



# ARCHDIOCESE OF CINCINNATI

Office of the Archbishop

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October 28, 2024

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

God's blessings to you and your family. I write to you today to convey a difficult decision regarding our longstanding partnership with Girl Scouts in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. After consultation with the archdiocesan Presbyteral Council and Deans, and with the recommendation of key archdiocesan leaders, I have instructed pastors of the archdiocese to discontinue their parishes' partnerships with the Girl Scouts.

Scouting is fundamentally good – it builds virtue, discipline and community. It helps form responsible, well-rounded citizens. Scouting has a strong, multi-generational heritage in our country, one associated with positive values and memories. Scouting can be an efficacious part of Catholic youth ministry, espousing a way of life congruent with the Gospel, as it has in our own archdiocese for decades. Many of you have served as scout leaders, faithfully helping young people incorporate the values and lessons traditionally associated with scouting into their lives. I am deeply grateful for your dedication to this calling.

Unfortunately, in recent years, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) has embraced and promoted an impoverished worldview regarding gender and sexuality. Through some of their activities, resources, badges and awards, Girl Scouts – including the local chapter, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio – has contributed to normalizing a sexual and gender ideology contrary to the Catholic understanding of the human person made male and female in the image and likeness of God. Our greatest responsibility as the Catholic Church is fidelity to the Gospel and sharing the saving mission of Christ. It is therefore essential that all youth programs at our parishes and schools affirm virtues and values consistent with the teaching of Jesus Christ. The Archdiocese of Cincinnati cannot partner with an organization that, from its highest level, advocates ideas which the Church considers false and harmful.

Please know that this decision has not been made lightly. It only comes after extensive research and interaction with leaders of the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. We have attempted to mitigate the influence of GSUSA at the local level; however, despite mutually respectful discussions and communication with the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio over the past two years, we have been unable to agree on an acceptable path forward.

The timetable for the conclusion of the partnership with the Girl Scouts will extend over the next 14 months out of respect for the decisions and steps that will need to be taken by those impacted. By the end of calendar year 2025, every Girl Scout troop currently operating on any

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**RADIATE CHRIST**

Catholic campus must: (1) convert to an American Heritage Girls troop; (2) find another location at which to meet; or (3) disband. In the meantime, no new Girl Scout troops may be established, and Girl Scouts may not be featured or promoted as an official ministry or extracurricular activity of any Catholic parish or school in the archdiocese.

More information on this matter, including how to start or convert to an American Heritage Girls troop, can be found at <https://catholicaoc.org/girl-scouts>.

While this development is difficult to share, it does not diminish my profound respect and appreciation for the many Girl Scout leaders in our archdiocese who have faithfully served our youth. Your mentorship has made a difference in the lives of many and I am very grateful for your service.

Please join me in praying for the renewal of our culture and country through the good news of Jesus Christ and the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dennis M. Schnurr". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning of the first letter.

Most Reverend Dennis M. Schnurr  
Archbishop of Cincinnati

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