

Green Bay bishop reinstates CCHD collection, establishes new commission

GREEN BAY, Wis. - Bishop David L. Ricken of Green Bay has reinstated the collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development in his diocese and established a new diocesan commission that will be in charge of teaching about and implementing Catholic social teaching.

In a 2,100-word statement announcing the developments Feb. 16, Bishop Ricken said he was "confident that we have the necessary checks in place" to ensure that CCHD funding would not be used in ways that conflict with Catholic teaching.

He had suspended the CCHD collection in his diocese last year but said it would resume the weekend of April 2 as part of the "collection for the world's poor" in parishes of the Green Bay Diocese.

Bishop Ricken acknowledged in his statement that "for some time in this country there has been significant disagreement among people of good will" about the collection for CCHD, the U.S. bishops' domestic anti-poverty program, which funds self-help projects in low-income communities around the country.

In October, CCHD officials nationally announced a "road map for renewal" that includes a series of steps to guide how grants are awarded to poverty-fighting groups and to strengthen oversight of how funds are spent.

"The new application process for grants ... will be much more thorough and will give increased consideration to Catholic social justice entities," Bishop Ricken said.

He said the establishment of the new diocesan Commission on Living Justice arose from "a genuine need for a great understanding of the social doctrine of the church" and the realization that "the diocese needs to be more involved in implementing this teaching in our own way and coming from our own theological and ecclesial foundation."

The commission will be charged with “taking a leading role in the catechesis, planning and implementation of Catholic social teaching in the Diocese of Green Bay” and with helping the diocese and its parishes “live out the Gospel message of justice and charity as outlined in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, and in the social doctrine of the church.”