

‘We aspire’ Mass Y6/Y4 Leavers 2020: Celebrant Bishop Mark O’Toole- Teacher’s notes

You and/or your families will need, if possible:

- Label stickers (two for each pupil/child), large enough for them to write a word or short phrase
- One sheet of card cut into an outline of your school building with individual bricks marked, one per child, large enough for a sticker to fit onto each brick
- Either a globe, or a circular sheet of card decorated as a globe
- Calming or atmospheric music for the quiet times
- A Rainbow cross or bright cross on display
- Small Romero crosses as leaving gifts if applicable (or other gifts of your choice)

Introduction

This Mass covers the following themes:

- The end of year 6 and leaving primary school or Y4 and leaving First School
- The powerful words of Romero – **‘Aspire not to have more, but to be more’**
- Feast Day of St Thomas

The Mass aims to give pupils both a local and global focus, beginning by thinking about their school experience and widening out to their role within the world as a whole.

It has been designed to be used in a class group of up to 15 pupils or for use in family groups at home and requires the children to take action and get involved from wherever they are watching this Mass. It is probably best to have pupils sitting in a semi-circle, so they can see each other and the onscreen Mass.

This note provides you with a basic structure and could be used as it is with little or no preparation. If, however, you have time to prepare and add to this, it will become an even more valuable and personal exercise.

The majority of the pupils can therefore focus on listening and reflecting and then be directed to the responses by the accompanying adult.

Suggestions to tailor this Leavers' Mass for your own school/home

- Ask pupils to write their own prayers – about things for which they are thankful during their time at primary/first school and things they might be worried about for the future.
- Use extra time before or after the Mass to ask pupils to prepare a PowerPoint presentation of experiences in year 6/year 4 and/or across the whole of the primary/first school. Add pictures of the school, pupils, trips and special days.
- Share this Mass link and special time with families and parishioners– invite parents and grandparents, guardians or carers who would usually come into school to watch from home.
- Give pupils time in advance to think of special moments from their time at primary school; they then might be more willing to offer ideas during the reflection activity.
- Add to the specific examples of how your school builds community – e.g. playground buddies, eco-garden, etc. to your weekly newsletter so your wider community can share in them. Put them on Twitter or Facebook if you can and tag @PlymouthDiocese , @PlymouthCAST @CAFODPlymouth and @CathEdService
- Make reference to events related to CAFOD at your school, whether it is a particular lesson, assembly, Harvest or Lent Fast Day, visitor or fundraising event if you can so that it links in with the Summer of Hope theme for this term . Visit cafod.org.uk/education/yourstories and share their Thank you film to see how children around the UK have joined together to make a difference last year. Share your events on social media and tag as above.
- Spend a lesson looking at the life of Oscar Romero, so that the children are familiar with his story before they celebrate the liturgy. Visit cafod.org.uk/primary/romero for resources.

CAFOD partners' work available on their website if you'd like to cover it before this Mass or afterwards via the link.

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Primary-teaching-resources/Yr6-liturgy-for-school-leavers>

Slides 12-19 show some of CAFOD's partners and some of the key areas of CAFOD's work:

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development **no one beyond reach**



CAFOD aspires to build a world free from poverty and injustice...

...where everyone has enough to eat.

Slide 12: Tomás' family are farmers. It's difficult to grow enough in the soil where they live. Plus, extreme weather is wiping out crops.

CAFOD have helped the family by training them in good farming practices and teaching them to grow their own seeds, as they are expensive to buy. Now the family grows enough to have what they need.

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development **no one beyond reach**

CAFOD aspires to build a world free from poverty and injustice...


...where children can rebuild their lives.



Slide 13: Mary is 7 years old and comes from Syria. She had to leave her home because of the war. Mary now lives in Jordan, where she can go to a puppet class with other refugees, supported by CAFOD.

In the puppet class, the children watch films, make their own puppets and talk about the difficult things they have experienced. In this way they can start to rebuild their lives.

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development **no one beyond reach**



CAFOD aspires to build a world free from poverty and injustice...

...where everyone can be healthy and happy.

Slide 14: When Twalumba was born, he was not growing as well as other children his age.

His mum joined a support group, funded by CAFOD, to teach new mums about good nutrition and feeding. Now Twalumba is feeding well and growing up healthy.

CAFOD Catholic Agency for Overseas Development **no one beyond reach**

CAFOD aspires to build a world free from poverty and injustice...

...where creation is cared for.

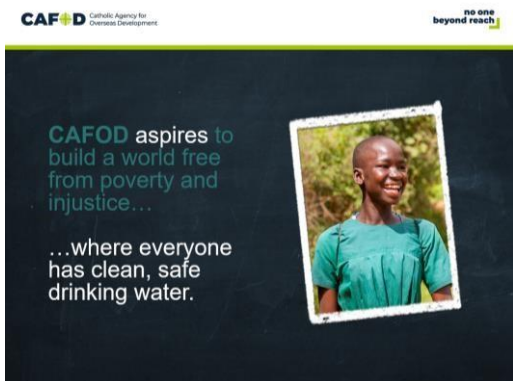


Slide 15: Proto, Fiona and Dana are 'young guardians' of the Atrato river. They live in the north west of Colombia, an area with many different plants and animals, but also at high risk from climate change. In order to help care for the river and their area, they learn about how to take actions such as cleaning the river and raising awareness in their community, in a project supported by CAFOD.



Slide 16: Waed had to leave her home in Syria. She now lives in Jordan. With CAFOD support, she goes to a school for Syrian refugee children. She has English, Arabic and Maths lessons.

Waed says: "I like English. I just want to play."



Slide 17: Two of Proscovia's sisters had to drop out of school to collect water. The same thing almost happened to her.

Through CAFOD, the borehole/well near her home was fixed, so she no longer has to go far for water. This means can stay clean and stay in school. Proscovia is happy learning with her friends.



Slide 18: CAFOD have helped Joel's parents to learn to grow more food in the hard conditions of the Altiplano in Bolivia. They have been helped to build a greenhouse to protect some of their crops. They have learnt how to build a wormery so that they have good fertiliser for their soil so that they grow more and better crops.

Now not only does the family grow enough food for themselves but they have extra of some crops such as onions, chard, potatoes and beans which are taken into the nearest town to sell at market.



Slide 19: In Magdalena Medio, conflict has been a part of life for such a long time. Violence is seen as a normal way to deal with disagreements and conflicts, even at home.

CAFOD have been talking to students parents and teachers to find out how conflict has affected them, so we can decide which issues to tackle in our school workshops.

These students from San Pablo Secondary School are some of the many that will be supported through CAFOD's peacebuilding work.

Why are we using Rainbow Crosses in our Mass?

We have chosen Rainbow crosses to give to all our schools in the Diocese of Plymouth this year on behalf of all those young people moving on from their current schools during a challenging year. This helps us to reflect on, respond to and learn from the lessons of the pandemic. Hopefully this Rainbow cross will help to remind us all of the things we missed, came to value greatly or people we lost during the pandemic but also help us to think of those who needed and continue to need our help and prayers. The crosses will be blessed during Mass on 3rd July then given to a school leader from every school attending the Leadership Conference on 1st and 2nd October 2020.

In an interview with Austin Ivereigh Pope Francis reminded us all of the need to learn from this crisis <https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/17845/pope-francis-says-pandemic-can-be-a-place-of-conversion-> “*This crisis is affecting us all, rich and poor alike, and putting a spotlight on hypocrisy. I am worried by the hypocrisy of certain political personalities who speak of facing up to the crisis, of the problem of hunger in the world, but who in the meantime manufacture weapons. This is a time to be converted from this kind of functional hypocrisy. It’s a time for integrity. Either we are coherent with our beliefs or we lose everything.*

You ask me about conversion. Every crisis contains both danger and opportunity: the opportunity to move out from the danger. Today I believe we have to slow down our rate of production and consumption (Laudato Si’, 191) and to learn to understand and contemplate the natural world. We need to reconnect with our real surroundings. This is the opportunity for conversion.

Yes, I see early signs of an economy that is less liquid, more human. But let us not lose our memory once all this is past, let us not file it away and go back to where we were. This is the time to take the decisive step, to move from using and misusing nature to contemplating it. We have lost the contemplative dimension; we have to get it back at this time.

