

**OFFICE FOR EVANGELIZATION
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF RICHMOND
STATEMENT CONCERNING THE BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
JULY 2015**

On July 27, 2015, the Boy Scouts of America passed a resolution changing current adult membership policy that removes the national restriction on openly gay adult leaders and employees. This new policy is effective immediately. In addition, the Boy Scouts of America stated the following:

"Chartered organizations will continue to select their adult leaders and religious chartered organizations may continue to use religious beliefs as criteria for selecting adult leaders, including matters of sexuality. This change allows Scouting's members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. This change also respects the right of religious chartered organizations to choose adult volunteer leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own."

The Catholic Diocese of Richmond is following the guidance of the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops (USCCB) and the National Catholic Committee on Scouting (NCCS), whose statement following the vote can be found [here](#).

The Diocese has enjoyed many years of strong partnership and collaboration with the Boy Scouts of America as an integral part of our parish youth ministry programs. The Diocese has always felt, until this decision was made, that the Catholic Church had a strong partner in the Boy Scouts of America in upholding high moral truths and values for the youth of this great nation. We are certainly discouraged by this decision as it is yet another example of the eroding moral framework of our country. As adult Catholics entrusted to serve young people through Scouting, youth ministry, our parishes and schools, it is essential that we are true to the teachings of the Church specifically in regards to Catholic morality and sexuality. This recent membership policy decision presents a moment of catechesis for our diocesan parishes and schools as well as local scouting units on the tenets of Church teaching on love, sexuality and marriage. When transitions take place in organizations with which we partner, we have an important opportunity to reflect on what our Faith tells us through its 2,000 year teaching, as well as how these changes may impact the ministry and youth of our parishes and schools.

Bishop DiLorenzo continues to encourage Catholics in our Diocese to live and witness the totality of Catholic teaching on morality and sexuality in all of our work for the Kingdom and to ensure that any Scouting program in partnership with the Catholic Diocese of Richmond is compatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church. For those parishes or schools who currently charter Boy Scout units, we encourage you to continue your support of Boy Scouting in so much as it continues to be compatible with the teaching of the Catholic Church. With this new resolution, it is incumbent on our pastors and school chaplains to take a more active, hands-on role in the initial screening and on-going review of adult leaders to ensure that as leaders for our youth through a scouting program their lives are lived in a way that is congruent with the Gospel of Jesus Christ and the Holy Catholic Church which is consistent with all our leadership positions within the Diocese.

The Office for Evangelization is prepared to assist you with any issues rising from this BSA decision.

Resources

- United States Conference of Catholic Bishops: www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/homosexuality
- National Catholic Committee on Scouting: www.nccs-bsa.org
- Office for Evangelization (scouting@richmonddiocese.org or 804-622-5159)