

Rachel McCarthy

Charity worker at CAFOD

Rachel has worked at CAFOD for the past three years. She is currently working in the Theology Programme, and previously worked in CAFOD's Campaigns team. She lives in South-East London, and has a special passion for knitting!



Tell us a bit about your current work

My current role is based on coordinating communications for the Theology Programme. My job is to create prayer resources to inspire people to reflect on CAFOD's work tackling poverty and injustice overseas. I previously worked in the Campaigns team, where I worked with others to encourage Catholics in England and Wales to put their faith into action, by signing action cards and meeting their MP.

What does a day in your life entail?

My work is hugely varied. A typical day at work will involve writing prayers to inspire supporters to make links between their faith and caring for creation, or giving to CAFOD at Lent. I also work with many other colleagues across CAFOD to inspire theological reflection, for example by producing videos, posting on social media and working with the Catholic media.

What is most rewarding about your job; what makes it all worthwhile?

It's really rewarding to write something that inspires others to pray and seek global justice. When I am writing, I always try to think about what would inspire me if I heard about CAFOD in my parish. I've long had a passion for global justice which is inspired by my faith, and I try my best to bring this through and write from the heart. I also love working as part of a small team, and learning from others' experience. Every day I learn something new!

How did you get to where you are today?

I studied Religious Studies at university, because I wanted to explore the links between religions and global movements for change. I really got stuck into campaigning at university- I would organise Fairtrade fashion shows and a peace festival on campus, to name a few! When I graduated, I volunteered with CAFOD as part of their Step into the Gap programme, where I was leading workshops with young people in schools, and it also included visiting development programmes overseas. It was an incredible year of my life, and one that really helped me to be where I am today.

What inspired/motivated/attracted you to get to your current position?

It was my faith and my love of writing. Growing up in a Catholic family, I've always been inspired by CAFOD prayers. I remember going to a Make Poverty History Mass in 2005, and I felt so uplifted and inspired that I've kept the liturgy service sheet ever since. It is a real blessing and a privilege to be doing a job I feel so passionate about.

Do you think faith and public life/politics are compatible?

Yes! In the words of Archbishop Desmond Tutu, *"An authentic Christian spirituality is utterly subversive to any system that would treat a man or woman as anything less than a child of God."* I believe our faith speaks calls us to love our neighbour and take a stand against injustice. One way of showing how much you care is to be involved in politics, to stand up for what's right and to hold our elected representatives to account.

What are the most important things you have learnt from your work and has anything surprised you?

I've learnt that change often doesn't happen quickly, and it can sometimes feel like an uphill struggle. However, there is a lot we can celebrate- for example the government's decision to uphold their 40 year promise to commit 0.7% to international development aid, thanks to thousands of ordinary people taking action.

What words of wisdom/advice would you give to students?

Follow your heart- work out what is it you most enjoy and fulfils you, and believe in yourself. You're the only one who can make your dream happen!