

From: Bernard White – CAFOD Group

To: All parishioners

Angela and I can't do this on our own. Please help.

Imagine, you can't get food or clean water to drink, for yourself or your family.

- Global heating has ruined the land your animals used to graze on, and most have died anyway.
- The nearest drinking water is three or four hours walk away.
- Your income has dried up too because vegetables and crops you normally sell won't grow any more in the arid soil.
- You need help. But at the same time, your government has to pay so much to other countries in debt repayments that it cannot afford the healthcare or vaccines needed to combat the Covid 19 pandemic.

Help us please! - you might cry.

Aid agencies, like CAFOD, can provide some food, help to get water and some assistance with other things you need right now, with the money they receive from donations from generous people in the United Kingdom and elsewhere. But this money cannot stop global heating and loss of biodiversity, so essential for life on Earth, from getting quickly worse, **because you cannot buy what needs to happen!**

However, there is plenty that we, in Plymouth diocese, can do by uniting with the 11,000 others of the diocese. We have a golden opportunity because our government is hosting, in Glasgow this November, the COP 26 (see <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/What-is-COP26>) where world leaders will come together to agree on the next steps needed to tackle the climate crisis. These will affect millions of people.

How you can help. Please read on.

1. CAFOD's petition to the Prime Minister
(<https://action.cafod.org.uk/page/73304/petition/1>)

With your help, and the help of thousands of people like us in other parishes, we can urge the world leaders to make decisions to help the poorest and most vulnerable people in the world.

If you have not already done so, please sign, and ask your families and friends to sign, CAFOD's petition to the Prime Minister, demanding that:

- The outcomes of the talks are ambitious enough to protect and care for the whole Earth – Our Common Home.
- he puts people worst affected by the climate crisis at the heart of the talks;

If you have already signed the petition - Thank you

2. Parliament in our Parish

CAFOD is also asking that, ideally, every parishioner joins a meeting (on-line if we cannot meet in person) with his or her MP, who was elected to represent your (not his or her) interests in Parliament.

What a contribution we could make along with the rest of the Plymouth diocese, by discussing with each of our MPs how to rebuild from the Covid19 pandemic in a way that tackles the major global issues of our time including climate change and unjust foreign debts for more information see <https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Latest-campaigns!>

You would not have to speak at the meeting, unless you wanted to, but we cannot overestimate the impact on your MP of meeting several constituents together, and the potential beneficial effects on the lives of the most poor and vulnerable people in the world. Please step up to the plate on this. As Pope Francis said, in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

“Each Individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.”

The Church “does not do politics”, in the sense that it cannot express a preference for Conservative, Labour, Liberal or any other political party’s philosophies. However, that does not mean that, in areas of the common good and matters affecting social justice derived from Scripture and the tradition of the Church, where it is the United Kingdom Government which has the ability and authority to make policy and take effective action, it is right and proper for members of the Church, as Christians, to lobby the Government through their MPs. Indeed, it is a Christian duty to do this, for example, for the poor and vulnerable members of society. (e.g. Matthew, Ch 25, v31 to 46 – The Last Judgement.)

Will it be worthwhile and effective?

Yes. CAFOD has succeeded many times, the most recent being to have persuaded the UK Government to stop funding new greenhouse gas emitting, fossil fuel, power stations overseas.

How to join a meeting

Chris Donaghy and others have already met with the MP for West Dorset, Chris Loder, which went very well. The MP took on the points made and has agreed to follow them up in Parliament.

Bernard White is trying to arrange a meeting with Richard Drax, MP for South Dorset which includes parishioners living in Wool, Lulworth, Swanage and Weymouth areas.

Angela Gray is doing the same with Michael Tomlinson, MP for parishioners living in Mid Dorset (which includes Wareham) and North Poole.

Please join Bernard or Angela, Please telephone or email Bernard or Angela to let us know. (please do!!). We will be able to give you any further information or answer any questions or concerns you might have.

Let’s really make an impact from the Plymouth diocese. Please!

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