

# That You act Justly

Br Vincent Kingston

In the Oct 2006 issue of Lasallians GB & M, I mentioned a workshop I had attended on 'How to Lobby Your MP', and I promised to expand on it at a later date with particular reference to becoming an MP Correspondent. This is an ideal way of getting involved at a really practical level in issues of justice and peace, and of the environment.

Baroness Tonge a former MP, said that "the more letters MPs receive, the more likely they are to support any particular issue. Keep pressing your MPs and they will listen" – and even more importantly, do something!

The MP Correspondent campaign is coordinated by CAFOD, or more specifically, by Bridget Burrows of the CAFOD Campaign Team. As a Correspondent you would commit yourself to writing to your MP four times a year on crucial issues chosen by CAFOD. You will be supplied with briefings on each particular issue and any insider information on Parliament that might be relevant. Bridget Burrows also manages CAFOD's database on MPs, so if you would like to know more about your MP, or want help in writing your letter, she is only a phone-call away (See below).

You will be sent a 'Write for Justice' pack, which is a resource full of useful information, including tips on lobbying MPs, how to compose really effective lobbying letters, and details on what actions you can ask your MP to take.

In signing up as an MP Correspondent you will become part of a vital network of people putting pressure on MPs to bring about real change for people here at home and in the developing world. Personal letters have a far greater influence on MPs than any number of campaign post-cards or email messages.

I conclude with a couple of quotes from the 'Write for Justice' pack:

*"Signing a petition or form letter is certainly better than not making any statement at all, but personally written letters mean much, much more. MPs take a sudden influx of identical or similar messages with a large pinch of salt. Much more notice is taken when lots of constituents write in different ways with similar views on a subject. This is much more likely to raise the profile of a topic with an MP."*

*"Early Day Motions (EDMs) are like petitions inside Parliament. Backbench MPs can sign an EDM statement as one would a petition... Through gaining signatures from MPs, an EDM aims to: urge the Government to take action on a particular issue; gauge or demonstrate the support of fellow MPs;*

*allow MPs to publicly place their opinion on record; push the issue up the parliamentary agenda; and gain publicity. You can ask your MP to sign any EDMs which are relevant to the issue(s) you are dealing with."*

Four letters a year is not a big undertaking. Go on, give it a Go!

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Support the 99% Challenge.

*"God intended the world and everything in it for the use of all human beings.* These thought-provoking words, written by Pope Paul VI are an inspiration for the Livesimply initiative that we are being invited to take on board this year.

Livesimply is exciting because it reminds us that the choices we make in our own daily lives have an impact on others who share our world. We can challenge the poverty and injustice we see around us by asking some important questions;

What do I do every day that affects people who live in poverty?

What changes could I make that would help other people have a better life?

Do I have enough or more than I need? Could I afford to spare some of what I have?

One way we could respond is by taking up the 99% Challenge. Could you live on 99% of what you live on at present? Just think what a difference the other 1% could make to someone living in extreme poverty. Just 1% -or whatever you can afford- every month can do a huge amount to help."

So we provide the money, and CAFOD who are implementing the 99% Challenge scheme will ensure that our offerings get to their destination. Here are some examples of how it helps:

A regular gift of £6 a month could in just one year provide a sewing machine for a disabled person in Uganda, helping the individual to set up a tailoring business and become self-sufficient.

A regular gift of £10 a month could provide second-hand clothes for children caught up in the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo – clothing for over 200 children a year.

A regular gift of £16 a month could add up during a year to help four families caught up in a natural disaster to get on their feet again.

The quotes above are from CAFOD's Side by Side publication. For further information see CAFOD's website [www.cafod.org.uk](http://www.cafod.org.uk) or phone 020 7733 7900

#### The Livesimply Prayer

Compassionate and loving God,  
You created the world for us all to share,  
a world of beauty and plenty.  
Create in us a desire to live simply,  
so that our lives may reflect  
Your generosity.

Creator God,  
You gave us responsibility for the earth,  
a world of riches and delight.  
Create in us a desire to live sustainably,  
so that those who follow after us  
may enjoy the fruits of Your creation.

God of peace and justice,  
You give us the capacity to change,  
to bring about a world  
that mirrors Your wisdom.  
Create in us a desire to act in solidarity  
so that the pillars of injustice crumble,  
and those now crushed are set free.  
Amen

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