

Person 1: Esperanza

Esperanza, 21, lives in a village called El Cacao in Nicaragua, which is in Central America. She lives with her parents and her brother.

Esperanza is at university. She has chosen to study social development because *"I come from a poor background, but I have always felt that if I study I can help myself, and others."*

What is her situation?

Esperanza's community lives in an area very vulnerable to drought. It is called the 'Dry Corridor'. Droughts affect their ability to grow food. *"We are in August and it hasn't rained. We sowed our seeds, but there is no harvest. The majority of us are without work, so it has a big impact on our families. There isn't food, so what do you live on? Life is difficult right now. This is why we are hoping."*

What does she do?

Esperanza is a leader in a project run by Caritas Jinotega, supported by CAFOD. The aim of this project is to help small-scale farmers cope with the challenges of drought. In the project, she has shared her knowledge from university with others in her community. She has delivered training sessions on leadership and the environment.

She has also worked to develop a seed bank in her area. This is a large metal container where local farmers can store their bean and maize seeds. It helps preserve the seeds and keep them safe for the next growing season. She says, *"I feel happy that as part of the project I am taken into account as a young person, and as a woman. All the benefits of the project make me happy too."*

What about her faith?

Esperanza is Catholic. To her, faith means *"belief in God"*. She says, *"Faith helps me to believe that things will happen. This is faith. Being always positive, not negative."*

Person 2: Julia



During her gap year with CAFOD, Julia, 22, spent five days living on just £1 a day to raise awareness and understanding of the extreme poverty she witnessed on a trip to Sierra Leone.

What is her situation?

Julia worked at YMT (Youth Mission Team) in the UK and also spent four weeks in Sierra Leone where 65 per cent of the country's population lives in extreme poverty.

What did she do?

"Today is Ash Wednesday! It means Lent has started and the 40 days of fasting and abstaining has begun. This year for Lent I'm giving up my luxuries. Starting tomorrow for five days I will be living off a £1 a day. I've carefully calculated for three meals a day and the use of shower gel, toothpaste and deodorant. Right now I'm feeling apprehensive about it. My diet is going to be rice and pasta and more rice and then more pasta."

After the challenge she says "My five days living off £1 a day were tough and challenging. And everyday that went by I tried to spend a few minutes remembering all those who had to continue living this challenge when I finished it."

"It made me have more understanding of the challenges they face but also of the price of food. I'm lucky that last Tuesday I was able to head to the supermarket and buy the food I needed in order to make my diet more healthy and balanced."

What about her faith?

"For all those living in the UK and overseas, I pray for them everyday that they may have the right support to be able to feed their families. It's crazy that in a world where we have enough food to feed everybody that every night one in eight people go to bed hungry. I hope in some way my challenge has helped people have more understanding of this."

Person 3: Fernando



In over 50 years of conflict, Colombia has suffered so much. People like Fernando, living in the Magdalena Medio region, are tired of being caught between government forces, guerrillas and paramilitaries.

CAFOD is supporting local experts to run peace building workshops in 34 schools, teaching young people how to avoid a life of violence. They are taught how to share all they have learnt with their families and neighbours.

What is his situation?

Fernando, 15, is a student at Simití Secondary School. He is tired of people only seeing Colombia as a country of drugs and war. He believes young people have a role to play in building peace.

What did he do?

"I'm a candidate to become student representative for my school and I've been campaigning in school today because the elections are tomorrow."

"I would work very hard to ensure that I fulfil my promises to my fellow students. I would be the voice of the students before our school directors. I would be their defender and fight for justice on their behalf. I would be against injustice. I would fight for equity, peace, tolerance and personal responsibility."

"On a daily basis, there are conflicts around our school. What starts as a game, often ends up as a fight."

