CCHD annual campaign an opportunity to show thanks

For nearly 40 years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development has been helping the poor help themselves.

During its annual collection, which will be held Nov. 22-23 in parishes across the archdiocese, the CCHD is once again asking individuals to donate one hour's pay to help address the root causes of poverty.

Monsignor William F. Burke, pastor of St. Francis of Assisi, Baltimore, and head of the local CCHD has been involved in the campaign since 1972.

"We're so grateful that we have so many wonderful groups to help themselves even in these difficult economic times, and while we know it's a strain on everyone, the suggestion of considering an hour's pay or wages to the CCHD might make a difference for people who are seeking job opportunities or a better economic situation," said Monsignor Burke.

During its annual luncheon Aug. 21, the CCHD distributed $355,000 in local and national grants to 12 organizations. The Archdiocese of Baltimore contributed $252,500 in the Nov. 2007 appeal.

Each project is prescreened by CCHD national staff, reviewed by local diocesan directors, endorsed by the local bishop and presented to the CCHD committee, a group of bishops selected to oversee the grants.

It is important to note, said Monsignor Burke, that no national CCHD grants monies have been forwarded this year to ACORN groups or projects. All CCHD funding of ACORN has been withheld until a satisfactory resolution of mismanagement of funds in ACORN's national offices has been reached.

The CCHD was started by U.S. Catholic Bishops and supports community-based projects – founded and managed by the poor themselves – that work toward building a better and more just community where poverty does not exist. Its primary support

comes from its once-a-year collection.