

Good morning/evening everyone. [Thank you Fr xxxxx for giving me the opportunity to speak today.]

My name is [xxxxx] and I'm a volunteer with CAFOD. As many of you will know, CAFOD is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. CAFOD brings hope and compassion to some of the world's poorest communities.

I want to invite you to join us by speaking up in support of those communities to people with power – we call that 'campaigning'.

CAFOD works to tackle the causes of poverty, not just the symptoms. And yes, fundraising is a vital part of enabling that work to go on. But we can do more. By pressing for changes in policy and practices to reduce poverty overseas, we can help thousands more communities than we could by fundraising alone.

Our campaigning includes the political but it isn't party political. It reinforces CAFOD's strong, positive relationships with politicians and decision makers. It enables us to get our research and recommendations to the people who have power to put them into practice. And we make a difference when we join our voices with others who share our aims as part of coalitions of all faiths and none.

But does it work? A resounding yes! Just a few successes you might have heard about:

- Nearly a million Catholics world-wide signed a petition that helped persuade world leaders to agree an ambitious deal to limit climate change at the Paris talks in 2015.
- After decades of campaigning, all our major political parties have agreed to spend 0.7 per cent of national income on lifesaving aid such as vaccines for children, and food in emergencies.
- CAFOD was a founder-member of the Fairtrade Foundation in 1992 and over one and a half million farmers worldwide now benefit from getting a fair deal for their work.

As part of the Jubilee 2000 campaign, CAFOD supporters helped secure over US\$110billion of debt cancellation for the world's poorest countries. This means that parents no longer have to pay primary school fees in a number of countries, helping to break the cycle of poverty.

And there are many other examples. Some campaigns take a long time to bear fruit but working patiently over the long term, we have real success.

So, how can you get involved? Whatever your age, job or political allegiance, everyone has something to contribute. It's not just banner-waving, it's letter-writing, petition-signing, ideas-sharing, conversation-starting, email-sending, and much more.

You can:

- Sign up to our campaign e-mails and receive the latest news and campaign actions.
- Become an MP correspondent and write to your local MP about current campaign issues.
- Become a campaign volunteer and help spread the word about CAFOD campaigns [\[in this parish/school – as appropriate\]](#).

Whatever you choose to do, you can make your voice heard right now.

Understanding and acting on the root causes of poverty has been central to CAFOD's work from the very beginning. It is part of our calling as Catholics. The women who founded CAFOD encouraged us to speak out about the injustice which causes so many to go hungry. We speak out because we are moved by compassion for our neighbours and care for our common home.

CAFOD's campaigning draws its strength and purpose from Catholic social teaching and Jesus' call to build the Kingdom of God on Earth. Campaigning helps us to put our faith into action.

Campaigning inspires us to recognise the power we have to decide what products we buy, how we use energy, and where we invest.

Pope Francis tells us "We are called to find Christ in the poor, to lend our voice to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them" – a call to action for us all.

Here in the UK, we have a voice and a vote – things denied to so many around the world. We can use these to stand up against poverty and injustice. If you would like to join us, then please [\[adapt as appropriate, according to where the talk is used. It's vital to spell out precisely what you are asking of your audience - signing a card, becoming an MP Correspondent, taking part in a lobby or rally - and how they should go about it.\]](#)

On behalf of CAFOD and the communities we serve, thank you for your time today.