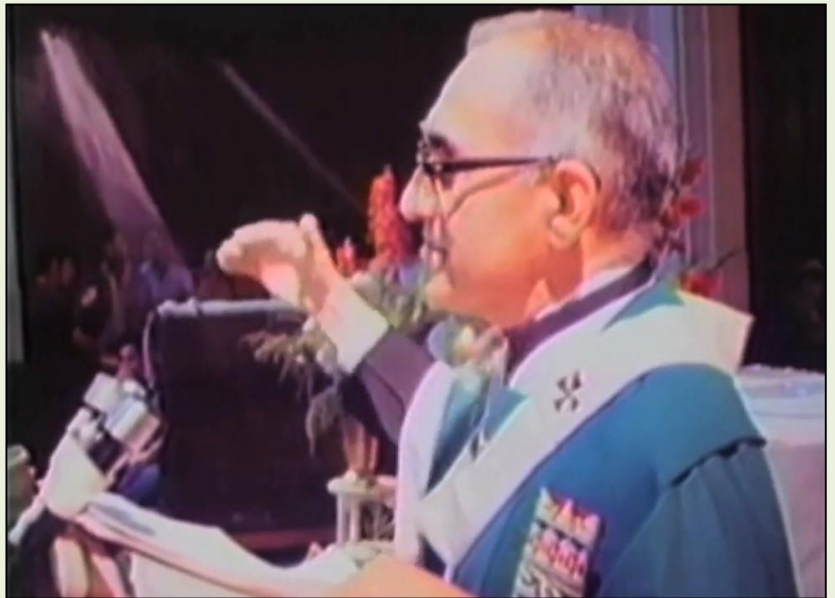
"My hope is that if I win this election, I will be able to ask for more spaces for recreation and sports for the students at school. I would also like more outdoor green space, where the students can rest. If we were able to create these spaces, I think there would be less conflict in the school because there would be set spaces for students to use."

What about his faith?

"In spite of everything that has happened or that could happen, if you have been hurt or damaged, you have to learn to forgive. Even if you've been hurt, you can't kick back at people who regret what they've done. These people can go back and re-arm themselves and create a bigger conflict. People need to feel loved, forgiven, and useful in their society."

Person 4: Archbishop Oscar Romero

Oscar Romero was from El Salvador. He is a CAFOD hero because he spoke up for the rights of those living in poverty and under oppression.



What was his situation?

In 1977, Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador, the capital of El Salvador. Some rich people were pleased. They thought he would help to control the poor people in the countryside, known as '*campesinos*'. The government and army supported the rich and powerful, oppressing the *campesinos* violently. Less than a month later, Romero's friend, Fr Rutilio Grande, was shot dead after criticising the government. Romero was upset and angry. He insisted that the murder be investigated. This never happened.

What did he do?

From that point, Romero became a friend of all people in El Salvador who were poor and oppressed. He was a voice for those who had no power against the violence they suffered.

In his radio broadcasts, especially his weekly cathedral sermons, Romero spoke out against the violence being done to the *campesinos*.

On 24 March 1980, Romero was saying Mass. A car drew up and a shot was fired through the open church door. Romero was killed.

What about his faith?

Saint Oscar Romero said, "*Many would like the poor to keep on saying it is God's will for them to live that way. But it is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing. That cannot be of God.*"

Find out more

Watch the video about Saint Oscar Romero at cafod.org.uk

Person 5: Monica



Monica went on a CAFOD Young People in Parliament trip. The aim of the trip was to lobby MPs and engage with them on justice issues so they could help to make the world a fairer place.

What was her motivation?

Monica recalls the day: *"In March 2014, 42 sixth formers from all over Britain gathered in London with two things in common – their love of politics and their faith."*

How did she prepare?

"To prepare for our trip to Parliament, the group had workshops on media training, campaigning with CAFOD, and the structure of parliament. As well as getting to know more about our government we also got to know each other."

"After a whistle-stop tour of the Houses of Parliament, it was almost time to watch Prime Minister's Questions. We watched as David Cameron and Ed Miliband antagonised one another whilst debating the economy, with MPs chatting and cheering them on. Surprisingly, all the bickering and scorning helped the political juices within us to flow and soon enough we were ready to lobby our MPs."

What did she do?

