



November 13, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Each year, on the weekend preceding Thanksgiving Day, a second collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) is taken up in parishes nationwide, including the parishes in our diocese. In fact, our parishioners have unfailingly been generous with their support.

There is no doubt that a tremendous amount of good is accomplished through the funding of this collection, both nationally and locally. The underlying principle of this endeavor is to sponsor programs and initiatives which enable people caught in the cycle of poverty to break away from that grip by addressing poverty's root causes, including discrimination, unemployment, lack of education and lack of economic opportunities. In this way, those aided by this campaign acquire a deepened understanding of their human dignity, become more accountable and responsible, and learn to advocate for themselves and their families. For example, the disAbility Resource Center in Fredericksburg helps physically handicapped people through providing new technology, training, classes and counseling to those with disabilities and their families. The CCHD monies fund "The Youth Leadership Team" at the disAbility Resource Center, which equips high school students with leadership skills and educates them about how to work with their elected representatives and officials to ensure fair treatment under government programs. This organization, along with several others, benefits from the 25% of the collection that stays within the diocese. The remainder of the money is distributed nationally via the CCHD Committee of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB).

Another principle of primary importance, and essential to the pursuit and realization of the intended goal, is the fact that every program must be in accord with the teachings of the Church regarding morality as well as social justice. The people being assisted by these programs or initiatives may not be Catholic, but we who provide funding to CCHD are Catholic and cannot and will not support any program or initiative that is in opposition to Catholic moral teaching.

Like many of you, I have been deeply distressed by reports of the misuse of some national funds collected through the CCHD, specifically by their distribution to organizations which pursue policies and advance causes contrary to the teachings of our Church. Whenever a program or initiative has been shown to be in opposition to Church teaching, its grant has been withdrawn and not given in the future. Nonetheless, these recurring instances, though few in comparison with the total number of grants (3 out of 250 in 2009, according to USCCB reports), leads to deepening concern about the oversight of this collection.

In several communications this fall, the USCCB office has indicated that added steps are being undertaken to ensure that all future programs and initiatives funded by the CCHD will adhere to Catholic teaching. I am encouraged by these reports and look forward to seeing the expected results. Moreover, I have written to Bishop Roger Morin, the chair of the CCHD Committee, to convey my serious concerns and to urge that the criteria for evaluating grants be revised so as to ensure in advance, as far as is humanly possible, that grants will be awarded only to those programs and initiatives in accord with Church teaching.

I am confident that the CCHD subcommittee will take advantage of this period of grace, so as to develop criteria which will lead to a faithful and fruitful future for CCHD. Therefore, I am authorizing the CCHD second collection to be taken this year on the weekend of November 21-22 in all the parishes of our diocese. I remain grateful for your continued generosity,

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul S. Loverde". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde  
Bishop of Arlington