

[Remember to take the Family Fast Day poster and envelope up with you, so you can show them when giving your short talk.]

Good morning/evening everyone, and thank you, **[priest's name]**, for the opportunity to speak today for CAFOD – our Catholic charity for overseas development, and part of the global Caritas family.

My name is **[your name]**, and I'd like to begin with a question.

Can you imagine waving your child or grandchild off to school, knowing they'll spend the day hungry? Knowing they'll try to concentrate in lessons but have an empty stomach, thinking more about food than what they're learning. It's difficult to imagine, but for many families around the world, this is a daily reality.

I'd like to tell you about 12-year-old Tayla from northern Zimbabwe, where drought has left communities struggling with food and water shortages. After fetching water before school each morning, Tayla often arrived hungry and tired. Without enough food or water, she struggled to concentrate in class and worried about falling behind with her studies.

Tayla told us: **"It affected me because I would feel tired and not be good at working. Some of the mathematics would be hard."**

But together, parishioners like you, Tayla's community and CAFOD's trusted Caritas partners began to change that situation.

At first, children received school meals so they could keep learning. But at the same time, local experts worked with Tayla's school and community to install a solar-powered water system – a long-term solution that means the children can drink safe water and wash their hands all through the day, without having to collect it before school. The school also uses the water to grow vegetables to provide nutritious school meals for children throughout the year.

Now Tayla and her classmates are better able to learn and play. And she's happy she can now concentrate in her maths lessons, so she can pursue her dream of becoming a doctor.

[Hold up poster]

As Tayla proudly says: **"We are getting more energy"**.

You can insert a Gospel reflection into your talk here if you have time

26th/27th September: 26th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) Matthew 21:18-32

In today's gospel we are asked which of the two sons does his father's will. The one who agreed but did nothing, or the one who declined but followed up with the right actions? We are reminded, then, that it is not enough to say we believe. If we are truly to be followers of Christ, we must also put our faith into action, for example by standing alongside our neighbours, like Tayla, who are experiencing shortages of food and water.

3rd/4th October: 27th Sunday in Ordinary Time (Year A) Matthew 21:33-43

In today's gospel the tenants refuse to listen to the servants that the vineyard owner sends. They even attack the landowner's son. Reflecting on this, we might ask ourselves whether we are always willing to listen to others. Are we open to the idea that God might be speaking to us through those that we encounter, whether we meet them in person, or hear their stories – like that of Tayla we have heard today?

Tayla's story shows what's possible when we come together. But there are many more children who still arrive at school hungry every day.

CAFOD's Family Fast Day is on **Friday 2 October**. This Harvest season, we have an opportunity to thank God for all we have received and to share those blessings with others. As one global family, we are called to put our faith into action by supporting our neighbours who don't have enough food or safe water.

As you leave Mass today, please take a CAFOD envelope or scan the QR code to donate to help communities around the world put food on the table. And if you're a UK taxpayer, please remember to complete the Gift Aid declaration, which increases your donation by 25 per cent at no extra cost to you.

[Hold up envelope] This isn't just an envelope. It's an opportunity to help another child arrive at school ready to learn instead of worrying about hunger.

If you're able to give monthly, your gift will help even more communities build these lasting solutions.

Thank you for your generosity, your prayers and your support.