout jamboree in various countries to which Scouts from around the world are invited. In 2019 the United States, Canada and Mexico will host the jamboree at the high adventure camp in West Virginia known as The Summit.

Since 1992, apparently in response to the AIDS crisis, condoms have been made available at the international jamboree’s medical facilities “upon request”. The Boy Scouts of America opposes this practice and cites its own policy prohibiting any sexual behavior at Scout functions. Yet the BSA believes that it cannot contravene the WOSM practice. To complicate matters, especially for those in the Scouting organization trying to understand the Catholic perspective, Fr. Jacques Gagey, Chaplain to the International Catholic Conference of Scouting, with headquarters in Rome, is quoted in an undated statement, saying that his organization is not opposed to what it considers a health practice.

Obviously, there are grave moral concerns involved. Our National Catholic Committee on Scouting has issued a strong statement opposing the availability of condoms at the international jamboree. The NCCS and I have encouraged officials of the Boy Scouts of America to take a stronger stance against the WOSM practice. Beyond that, any parents or older Scouts with concerns may prudently choose to avoid the international jamboree.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet