

# Speak up for CAFOD

## this Lent



*Speak out on behalf of the voiceless, and for the rights of all who are vulnerable. Speak out in order to judge with righteousness and to defend the needy and the poor.” Proverbs 31:8-9*

It makes a huge difference to people at Mass all over England and Wales if they can hear a short talk from someone at Fast Day.

We've found that when someone speaks about CAFOD it increases our support nearly 50%. A talk means people hear from the people around the world who benefit from Fast Day giving – our brothers and sisters in the world's poorest places. So in giving the talk in a parish, you are being the voice for the voiceless and oppressed people in our world.

### The crucial bits you need to get across are:

1. **Introduce yourself** and CAFOD, and thank the priest for having you to speak
2. **Inspire people**, and tell them about what CAFOD does – people overwhelmingly respond to human stories
3. **Invite them to give and pray**, for justice and compassion in our world
4. (In a parish where there are no or very few CAFOD volunteers, a **request for people to consider getting involved** is really helpful.)
5. And most importantly, say a warm **thank you** for their ongoing support and for listening

### Things to remember:

- It really helps to prepare – read through the talk, out loud if you can, and get a sense of how it sounds in your voice.
- If your slot to speak is very tight, an even shorter version is available at [cafod.org.uk/lent](http://cafod.org.uk/lent)
- If you need to edit it down at all, make sure you keep in the key bits:
  - **introduce** yourself, and CAFOD's work
  - **inspire** people
  - **invite** them **to give and to pray**
  - and say **thank you**.
- Get to church a bit early, and sit somewhere near where you'll be speaking from.
- Have a Fast Day envelope in your hand to hold up.

# Short talk

Thank you Fr \_\_\_\_\_ for giving me the opportunity to speak here today. Good morning / evening everyone. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am here to say a few words about the work CAFOD is doing in your name.

**Optional:**

*For those of you who don't know, CAFOD is the official aid agency of the Catholic Church in England and Wales.*

(PAUSE)

Do you remember the floods here in **England / Wales** last year? The pictures on the news of people carrying their belongings from their homes. Sandbags in the streets. Houses flooding with water. Villages semi-submerged.

For many of us, that was when the reality of extreme weather really hit home – no matter how advanced a country we think we are, no matter how much faster, quicker, stronger, we grow, we remain at the mercy of our environment.

**Alternative opening:**

*I would like to speak to you about one of our favourite subjects: the weather. Countries around the world are fascinated by our fascination with the weather.*

*But the poorest people around the world are not just fascinated by the weather, their lives depend on it.*

58-year-old Kyin Nu (pron. Chin Noo) lives in a small jungle village in Myanmar. A few years ago, a huge storm ripped through her community.

At 6pm that night, 400 women, men and children lived in her village.

By 6am, there were just 200 left.

In the space of 12 short hours, Kyin Nu had lost everything.

Her possessions – precious photographs of her family, hand-me-downs from her parents. Gone.

The small bamboo home she slept in and used for her business. Gone.

But worst of all, her three eldest children. Gone.

This hardworking woman, who had dedicated her life and her efforts to her children had, through no fault of her own, lost everything.

After the essential aid work was underway, your generous support helped Kyin Nu to pick up the pieces, with shelter and some chickens to make a living.

But in the months following the disaster, the community's farmland was flooded and their crops ruined by saltwater because the storm had destroyed all their natural barriers.

The villagers wanted to build a wall to protect their crop, but they didn't have the time to do so as they had to earn money to buy the essentials such as food and clothes. Your support ensured the people were paid to build the barrier – this meant they could feed themselves immediately and make something vital that would save them in the long term.

And you also helped to train Kyin Nu and her neighbours to plant trees that would grow and form a storm wall to protect them from future cyclones.

A changing climate and increasingly extreme weather have the biggest impact on those who are least able to cope. But we can help our sisters and brothers around the world to adapt to their impact now.

With your support, Kyin Nu and her village are now able to live lives of hope and dignity with less fear of another storm. Kyin Nu herself, while suffering terrible losses in the storm, has built back up a small business that brings in some money for her family.

**Use the relevant paragraph below if you are speaking in the homily slot at Mass:**

**THE WEEK BEFORE LENT FAST DAY**

**First Sunday of Lent (Year B): 22 February 2015**

**Based on the readings: Genesis 9:8-15 and Mark 1:12-15**

*In today's Gospel, Jesus is sent out into the desert with nothing. Through the support of the angels, Jesus was able to face the forty days of temptation. As we begin Lent, we're called to face our own temptations, to look at our own lives and see where we need to make changes to grow closer to God and our neighbour.*

*In the first reading, we were reminded of God's covenant with humanity – that God would never again flood the land. Yet our own actions and lifestyle choices increasingly cause damage to the world around us and impact on our neighbours near and far. This Lent let us remember God's covenant, and recommit ourselves to care for all of God's creation – both the environment, and our sisters and brothers throughout the world.*

**OR, THE WEEK AFTER LENT FAST DAY**

**Second Sunday of Lent (Year B): 1 March 2015**

**Based on the readings: Romans 8:31-34 and Mark 9:2-10**

*In today's Gospel, Jesus and the disciples go up a high mountain to 'be alone by themselves'. During Lent, we're encouraged to do the same, to 'listen to God's Son'. In the reading from the letter to the Romans, St Paul inspires us, saying 'with God on our side, who can be against us?' For Kyin Nu it must have felt like everything was against her. Yet through listening to God in prayer, she finds hope. She says, 'My faith helps me through these times. I trust in God. What gives me hope is God'. As we strive to listen to God's Son this Lent, may we be inspired by the hope which God gives to Kyin Nu. So, inspired by that hope...*

This Lent we are asked to consider our neighbours. Not just those who are sitting next to us in the pews, or those that live next door. We're asked to consider our global neighbours. People like Kyin Nu who more and more frequently have to face weather that destroys lives.

And as neighbours, we share in each other's hopes and fears and are called to respond compassionately to lift each other's burdens and make our hopes a reality.

(PAUSE)

With your help, we can support our sisters and brothers to not only survive cyclones, floods and droughts, but to build back better and stronger and to be prepared for when the next one strikes.

(PAUSE)

This Lent, the generosity of the Catholic community is being recognised by the UK government. Under their UK Aid Match scheme they will match pound for pound every donation given to CAFOD up to a value of £3.5 million. This is a unique opportunity. So, for every pound you're able to give, CAFOD will receive an extra pound to help thousands more people like Kyin Nu, in some of the poorest communities, to live sustainably and with dignity by adapting to the threat of storms, cyclones, tidal waves and droughts

So thank you for all you support, and I know that you will give what you can in your Fast Day envelope.

As always, we are grateful for your support. Without your generosity and prayers, the work that CAFOD does to change the lives of thousands of people worldwide, would not be possible. For that I would like to say thank you on behalf of the communities we work with, and to ask for you to pray for people around the world who, right now are having to adapt their lives to the effects of storms, floods and droughts.

And thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak today.

***Include this paragraph if there is no CAFOD contact in the parish:***

*We don't currently have anyone here at \_\_\_\_\_ (name of your parish) who can keep you in touch with our work and show how your donations continue to make a difference to people like Kyin Nu. Please pray for our work. And if you are called to ministry with CAFOD here in the parish, and you would like to join a growing group of parish contacts across the diocese, please speak either to me or Father \_\_\_\_\_ after Mass. It doesn't take much time but it makes a huge difference.*



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