And speaking of contemplation, I’d like to dwell on one point. This is the moment to see the poor. Jesus says we will have the poor with us always, and it’s true. They are a reality we cannot deny. But the poor are hidden, because poverty is bashful. In Rome recently, in the midst of the quarantine, a policeman said to a man: “You can’t be on the street, go home.” The response was: “I have no home. I live in the street.” To discover such a large number of people who are on the margins ... And we don’t see them, because poverty is bashful. They are there but we don’t see them: they have become part of the landscape; they are things.”

There is also a link to rainbows with St Oscar Romero. “As if the heavens were rejoicing for the official proclamation of another blessed figure, the clouds in the sky parted to reveal a rare solar rainbow halo during the beatification of Salvadoran Archbishop Oscar Romero in El Salvador. The colourful solar halo appeared as Blessed (now St) Oscar Romero's relics were brought out to be venerated during a Holy Mass held as part of the archbishop's beatification ceremonies in El Salvador's capital, San Salvador.

People who witnessed this one-of-a-kind optical phenomenon during Romero's beatification were instantly astonished.

Additional resources on St Romero

Romero crosses should you wish to purchase them for your children or school

The beautiful crosses are hand made and hand-painted for CAFOD by Lázaro Rodriguez and his family in La Palma, El Salvador. On the reverse they show Romero's birth and martyrdom date accompanied by a quote from him.

- The small crosses (4" high) are £4.25 each
- Medium crosses (12" high) are £14.50 each
- Large crosses (20" high) are £29 each

To place an order:

Go to their shop website <https://shop.cafod.org.uk/> call 0300 011 5680, or email resources@cafod.org.uk

Costs correct at time of publication - June 2020.

Other resources

Visit cafod.org.uk/primary/romero for more resources, films and to order a free poster

‘We aspire’ Mass: prayers and reflection for schools and families to join in with

Introduction

Gathering hymn played on CD? We Walk By Faith

Bishop Mark: We gather together today to celebrate your time at primary or first school. You will be looking forward to the changes that are ahead. This is a time for reflection; it is a time for us all to stop and think; it is also a time for us to say thank you and to celebrate.

As we think about the great times you have all had in your schools, we pray for the courage to take up the challenges you face in the future.

During your time in primary and first school you have grown as a community based around faith in God. This faith and your experiences in your school will help you to move on to our new schools with confidence.

Opening prayer

Dear friends, so often St Thomas is remembered as the apostle who doubted, but rather we should honour him as the one who came to a great depth of faith in the Risen Lord.

Bishop Mark: We pray together:

All say: Dear Lord,

We thank you for all the great things we have done at this school.

We have learnt so much; we have had fun; we have grown up.

Look after us as we prepare for a future in a new school.

Help us stay true to the faith and values that have been so important in this school.

Help us aspire to be more.

Amen

Memories of building our school community

Bishop Mark: We are God’s family; filled with the Holy Spirit let us pray together:

All say: We are part of a community, we build it together.

We aspire to be more.

We aspire to build a strong community in our school.

All say: Aspire not to have more, but to be more.

Bishop Mark: These are the words of St Oscar Romero. Oscar Romero was the Archbishop of El Salvador and he was murdered in 1980, for criticising the government that kept people very poor. Oscar Romero knew that he was risking his life. And yet, like Jesus, he continued to speak out against the things he knew were wrong. Romero tried day by day not to *have* more, but to *be* more. Romero has inspired many people all over the world, because he tried to live the Gospel.

Jesus calls each one of us by name. We are all special. The Bible tells us that God even knows the number of hairs on our heads.

In our schools we are all important. You all work together to build a strong school community. You have built this community by making friends and being playground buddies. You have become a community by sharing experiences with children of different ages, abilities and backgrounds.

You have also built a faith community. You have prayed together, celebrated Mass together and shared our faith. Jesus tells us we should not be afraid, we are loved and so he will help your transition into a new school.

Mass continues as usual. After Communion, you will need your bricks and globes ready.

Post Communion Reflection **Quiet reflection time**

[You may find it helpful to put on quiet background music for this time, so that it is not completely silent and perhaps have pictures of your school – to focus the reflection]

Bishop Mark: I want you to spend a minute quietly thinking about your time at your school. Think how small and nervous you were when you started school... Think of all the happy times you've had there... all the things you've learned... and the friends you've made... now take a moment to thank God for all your experiences at primary or first school. *[pause]*

I want you to write your name on one of the small pieces of paper/stickers provided. As you write your name, think about what you have brought to the school. When have you made someone laugh? How have you helped out? What have you added to this rich community?

