

Lent Prayers – 13th April Week 6

‘The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.’

Genesis 2:15

In this final week of Lent, we invite you to pray for an end to plastic pollution with an agreement on an international treaty and also for the work of Tearfund with churches and community groups in Latin America aiming to reduce pollution from waste in their local area.



An example of Tearfund’s work can be seen in Honduras, where they have been working alongside Pastor Wilfredo Vásquez, who leads the Church of God in El Rincón. He says: “We had a serious problem with trash, there was waste everywhere in our community. A lot of the rubbish was being burnt. Items included

plastics, clothes and nappies. Before there was never any garbage collection. As a church we have worked on cleaning up the community, and have run awareness campaigns about the use of plastics and the burning of garbage.”

Alongside Tearfund, Wilfredo has also worked with community leaders and the local government and now a rubbish truck goes through the town once a week collecting waste. A youth group from the church also collects and recycles plastic, while the other recyclable waste is collected at segregation points across the community. A banner hangs outside the church saying ‘Let’s be part of the solution, not the pollution’.

Yosely Andino, 48, who lives in El Rincón and used to burn her waste, once needed a nebuliser for her granddaughter Valery who suffered breathing difficulties. “One of my granddaughters suffered chest pain, due to smoke pollution, the air was contaminated, but now the way we do it [dispose of waste], it is no longer burned and she has improved in that she no longer gets sick.”

Two billion people, one in four, worldwide (including 40 million people across Latin America and the Caribbean) don't have access to safe waste collection and disposal. This devastating reality means that as many as one person every 30 seconds is dying globally from illnesses and diseases caused by living near dumped and burnt waste, such as heart disease, cancer and respiratory infections.

Unfortunately, UN talks on a treaty to end plastic pollution finished in December without an agreement in place, but will restart this year.

“While the waste collection and bins being installed in El Rincón will make a big difference to this community, there are hundreds of thousands more communities like this. We need far more action from governments and companies, which is why an ambitious treaty is essential,” said Miriam Moreno, Tearfund's Environmental and Economic Sustainability regional manager for Latin America and the Caribbean. “The treaty is a once in a lifetime opportunity to bring about an end to the worldwide problem of plastic pollution, this means driving down plastic production and making sure the rest is safely collected and recycled.”