

CAFOD Harvest Day Appeal

By Elizabeth Carey, 22 September 2021

Have you been to the top of the much maligned Marble Arch mound? Recently I went to see what people were talking about. The views over that corner of London were impressive, as was the structure itself, with its vertical garden effect. My abiding memory, however, is the vision of the lush treetops of Hyde Park. From the ground we don't fully appreciate that thick canopy of leaves and branches, something of a marvel in the middle of one of the world's largest cities. In addition to their beauty and cooling shade on a sunny day, no doubt those trees make our air a lot cleaner.

Trees in Hyde Park and throughout London are just one reminder of how every breath we take, and everything we eat connects us to the forests, flora, fauna and fish of God's magnificent Creation.

Lately we hear less about the wonders of our world, and more about the damage wrought by global warming, destruction of habitats and climate change. It is easy to feel helpless and despondent. In response, we are called to change how we travel, eat, heat our homes and what we consume. While we face adjusting our lifestyle, others face more radical threats to their very existence or homelands.

In Brazil, for example, the Amazon rainforest supplies vast quantities of Oxygen to the Earth's human and animal populations. For that reason, it is often referred to as the Planet's "Lungs". The Amazon is threatened by fires deliberately set because some people would rather use the forest land to raise cattle or soya, or for logging. Not only does that destroy part of the Planet's lungs, it accelerates the production of harmful greenhouse gasses, first from the flames themselves, then from cattle. In the process, indigenous people, who have lived in and been stewards of the Amazon forest, are displaced, made destitute and often killed.

Some brave people are fighting back. The poster in the entrance to St. James's Spanish Place shows Ivanilde, one of those brave individuals. With support from CAFOD's partners in Brazil, Ivanilde and her community are resisting deforestation and displacement. After fires destroyed the trees and plants she had nurtured on her own smallholding, Ivanilde resisted the temptation to give up in despair. Instead, with help from local experts she has replanted her land. And Ivanilde is standing up for her rights, thanks to legal assistance from CAFOD's partner, the Pastoral Land Commission. Her remarkable story features in a video on the CAFOD website: [Climate Crisis Appeal | CAFOD](#)

Stories of CAFOD's local partners helping brave individuals achieve extraordinary results are repeated in Ethiopia, Bangladesh and many other countries besides Brazil where populations are fighting the worst effects of climate change. We all suffer to varying degrees from rising temperatures and volatile weather. We know it is our poorest brothers and sisters who suffer the most. With our help, they can show us the way to stand up for God's creation against the forces of greed, ignorance and short-termism. Standing with people like Ivanilde can give us courage to take some hard decisions and embrace lifestyles that are more sustainable. Following her inspiring example and joining the fight against the causes of climate change makes us better stewards of this Earth. That benefits ourselves plus those we share the Earth with now and future generations.

I hope you will join me in supporting CAFOD's vital work with communities confronting the starkest effects of climate change. Strong support for CAFOD will send a message that we care for those at the proverbial coal face of the climate emergency. It will also signal that we demand tangible progress from world leaders at November's COP 26 conference in Glasgow.

Please take an envelope and return it with your contribution at any mass during the weekend of October 2-3. If you prefer to give online, the link is: [CAFOD : Donation to the Climate Crisis Appeal 2021](#). In either case, please fill in the Gift Aid form if that applies. Thank you for showing your solidarity with courageous people like Ivanilde in Brazil, and with countless others around the globe who offer us hope through their stewardship and determination to preserve God's Creation.