"We sat in our very own debating room with several MPs. We discussed topics from poverty in Britain to poverty abroad and it was inspirational. Even as a young person myself, seeing so many young people just like me join together to serve a common purpose was amazing."

Patrick, who was also on the trip says, "We were looking at the issues of climate change and world hunger. Lots of our questions have focused on the fact that one in eight people do not have enough to eat. We have been encouraging and lobbying our MPs to bring these issues up in Parliament more often."

Find out more

Read CAFOD blogs about young people campaigning for the climate.

Person 6: Jasper



Jasper, 17, was a volunteer for Caritas Philippines. He recalls the time that Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines and explains what he did to help. He also reflects on his respect for God.

What was his situation?

"At around eight to ten o'clock in the morning there were already strong winds coming. It is the strongest typhoon I ever have experienced. I am sure that many people died. Many buildings collapsed. Most of our things were destroyed even our dormitories. Some of us have no more clothes. Our books are all wet."

What did he do?

At the time, Jasper told us: *"I help pack goods, give water, give them food as much as possible. We still need more volunteers and supplies for all the people. They feel relieved that someone still cares about them."*

What about his faith?

"It's really true, when somebody needs help and when people see that you need help, there will always be providence from God. Sisters are coming from the other archdioceses, volunteers from other counties are coming and helping us. We are really blessed."

"The Bible says that when you give something, it will be given back a hundred-fold by God. I am thankful for those people around the world who have been helping the Philippines so much. One thing I am sure, we will all rise, with the help of everyone, with the help of our co-Filipinos, of everyone, we will rise."

Find out more

Watch Jasper's film at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_L5KW2f2RA
(Search 'Jasper, CAFOD, Philippines')

Person 7: Daniela



Daniela (16) has never had running water at home. Water is delivered weekly by truck to her neighbourhood, an informal settlement high on the slopes in the outskirts of Lima, Peru.

Residents in poorer neighbourhoods, like Daniela's, can pay up to eleven times more for water than people with access to public networks.

What is her situation?

The trucks deposit the water in tanks that are open to the dust, so water quality is poor. And sometimes the water trucks don't come.

Daniela says: *"We feel uncomfortable when water doesn't come. We need water for everything – to wash, to cook, everything."*

After heavy rain, it's virtually impossible for the water trucks to make it up the steep hillsides. So the community must buy and borrow water from one other.

What is she doing?

Local experts supported by CAFOD have trained Daniela and her friends to use a specially designed mobile phone app to survey residents about their access to water and water quality. The data they collect will be presented to Congress as evidence to lobby for better rights to water.

What motivates her?

"What I'd like is what everybody wants – water, roads, paths, sports grounds. What I want is for things to be better for everybody."

Find out more

Our augmented reality posters come to life so that you can see Daniela and her friends at work: cafod.org.uk/changemakers

Person 8: Kayode



Kayode Akintola, during COVID-19 awareness training for religious leaders at CAFOD's office in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

What is his situation?

Kayode is CAFOD's country representative for Sierra Leone and Liberia.

What did he do?

When the deadly Ebola virus struck Sierra Leone, CAFOD was on the front line fighting it. With a network of local experts, Kayode's team reached vulnerable people with life-saving prevention information, hygiene kits, and food. They also trained volunteers in the dangerous work of providing safe and dignified burials.

This experience of Ebola, and trusted relationships with local leaders, meant that Kayode and his colleagues felt confident that they could ensure life-saving messages were heard and support available to help prevent the spread of coronavirus, despite the enormous challenges they faced.

Kayode said, "These are worrying and challenging times, but we refuse to be overwhelmed by the odds stacked against us."

"We are responding to and reaching out to communities that need guidance and advice on how to keep safe."

What about his faith?

"CAFOD supporters never fail to walk alongside us in our times of greatest need. Their prayers and donations keep hope alive and propel us to do all we can to protect communities from this global pandemic."

"Filled with the Easter spirit, we thank you from deep within our hearts."

Find out more

You can visit cafod.org.uk to find out more about CAFOD's work in Sierra Leone and around the world.