

Diocese of Joliet

Office of the Bishop



Blanchette Catholic Center
16555 Weber Rd.
Crest Hill, Illinois 60403

May 7, 2018

Dear Brothers,

Since last fall I have been serving as the official USCCB liaison to the National Catholic Committee on Scouting. It has been an interesting first few months in that role.

As you are undoubtedly aware, last October, the Boy Scouts of America announced its adoption of "Family Scouting". I would like to take this opportunity to clarify a few aspects of this significant change in the BSA program. Two issues are of particular importance to us as pastoral leaders.

First, on the surface, "Family Scouting" may seem to be a cover for making Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts co-ed. But Scouting-BSA (as it now calls itself) makes it very clear that the impetus for family Scouting came from parents who were looking for a way to engage both their sons and daughters in the same program, thus strengthening family unity, especially in an era when so many mothers are in the work force. Just as important, boys and girls can (and in some cases must) be separated within the individual Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops.

Second, each organization which is chartered to conduct the Scouting program (such as a parish) is free to have family Scouting or not. While it is assumed that most chartered organizations will adopt the change, the matter should be given careful consideration.

In some respects, Family Scouting is not as large a change as it may seem. The BSA has had young women involved in its Exploring and Venturing programs for years. Most of our programs for young people in the Church, including schools, incorporate both boys and girls. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting has taken the stance of supporting Family Scouting and does not consider any such changes as diminishing Scouting as an excellent instrument for ministry with young people.

I take this opportunity to thank you for the leadership that you exercise with regard to Scouting. The National Catholic Committee on Scouting and Scouting-BSA rely on the engagement of the leaders of chartered partners to assure the effectiveness of Scouting in helping to form young people in the image of Christ. If you have questions or concerns regarding Scouting, please, let me know.

May the Lord bless you and all whom you serve in his Name.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Daniel Conlon". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet