



**“We plant the seeds that one day will grow”.**

It's Harvest Fast Day on Friday and at harvest, we share God's abundance with our neighbours. 'We plant the seeds that one day will grow'.

These words are from a prayer that remembers Blessed Oscar Romero, Archbishop of San Salvador who was brutally murdered because he tried to help the poorest people in his country. In El Salvador where Oscar Romero was archbishop, the words from the prayer mean so much. This is traditionally a country that lives from the land; many families depend on their harvest.

Edelmira, a farmer in El Salvador, literally “plants seeds” trusting that “they will grow”; come harvest time, they bring fruit that she sells to support her family. And, from that harvest, she gathers an abundance of fresh seeds to sow the next spring. This is the natural abundance of God's earth: one seed yields many. One harvest produces the next sowing in the spring; and the next harvest. Any gardener, or farmer, knows this instinctively: that nature is abundant, as God's love is abundant. But in El Salvador in recent years, farmers have bought foreign, hybrid seeds because they were told they will get a much bigger harvest for their hard work. Slowly, these commercial seeds have become widely used, supplanting stronger, native El Salvadoran seeds.

Some farmers say they might get a good first harvest, but the seeds they keep from the crop won't grow a good second or third. So they have to keep buying these commercial seeds, instead of gathering their own seeds from their own harvest. Other farmers tell us that they've watched their crop rot on the stalk because the seed hasn't spent generations adapting to the heavy rains in their region. Imagine watching your crop, the fruit of your hard work, rotting in the fields because of strong rains, a pest, or a crop disease. Imagine the feeling of powerlessness. The anxiety of wondering how you will feed your family now. But, in communities like Edelmira's, CAFOD's local partners have given farmers native seeds, which are well adapted to the area's climate and threats, and yield strong, fertile seeds at harvest. These strong, local seeds are restoring nature's abundance to these farmers' lives. So now, Edelmira can plant seeds that will grow, and bear fruit, and sustain her and her family.

## A step along the way

“This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need further development.

We provide yeast that produces far beyond our capabilities.

...It is a beginning, a step along the way, an opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter and do the rest.

We may never see the end results, but we are workers, not master builders; ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.”

From a prayer by Bishop Ken Untener of Saginaw, which he later used to mark the martyrdom of the Blessed Oscar Romero of El Salvador.

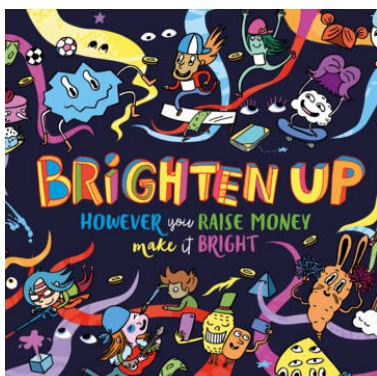
## Prayers of intercession

We pray for all those who hunger: that, through the grace of God, they may come to share in the abundance given for us all.

Lord, in your mercy...

We pray for all those who struggle to get enough to eat: that they may know they are not forgotten, and that together, by the grace of God, we may build a brighter future and a fairer world.

Lord, in your mercy...



“It is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing.”  
Blessed Oscar Romero

## READ MATTHEW 21:28-32

Can you think of a time when someone asked you to do something? Did you do it? Or did you just say you would do it?

How did you feel afterwards? And how do you think the person who asked for your help felt? What will you do the next time someone asks you for help? How will you help other people in the coming week?

Why do you think Jesus tells this story? What is he trying to teach us?

The man in the story is God. And we are all God's children. So Jesus is trying to tell us that we should listen to what God asks of us and then go and do what is asked.

It is not enough just to say that we will follow God in our lives. We actually have to go and do what is asked. We have to live our lives as God wants us to. How do you think we can do that today?

God asks us to take care of the world and the people in it and it is up to us how we answer. Jacqueline and her family live in one of the poorest areas of El Salvador. Although they live in a poor area, Jacqueline and her family are pleased to have animals and a vegetable garden. They have been able to build a new house with money from selling their pigs. CAFOD has been supporting Jacqueline's family for many years, so they can have the things they need to grow their way out of poverty.

Blessed Oscar Romero, who came from El Salvador, once said, “It is not God's will for some to have everything and others to have nothing.” We are called to help our sisters and brothers around the world, like Jacqueline, to have a brighter future.

Let's think about how we can Brighten Up this Harvest, and play our part to build a brighter world free from poverty, so that all everyone can live life to the full.

