



Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition

"Faith Communities In Action Against Poverty"

News Release – March 9, 2009

We continue to pray that you have mercy on the poor

Since Tuesday, March 3, Ontario's faith communities - Buddhists, Christians, Hindus, Jews, Muslims and others - have been praying for the poor at Queen's Park during a series of pre-budget vigils outside the provincial legislature.

Multifaith participants have been praying for the integrity, courage and spiritual strength of the Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPPs). And we have been praying for compassion to be directed to the poor in the provincial budget expected to be presented in the legislature on March 26.

Vigils are being held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., throughout March, Mondays to Thursdays. Each day at noon, a religious leader guides participants in prayer and reflection under a prayer canopy outside the legislature.

Several Members of the Provincial Parliament have stopped and expressed their appreciation, including the Hon. Deb Matthews, who chairs the Ontario Poverty Reduction Cabinet Committee. Others include: Leeanna Pendergast, Hon. Michael Gravelle, Mike Colle, and Michael Prue.

People who have come have really enjoyed it (despite the freezing temperatures) and felt blessed by the experience. In fact, the cold has helped participants better identify with those "out in the cold".

The vigils are being organized by the Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) and include coalition members and other persons of faith. ISARC has provided a religious voice for Ontario's marginalized people for 23 years.

The vigils are being held as a public witness to the collective concern of faith communities about the swelling ranks of the poor during Ontario's deepening recession and the need for a strong response.

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