



Catholic Campaign for Human Development

DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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June 29, 2020

Dear Brother Bishops,

I pray this letter finds you well. I am writing to address the recent criticisms from certain Catholic websites directed at organizations supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD), the domestic anti-poverty program of our U.S. Conference. Our national staff and subcommittee members have reviewed these accusations and found them to be baseless.

For the last 50 years, CCHD has supported low-income led anti-poverty projects across the country. CCHD was founded in the aftermath of the race riots of the late 1960s as a way to address systems and structures that perpetuate the evil of racism. Today, our funded organizations are continuing to live out that mission by amplifying their efforts to address the disparities that contribute to the disproportionate impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on communities of color. Now more than ever, as the majority of our supported organizations identify race relations and/or anti-racism as key issues they are working to address, the work of CCHD is vitally important.

Organizations like those mentioned in the most recent allegations, the New Orleans Workers' Center for Racial Justice, the Workers' Center of Central New York, the People's Lobby Education Institute, and the Worker's Defense Fund, have been working to address the root causes of structural racism for many years. This includes addressing economic inequalities, protections and benefits for low-wage workers, criminal justice reform, and environmental justice to empower communities experiencing poverty to dismantle unjust systems and structures.

Throughout CCHD's long history of fulfilling the Gospel's call to empower and support those living in poverty, organizations like the Lepanto Institute have made allegations against the groups and work funded by the generous contributions of faithful Catholics. In a recent article, the Lepanto Institute, followed by Church Militant and LifeSite News, questioned the participation of several of CCHD supported organizations in the recent demonstrations that have occurred throughout the country.

Using inflammatory language and imagery in ways that mislead, the Lepanto Institute and similar organizations have sown seeds of doubt about the great work of CCHD to incite fear and uncertainty in the minds of faithful Catholics and create resistance to the gospel values the organizations CCHD supports seek to live out. These accusations are not limited to CCHD. As many of you know, these same organizations have carried out appalling attacks against other Church institutions like Catholic Relief Services, as well as different dioceses and many of our brother bishops.

*The Catholic Church Working to End Poverty and Injustice in the United States.
La Iglesia Católica está trabajando para eliminar la pobreza y la injusticia en los Estados Unidos.*

June 29, 2020

Page Two

As you receive inquiries from faithful Catholics, priests, deacons, religious, or seminarians in your (arch)diocese, please make it clear that these organizations misrepresent the teachings of the Church.

All of the initiatives that are supported with CCHD funding have gone through a thorough application process, which includes approval by the local Bishop and the national subcommittee of bishops and are closely monitored throughout the length of their grant to ensure that the terms of the grant agreement are strictly followed. Catholics can be confident that the Catholic Campaign for Human Development does not fund organizations that violate the moral or social teaching of the Church. Any departure from this irrevocable commitment would lead to immediate termination of funding support.

CCHD has long supported and will continue to support, this important work to “take responsibility for correcting the injustices of racism and healing the harms it has caused” ([Open Wide Our Hearts, pg. 23](#)). *I urge you all to join me in this effort and publicly reaffirm your support of the CCHD funded organizations working in your diocese.*

As our Church faces the difficult task of rebuilding in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and eradicating the scourge of racism from our Church, I echo the words of my fellow Chairmen, “indifference is not an option” ([Statement of U.S. Bishop Chairmen in Wake of Death of George Floyd and National Protests, May 29, 2020](#))

Please share this letter with staff, pastors, and leadership in your diocese. If you or your diocesan staff have any further questions please don’t hesitate to contact the director of CCHD, Ralph McCloud (RMcCloud@uscgb.org), and visit www.usccb.org/cchd for more information. The generous support of CCHD from thousands of faithful Catholics is helping to build more merciful and just communities throughout the country.

Thank you for your continued support and solidarity.

Yours Faithfully in Christ,



Most Reverend David G. O’Connell
Auxiliary Bishop of Los Angeles
Chairman, Subcommittee on Catholic Campaign for
Human Development