



November 22, 2008

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

There are nearly 37 million people, including 13 million children, in the United States struggling below the poverty line. Poverty is caused not simply by the lack of financial resources, but by the lack of quality education, affordable housing, health care, child care, fair wages and vocational training.

The Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has worked to create permanent, locally-based solutions to the problem of poverty by funding programs that promote self-sufficiency. Each project, before it is funded, is pre-screened by the CCHD national staff and trained volunteers at the diocesan level. The majority of CCHD's funding comes through its annual parish collection, which will take place in all parishes on the weekend of November 22 - 23.

In recent weeks, the relationship of CCHD to ACORN (Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now) has faced scrutiny. ACORN does not operate in the Diocese of Arlington, but 75% of our CCHD collection does go to the USCCB. During the meeting of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (November 10-13), Bishop Roger Morin, Chair of the CCHD subcommittee, reported to us bishops that in the past, "CCHD has funded proposals from local organizations affiliated with ACORN when those activities conform to the CCHD guidelines and when the local diocesan CCHD director and the local diocesan bishop explicitly approve the proposal. Many of these local ACORN groups have done impressive work preventing home foreclosures, creating jobs opportunities, raising wages, addressing crime and improving education."

In that same report, Bishop Morin indicated that CCHD has not funded the national structures of ACORN. However, given the financial concerns regarding ACORN's national structures and the more recent reports of ACORN involvement in alleged voter registration fraud and political partisanship, the Bishops' CCHD subcommittee, during their November 8-9 meeting, voted unanimously to reaffirm, extend and formalize the decision to end CCHD funding of ACORN organizations. "This cut off means that no CCHD grants were given to ACORN groups this year (using funds from the 2007 CCHD collection) and no funds from the coming collection (to be taken up in on November 23-24 in many dioceses) will go to ACORN in any place or at any level," said Bishop Morin.

Out of your donations, 25% stays in the Diocese of Arlington to fund local projects that help strengthen our communities through programs that help low-income families, provide leadership training for members of minority communities and offer job training to those out of work. These local projects undergo a thorough vetting processing, including

review by the Diocesan Coordinator of CCHD and an advisory board. Each group applying for a grant must affirm that their organization and projects are in accord with Church teaching.

Helping the poor out of the chains of poverty through programs that uphold their human dignity is an important facet of the pro-life movement. As our brothers and sisters in Christ advance, they are less likely to have an abortion, to commit crime and to remain in the cycle of poverty. The success of these anti-poverty programs depends in a large part on your generosity, and, as always, I am grateful for your commitment to these causes.

Faithfully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Paul S. Loverde". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Most Reverend Paul S. Loverde
Bishop of Arlington