

Maryland Catholics help CRS

Maryland Catholics donated more than \$84,000 for the annual Catholic Relief Services collection and more money from the Archdiocese of Baltimore is expected to come in throughout the year.

The mid-February second collection baskets sent out to parishioners in churches throughout the archdiocese will help CRS with its relief efforts for victims worldwide of earthquakes, floods, war and religious and ethnic persecution.

This national annual collection for the Baltimore-based CRS provides the core funding for the work of five Catholic social ministry agencies in the United States, said Jeffrey Griffith, a spokesman for the international organization.

"Last year, Catholics in your diocese and around the nation contributed more than \$16 million to the appeal, which provides an opportunity for Catholics to support those in need," Mr. Griffith said. "The amount raised in 2006 represented an 11 percent increase over donations the previous year. The CRS collection supports agencies that build the international social ministry of the Catholic Church through advocacy on behalf of impoverished people and through relief, recovery and resettlement services to victims."

Some pastors in the archdiocese said the CRS collection funds a very worthy cause.

St. Luke, Edgemere, raised \$1,225 for the cause - which is about the average for its second collections, said Monsignor Joseph S. Lizer Jr., pastor of the parish.

Father Sylvester Peterka, C.M., pastor of St. Cecilia and Immaculate Conception in Baltimore, urges members of his congregation to be generous in the CRS collection each year and always makes a donation himself.

"Catholic Relief Services is the best foreign relief agency," Father Peterka said. "You can be sure CRS will look for responsible agents to make sure the money gets to the poor and the needy."

The Archdiocese of Baltimore raised \$104,638 in 2004 during its annual CRS

collection, \$92,418 in 2005 and \$99,587 in 2006, Mr. Griffith said.

“Some parishes send their collection money in later, so we’ll continue to receive more money as the year progresses,” he said. “We’re very encouraged by the numbers so far and this money will go to help people all over the world.”