

Short reflection on CAFOD Harvest Day Collection

For Masses on October 24-25, 2020

For most of us, COVID and the ever-shifting regulations that limit daily life are trying our patience. We long to socialise freely with friends and family, attend gatherings and events, travel, celebrate mass as before, or simply sit in the park without worrying about who is nearby.

With the economy sputtering, churches and charities have increased their appeals for our generosity. Everyone's needs are suddenly so desperate. Sometimes it seems hopeless. Will we ever get back to our "old normal"?

When I find myself discouraged by extra worries or the inconvenience of COVID precautions, I cast my mind back to the many characters I have encountered in preparation for dozens of CAFOD appeals over the years. I wonder how they, their families and communities are faring in the present environment. How are the networks of volunteers and agencies on the ground, which partner with CAFOD, managing? Do they all still have hope for the future?

It's quite uncanny: the same thing happens whenever my mind goes on this circuit of thought, first my inner complaints, then moving on to wonder how people far away, whom I have never met, are coping. It always makes me feel a whole lot better, less worried, more at peace. I start counting my blessings rather than dwell on what has been lost, closed, or made tiresome and lonely.

On reflection, how ironic to be "repaid" by a charity, CAFOD, just now during a pandemic! It's undeniable: engagement with CAFOD has immeasurably broadened my understanding of the variety of experience of our brothers and sisters wherever they may live. Though many of us are suffering deeply or have lost loved ones, I see that we are among the lucky ones. For that, we have God to thank. But I also thank CAFOD for this new lens on our shared suffering: it is making all the difference for me right now.

Please join me in supporting CAFOD by placing your contributions in the baskets that will be by the door after every mass this weekend. If you can gift aid your donation, that would be fantastic. There are envelopes in the back with the gift aid form to fill out. Alternatively, if you prefer to give online you can do so via the following link: <https://cafod.org.uk/donations>

Please also join me in thanking our anonymous match-funder. Perhaps like me, he or she feels somehow calmed by our deeper connection to all of God's children.