



TAWONGA, MALAWI

Tawonga is a ten-year-old girl, living with a disability. She lives in a village in northern Malawi in a region plagued by food insecurity and poverty. For most of her life, her parents have struggled to put meals on the table. Tawonga often had to miss school because she was too sick from hunger. The family also faced discrimination in their community due to her disability.

Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed. Her family now grows enough food to provide three meals a day, ending the struggle of malnutrition, and helping her thrive at school.

Tawonga, whose name means 'thank you', says her community is blessed with many resources, like rivers, fertile soil and hills. However, with dry spells followed by floods, armyworm infestations and crop failures, her parents struggled to make a living.

In 2016, Tawonga's parents heard about the A+ program run by Caritas Australia's partner, CADECOM (Catholic Development Commission in Malawi). They learnt irrigation farming and were given fertiliser and high-yield seeds. With these new techniques, their production of crops almost tripled.

With your help, this transformational program can continue to empower vulnerable women, men and children, and strengthen the communities around them. Let's Go Further, Together.

REFLECTION/HOMILY NOTES

The scriptures today are about life and about death. In the midst of a world with so much death, we believe in a God of life. Jesus says to Martha: "I am the resurrection and the life."

We are invited to implement God's vision of life. Jesus says: "Lazarus, come out." Jesus says to those around him: "Untie him and let him go." Our contemporary world needs us, the people of God, to respond to Jesus who invites us out of our tombs and into freedom; freedom to respond to the needs of others, freedom to let go of everything that keeps us from being fully alive.

Jesus wept at the death of Lazarus. We too have so much to weep over:

In a world of plenty, 6 million of Malawi's 19 million people require food aid.

23% of all child death cases in Malawi are related to under-nutrition.*

663 million of our sisters and brothers around the world do not have easy access to clean, safe drinking water.

The Project Compassion story this week features Tawonga from Malawi. In her eleven short years Tawonga, like

millions in our global family, has faced the challenges of food deprivation. She is living with a disability and walks with the aid of crutches. Her siblings used to push her three kilometres to school in a donated wheelchair. She was often sick and missed school due to hunger. 90% of youth living with a disability live in rural areas of Malawi, leading to fewer education opportunities.

During the East Africa Food Crisis Caritas Australia supported A+ program in Malawi three years ago. They now have enough food to eat and access to safer water closer to their home. Her family is benefitting from their ability to earn a reliable income from the sale of their crops. This has enabled Tawonga to continue her education and attend boarding school.

The hunger that their family and community once experienced has given way to new life.

Hearing Tawonga's story can also bring about a change in us. In what ways can we go further together to ensure the inherent dignity of all?*

PRAYER OF INTERCESSION

We pray for our sisters and brothers throughout the world who are denied their basic human rights. May we stand in solidarity as a global community, working courageously to promote justice and uphold the dignity of all people.

FUNDRAISING IDEA

Reinforce the importance of Project Compassion by drawing parishioners' attention to the 'What Your Donation Can Do' poster displayed in your parish. Reveal your parish's fundraising total so far and thank everyone for their generosity. Use the poster to explain how their donations can greatly benefit communities around the world.

BULLETIN NOTICE

Tawonga is a 10-year-old girl living with a disability, and struggling with food insecurity and discrimination in Malawi. Since participating in a Caritas Australia supported program, Tawonga's life has transformed.

*Source: 1. MVAC or UNICEF 2013 – from Cass' information 2. UNICEF: <https://www.unicef.org/malawi/media/601/file/Nutrition%20Statistics%20Factsheet%202018.pdf> 3. UN SDGs: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/water-and-sanitation/>