

Dear friends,

This is our first Campaigns Update of 2024, where we let you know what's happening on the campaigning and advocacy side of CAFOD's work. It's the time of preparing for Lent, so if you're helping to run Family Fast Day in your parish, or signing up for our Big Lent Walk, thank you.

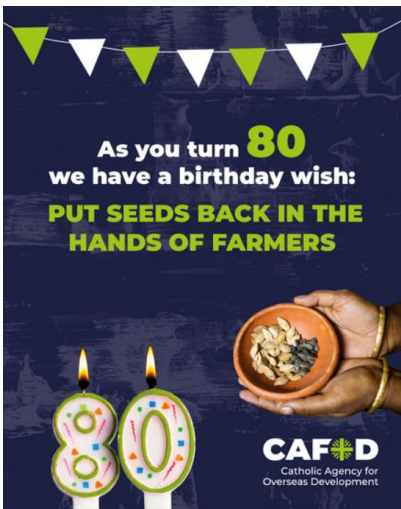
2024 is a special year, as we know we will see a General Election in the UK. Read more below about how we are preparing. It's also the year that the World Bank turns 80! See how we're planning to mark this anniversary, below.

Helen, and the Campaigns Team



CAFOD's Campaigns team: L-R Liam, Phoebe, Ciara, Andrea, Aisha, Helen

## Send an 80<sup>th</sup> birthday card to the World Bank



As the next step in our Fix the Food System campaign, we are inviting CAFOD supporters to send a birthday card to the World Bank!

As a publicly-funded bank that was created to eradicate poverty, the World Bank is not up to the job seeing as poverty is still rife, and 2.4 billion people do not have regular access to food. CAFOD produced a report last year demonstrating how the World Bank's policies on seeds are harming, not helping, small-scale farmers.

The global institution turns 80 this year, and we think it's a perfect time for them to put seeds back in the hands of farmers all over the world, helping them to provide for their families.

This action follows on from Salina's letter last year, which 70,000 parishioners signed from one-third of parishes in England and Wales. We gained the attention of the World Bank, with hand ins to their senior staff in London and Morocco, and thousands of emails from

CAFOD supporters. Our engagement with them on this issue has so far been positive, but we need to keep up the pressure. Please add your name at [cafod.org.uk/worldbank80](https://cafod.org.uk/worldbank80)

## Preparing for a General Election – A Year of Encounter

We know that a General Election is coming this year, and we're making sure that we are ready. The Church tells us that, *'All citizens ought to be aware of their right and duty to promote the common good by casting their votes...'* In order to arrive at the polling station as well informed as possible, it's important to know our prospective MP's views on the things that matter to us.

For this reason CAFOD and the SVP are working together to prepare materials for parishes to engage their candidates ahead of the General Election. This is not about political affiliations, but rather about ensuring candidates hear about the issues that matter to us, strengthening community participation and practising the culture of encounter that Pope Francis talks about.

Our resources will give guidance and information to help you and your fellow parishioners reach out to local candidates and make the most of this vital moment to raise awareness about critical issues such as poverty, hunger and climate change. Watch this space!



### CAFOD Campaigns Update – January/February 2024

You are receiving this update as part of your volunteering agreement with CAFOD. If you want to stop volunteering or discuss your volunteering role, please contact your local CAFOD representative. Or for any queries email Helen Moseley [hmoseley@cafod.org.uk](mailto:hmoseley@cafod.org.uk) or call our Campaigns hotline on 020 7095 5692. Photo credits: CAFOD

## Could you take part in our research project?

Would you be interested in joining a **small group discussion** (online, two hours) in the next few months for our project, "The spirituality of encountering catastrophic reality"? Our theology team are researching what helps people face global realities like climate change and war. We'll be looking at people's fears and where they find the spiritual resources to sustain them, and how the church is currently resourcing people in this area. To find out more, email Francis: [fstewart@cafod.org.uk](mailto:fstewart@cafod.org.uk)



### Meet Vera

**"For the first 24 hours, the building was in total darkness. Long empty, there were cockroaches and rats. Together with other families, Vera would get up at first light every day to clean. The passers-by on the fancy avenue outside would call them names. But Vera and her friends carried on."**

This is part of the story of Vera, a woman from São Paulo, Brazil, who was born into extreme poverty and who at one stage was sleeping in a garage forecourt after a storm washed away her shack in the favela. With the support of CAFOD's partner organisation Semeando, groups of families, including Vera's, won a public contract to turn an abandoned building into safe and affordable housing for 176 of São Paulo's poorest families.

It took ten years of hard struggle, but Vera says her new apartment is the most beautiful thing God has ever given her. It's bright, spacious and has a kitchen, shower and laundry area. The building has a lift, playground, and on the top floor, a community room with a city view. Its central location means access to jobs, services, education and leisure, essential for a dignified life, and which many poorer citizens lack.

Brazil's constitution guarantees everyone the right to housing. As such, homeless people occupying empty buildings acquire legal rights. CAFOD's partner organisation Semeando helps members of housing rights movements like Vera learn about these rights, how to organise with others and how to face threats and intimidation.

Even though Vera is overjoyed to finally have her own home, she is fully committed to the housing rights movement. "We need to carry on and show others what's possible," she says.

Vera's story shows us that wherever we are in the world, campaigning for change is vital to winning a better world!

## Year of Prayer 2024

Pope Francis has called us to a great "symphony" of prayer this year, as we prepare for the 2025 Jubilee Year, *Pilgrims of hope*. As the Pope says: "Prayer unites us; it makes us brothers and sisters ... It is in prayer that our hearts find the strength not to be cold and insensitive in the face of injustice."

May the Year of Prayer lead us to deeper solidarity, hope and love so we may work together seeking God's justice and peace and the flourishing of all people and all creation.

We're enclosing a prayer card for you. If you would like to order more copies for your parish, please go to [cafod.org.uk/shop](https://cafod.org.uk/shop)



## The elephant leaflet!

You may have recently received a pack of resources from us for your parish, about gifts in Wills (don't worry if you didn't). Unfortunately, a reference leaflet was missing from that pack. You will find it in this envelope instead.

The leaflet explains how Gifts in Wills fund one third of our long-term support to help people out of poverty, and how CAFOD staff and volunteers can help by just mentioning this to people. Thank you.

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