

## A summer activity for your parish

In this Jubilee year, and in Eastertide, we have high hopes! We are facing the most acute **global debt crisis** in history and it's the world's poorest countries who are the worst affected. Together with our sister organisations in the global Caritas network, and many other organisations in the UK and around the world, we are gathering signatures for a **global church petition** to world leaders, who could make a huge difference to this situation if they chose. Please can you get this signed in your parish this summer?



We have a **special message from Father Charlie Chilufya**, a priest based in Kenya and director of the Jesuit Justice and Ecology Network, Africa (JENA), explaining how the people of Kenya are being affected. There are **petition** sheets for parishioners to sign, and a **short talk** to be given at the end of Mass overleaf. Below you will find a simple **how-to guide**.

### The lives of our sisters and brothers are being devastated by debt

**54 countries – from Kenya to Sri Lanka – are facing debt distress.** Many are forced to spend more on payments to big banks, wealthy nations and global institutions than they spend on health, education or life-saving climate measures. Debts are being paid at the expense of hiring doctors and teachers, building schools, hospitals and sewage systems, preparing for floods, or coping with droughts.

Often, countries have already re-paid their debts once, but due to unscrupulous lenders and extortionate interest rates, they are often left paying for the original debt many times over.

We need to cancel unfair debts, build better financial systems and implement fairer laws to prevent future debt crises.

And the time to act is now! 2025 is a Jubilee year, which is when the Bible calls for debt cancellation to restore justice and human dignity. This Jubilee year, people across the world are uniting in solidarity to demand action on to the debt crisis. Pope Francis says, "More than a question of generosity, this is a matter of justice." Read more at [cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt](https://cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt)

### Simple steps to run this activity

- Ask your priest if you (or someone else) can read out the short talk on the reverse at the end of Mass one weekend, which includes the text of Father Charlie's letter.
- Prepare a space in church, perhaps a table near the exit, and display the enclosed poster for parishioners to see, with petition sheets ready for them to sign.
- Try and collect signatures at Masses over the weekend if possible, if others can help you with the other Masses.
- Suggest that this **Prayer of intercession** is included in the Mass: We pray for the world, and particularly for all those in the poorest countries who are burdened by the new global debt crisis. In this Jubilee Year, may God grant world leaders, and each of us, the wisdom and compassion to take action to enable all people to flourish. Lord, in your mercy...



- We're enclosing **three petition sheets**, but you can photocopy them or order more or download them at [cafod.org.uk/shop](http://cafod.org.uk/shop)
- Consider giving a **flyer** to people as they leave, which tells them about a **mass lobby of Parliament on 9 July**. Please order the number of flyers you need at [cafod.org.uk/shop](http://cafod.org.uk/shop)
- Please return your **petition sheets** to us, with the completed **Return Form**, ideally by **1 September**, although we can still accept them after that. Please send them to "Freepost CAFOD." (Please don't write anything else on the envelope other than these two words or we will be charged extra – these two words really do work!). The signatures will be added to a **global total**. There's a QR code for people to sign online if they prefer (it's the same petition).
- If you do this activity in your parish quite soon, **please take a few photos** and send them to us at [campaign@cafod.org.uk](mailto:campaign@cafod.org.uk) so that we can use them to inspire others!
- To read more about the global debt crisis see [cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt](http://cafod.org.uk/cancelthedebt). We have stories of people affected by the debt crisis, theological reflections, FAQs and more.
- **Any queries**, just email us at [campaign@cafod.org.uk](mailto:campaign@cafod.org.uk) - we are here to help you!

### Short talk: "Let's be Pilgrims of Hope in this Jubilee Year"

Thank you, Father, for this opportunity to share with you. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am a volunteer with CAFOD, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development.

Today I have a special message to deliver to you, from Father Charlie, who is a priest based in Kenya. Kenya is one of the 54 of the world's poorest countries around the world facing a debt crisis, with devastating impacts for ordinary people. Father Charlie says:

"Dear brothers and sisters,

Greetings from the Archdiocese of Nairobi in Kenya in this Jubilee Year.

54 countries are facing a devastating debt crisis. Kenya is one of them, currently spending five times as much on repaying foreign debts as it spends on hospitals and doctors.

For countries like Kenya, this is not a choice.

The global financial system pushes low-income countries into borrowing money at extortionate interest rates, keeping them in a vicious cycle that make it impossible to clear the debt.

The consequences of this are that families forego medical care, children lose access to quality education, and small farmers face the devastating impacts of climate change without support.

We need to create better systems, cancel unfair debts, and implement fairer laws.

In this Jubilee Year, in its spirit of forgiveness, I would like to encourage parishioners in England and Wales to stand with the people of Kenya and many others around the world who are suffering the impact of this global debt crisis.

With prayers and blessings,

Father Charlie Chilufya

Nairobi, Kenya

Please sign the petition on the way out of church, which is being signed by people in Catholic parishes all over the world.

Thank you for listening and thank you for your support of CAFOD's work.