

BOY SCOUTS AUTONOMY IS THE ISSUE

Recently the Boy Scouts of America were expected to make a decision rescinding its ban on homosexuals; after some deliberation, the group postponed its decision to May.

The issue of allowing homosexuals to join the Boy Scouts is second only to the most important issue: the autonomy of the organization to craft its own strictures absent outside pressure. Unfortunately, outside pressure is what has forced the need for a vote.

Edmund Burke called them “the little platoons.” Tocqueville called them “voluntary associations.” Political scientists speak of “civil society.” Sociologists refer to them as “mediating institutions.” They all mean the same thing: the critical role played by social institutions that intervene between the state and the individual; it is in these nooks and crannies that freedom is born.

Regrettably, the intermediate strata are today in jeopardy, the worst culprit being the federal government. Indeed, even on this issue, President Obama unwisely decided to interject himself. And there is also the role of well-funded gay groups that have sought to pressure the board members of the Boy Scouts. None of this is acceptable.

The Boy Scouts have already won the constitutional issue. Whether they now want to change their rules is their business. It is not our business. Which is why the Catholic League takes no stand on this matter.