One by one I want you to put your sticker onto one of the bricks on the picture of your school building being passed around. As you attach your name, think about how you, in Romero's words, have 'been more', how you have helped to build this strong school community.

As you stick your name onto the brick, **say your name out loud** so everyone can hear **and if you would like, tell us one memory about school**, or one wonderful time you can remember.

[Place these at the foot of the Rainbow cross]

Bishop Mark: In our schools we have aspired to be more by building a strong community. As a prayer of thanksgiving for the good things we have experienced here, we light a candle next to our rainbow crosses.

[Light a candle next to the Rainbow crosses]

Memories of building a global community

Fr Oscar: Let us pray together for ourselves and for our global family:

All say: We aspire to be more.

We aspire to build a strong global community.

We aspire to make the world a better place.

St Oscar Romero was a friend of CAFOD. Like Romero, CAFOD aspires to be more. CAFOD works to strengthen communities in developing countries so that they can have the basic needs in life, like food, water, health care, education and somewhere to live. CAFOD's partners work with people aspiring to be more every day. They work hard together as communities, helping each other and sharing what they have with their neighbours.

Fr Oscar: In a moment I'll ask you to spend one minute quietly thinking about how you have helped to build a strong global community. It could be by recycling, saving energy or water, taking part in a global week at school, planting in the garden, helping others, walking to school, raising money, celebrating CAFOD Fast Day, taking part in the the Summer of Hope or praying for others.

Let's close our eyes now and try to keep our bodies and our minds very relaxed and still. Use this time of silence to remember how you've helped build a strong global community.

[Silence]

Fr Oscar: On your sticker write a word or draw a picture to show something you have done to help our world and God's people.

One by one, stick your word or picture to the globe being passed around. As you stick it down, say your word or explain your picture out loud so everyone can hear.

[Place the globe beside the Rainbow crosses]

Leader: As a sign of our prayer for the world and all God's people, we light a candle.

[Light a second candle next to the Romero crosses]

Part Three: Looking ahead to our new schools

Bishop Mark: We are God's family; filled with the Holy Spirit we proclaim together:

All say: We are part of a community, we build it together.

We aspire to be more.

We aspire to build strong communities in our new schools.

Bishop Mark: The Reading that we heard earlier told us how we are all part of God's household. We are part of a building that has the apostles and prophets for its foundations, and Christ Jesus himself for its main cornerstone. So we need not be afraid of the future. God will be with us in our new schools. We can look forward with hope.

Soon we will have our last moment of silence together. This is a time to think: What are your hopes? What do you aspire to be in your new school? Try to think of one thing you hope to be next term. *Silence*

Bishop Mark: We invite each of you to watch as we bless a Rainbow cross as a farewell gift from all of you to your primary or first school. May it remind you and those who receive it of all that you have learned and celebrated there.

We pray that whenever you look at it you will be given courage to become all that you aspire to be, in your new school and in the world.

Let us pray together for ourselves and our global family. In thanksgiving for the life of St Oscar Romero, we light this candle and ask him to pray for us.

[Light a third candle and place it by the Romero crosses]

**All say: Thank you, Lord, for giving us St Oscar Romero,
a prophet living in modern times.**

Thank you for his words that continue to inspire us.

Give us the strength and courage to 'be more'.

**All say: Thank you for all the wonderful things we have learnt at this school and
all the fantastic friends we have made.**

Thank you for all the wonderful teachers and other staff who have worked so hard for us.

Thank you for our parents who have helped us to grow up.

**Care for us as your children,
and help us not to worry about the changes ahead of us.
Help us to remember that you are always with us.**

**Help us to build a strong community in our new school.
Assist us as we try every day to be better global citizens,
thinking how our small actions can help to make the world a better place.
Amen.**

**Bishop Mark: May God who calls us and helps us to change our lives, bless us on our journey
ahead. And may St Oscar Romero pray for us. Let us go in the peace of Christ.**

All say: Thanks be to God.

Final hymn: Shout to the Lord