



The Bishop of Edinburgh's Lent Appeal 2009

Bishop Brian writes:



'I'm suggesting this year that money from the Lent Appeal is divided between two very important, but contrasting areas of work. One is local, and one is overseas. One concerns work with older people, one concerns work with younger people.

The Faith in Older People Project was an initiative started within the Diocese and has grown significantly from its original roots. Many people are now familiar with its work and the value of what it is achieving has been noted, not only within the Episcopal Church, but in other denominations, among other faiths, and by "secular" organisations. It is certainly a project that we need to be supporting and seen to be supporting as it is raising and facing many important issues concerning the welfare of older people in our society.

During this past year, not only at the Lambeth Conference, but also in visits to some of our congregations, I have had the work of Mary's Meals drawn to my attention. This is a Scottish based charity, handling a number of projects concerning the welfare of children in various parts of the world. Further details of both projects can be found on their respective websites, and I do recommend them for your attention during this coming Lent'.



Faith in Older People (FiOP) is an initiative begun in the Diocese four years ago. It is now a charitable company and has spread its work all over Scotland. At its heart, FiOP works to celebrate ageing and increase understanding of the spiritual dimension of older people, ensuring that this is nurtured and supported in the care of older people whether they live by themselves, with their families or in Care Homes.

We run training courses for congregational members of churches, helping them to understand such things as visiting skills, dementia, end of life issues and other aspects of ageing. We work in Care Homes, helping staff to meet the statutory requirement of 'meeting residents' spiritual needs' (not always an easy thing to unpack) and we are developing training material to assist people who lead worship in homes and hospitals, particularly with people who have dementia.

At the moment our quarterly Newsletter is sent to over 800 people and we are developing a programme of 'membership' which we hope will include people from every congregation in the country! High hopes, but there is no reason why we should not achieve it, thus helping churches to rejoice in the presence of older members, who still have so much to contribute by their faith, their experience and their prayers.

We are developing relations with people of other faiths (and no faith) to explore ways in which we can continue to celebrate and honour the aging process, and we work in partnership with other organisations to help achieve our objectives.





Mary's Meals provides daily meals to over 350,000 chronically hungry children in their local schools throughout 14 different countries.

In this way the hungry children are encouraged to attend school and, through education gain a better future for themselves and their communities.

The Problem – World Hunger

Today more people die from hunger related diseases today than they do from HIV/AIDS, malaria or tuberculosis combined. In a world where there is enough food for everybody, hunger is still the biggest threat to health.

Children are particularly vulnerable. Hunger kills millions of them each year. It also stunts their growth – and their dreams. Hungry children think about survival, not about going to school. In order to survive they have to labour, whether in the fields or on the streets. Even if they do make it into the classroom, hunger will affect their ability to learn. All of this suffering could be prevented.

The solution – Mary's Meals

An education can set a child free from poverty in adult life. And not only that child but his children too. To gain an education children first need to attend school and then be given the opportunity to learn. Mary's Meals is not only feeding children, but it is also allowing the children to attend school and to be educated.

The cost of giving a child a daily meal for a year is on average just £8.40.



Rt Rev Brian Smith helps out at St Mary's Dalmahoy

Daily Attendance Improves

Poor children are more likely to fall ill or be needed by their families for chores and so they often miss a lot of school. Mary's Meals brings children to the classroom every day.

Concentration improves

Mary's Meals removes the gnawing pain of hunger, leaving children free to turn their attention to class work.

Education of girls is encouraged Girls from poor backgrounds are more likely to miss out on school than boys. Poor families often expect girls to help in the household. Mary's Meals helps girls attend school and realize their full potential.

Better Grades

Mary's Meals provides the conditions necessary for learning and so improves pupil's performance.

More information can be found at www.marysmeals.org

Donations should be handed in to your church

If you have not already filled out a Gift Aid form, please ask your church for one and help us to maximize your contribution

For further information, please contact the Bishop's secretary on 0131 538 7044 or bpsec@dioceseofedinburgh.org

Photographs were provided by: FiOP, Mary's Meals & 'Inspires Magazine'