

Trócaire

**We can't save
Maria's home but
with **your help** we
can save her life.**

Climate Change is not a distant threat for 6-year-old Maria,
it's a monster that rushes violently into her home...



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Trócaire

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**Please support our
LENT APPEAL TODAY**

Mrs Joan Sample,
Sample Street,
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Co. Sample.



"I panic when I hear the water is coming. I grab my daughter and run as fast as possible."

Miriam, Maria's mum.

This Lent we're fighting for justice for the world's first victims of climate change. Please will you join us by sending a generous Lent Gift of €<Ask1>?

March 2017

Dear <Personalised>,

Can you imagine a world where there's **no** argument about climate change?

Where everyone **knows** it's happening – because the evidence is right outside your own front door?

Miriam and her 6-year-old daughter Maria live in that world. Today.

They live on the *Barra del Cuyamel* in Honduras, the most climate-change-affected country in the world. On a sandbar. Climate change is not a *maybe* to them, it's not *debatable*... it's a hungry monster that comes rushing at high speed into their home and their lives with a deathly roar.

And right now, it's coming every three or four months.

Every time it comes, they must run for their lives, not knowing if the sea will take their home or spare it this time. They are exhausted. They are afraid.

But <Personalised>, you can help them! By sending an urgent Lenten Gift of €<Ask1> today, you can save lives and livelihoods like theirs by providing some of the most vulnerable communities in the world with emergency warning, evacuation and survival assistance systems.

Please will you dig deep and send a kind and generous Lenten gift to fight for justice for people like Miriam and Maria?

As you probably know, the world's first victims of climate change are also among its poorest. Miriam and her little girl are no exception. They live in a precarious community of 500 people strung out along a sandbar in ramshackle homes, trapped between the rising ocean on one side and a river on the other.

You might be thinking, “*Why don’t they move?*”

But of course, they can’t.

They are poor subsistence farmers. They have no money to buy safer land. All the higher, safer ground already belongs to wealthy landowners. Not one of the families on the *Barra del Cuyamel* has enough money to buy a **safe** home.

All they have is the sandbar . . . their simple homes . . . and life in the path of destruction. But <Personalised>, they also have Trócaire, and you.

Today, your Lenten Gift of €<Ask1> can help real people like Miriam, Maria and their neighbours, by funding a range of practical life-saving emergency measures. In fact, just to give you a few examples of the power of your gift...

... **as little as €10 is enough** to give a child like Miriam an emergency WASH KIT including soap, toothbrush, toothpaste, and underwear when disaster strikes.

... **just €15 can** provide a family of evacuees with a week of FOOD SUPPLIES.

... **and €20 can** help provide a community like Maria’s with the kind of EVACUATION training and equipment that saves lives during coastal floods.

<Just think of the huge impact **you** could have in the lives of people like Miriam and Maria. With a generous gift of €<Ask1>, you’ll be able to provide emergency essentials – and make a lifesaving contribution to one of our disaster preparation programmes as well. >

<Personalised>, in all honesty, I can’t begin to imagine the horror of living day-to-day in constant fear, knowing that it’s not a matter of **if**, but **when** you will have to run for your lives once again. But Miriam does, so I want to leave you with her words in the hopes they will move you to give today . . .

“Every time there is bad weather we have to evacuate. The water comes really fast. It brings timber, and if you’re hit, you’re really hurt. I panic when I hear it’s coming and Maria is really scared.”

With your help, we will keep them safe. Please send a generous Lent Gift today.

Thank you so much,

Sean Farrell

Sean Farrell

Director of International Programmes

P.S. <Personalised>, people like Miriam are fighting a losing battle against an ocean that’s greedily eating their homes, their fields and their livelihoods. We need your urgent help to be there for them when disaster strikes. Your lifesaving Lent Gift of €<Ask1> will help communities to prepare for disaster, provide them with practical evacuation systems and help them survive the next disaster when it comes. Please do all that you can. Thank you!

ROI Offices: Trócaire, Maynooth, Co. Kildare / 12 Cathedral Street, Dublin 1 / 9 Cook Street, Cork

NI Office: Trócaire, 50 King Street, Belfast, BT1 6AD

ROI Charity No: 20009601 NI Charity No: NIC 103321

www.trocaire.org

In 1998 the Barra del Cuyamel sandbar was hammered by hurricane Mitch. A young man of 18 called Santos Francisco "Chico" Diaz, dropped what he was doing and threw himself into helping the survivors. Since then he has dedicated his life to helping flood victims on los Barras.

Now a community leader, there is no better witness to the devastating effects of climate change than Chico. Just before Christmas, he asked us to pass a message on to you. Here it is...

December 2016

Dear friend of Cuyamel,

I want to send a message to Ireland and to the very kind people who support Trócaire.

I know Irish people are good people with a good heart. We need your support because any day we could die from flooding.

We are really grateful for your help.

I was born here on Barra del Cuyamel. When I was younger 150 families used to live here. Now only 85 remain, about 500 people.

In the 80s the beach was 800m wide, but now it is only 40 meters at most. The problems started with Hurricane Mitch in 1998, that was the first ever time I evacuated people. I was injured, and we were all out of our homes almost for a month.

In 2009 coastal erosion due to climate change washed away several houses and an earthquake sank the community, making the village more prone to floods.

If another hurricane like Mitch comes, we are doomed.

Nobody worried about us until Trócaire arrived here, they were truly pioneers. I don't even think that the Government knows that we are here.

I would love to live in a good safe house, I have dreamt about it. Until then, I will not give up. I will only rest when we have saved the community and resettled in a higher place.

Thanks to all the training and support from Trócaire the situation has changed radically in our communities.

Trócaire supported the digging of canals to improve the evacuation route. Those two kilometres of canals make a real difference in a tough moment.

Trócaire have been the only ones looking after us, we know it very well. I am saying this to you, but I would tell the same to the President of Honduras if he was here, it's the truth!

Chico's community is actually losing land at a rate of 1.5m a year!

Chico and other community leaders are working to pressure the Honduran government to purchase new land in a safe place and relocate the people of the Barra there. This is their only long term hope.

Being prepared for flooding and evacuation is a 24-hour job. If I get a phone call to say that a storm is coming, I tune into the radio for updates. From when we get the alert, it's critical. It can be a matter of hours.

We know the storm is coming, we know we will lose something. We can't eat. We can't sleep. We're so worried. The storm is coming and we need to save lives.

When a flood hits, I quickly fill the boat outside my back garden with 30 people at a time and evacuate them to safety over the river and across a narrow channel to dry land.

Once the storm is here, it is so important to stay calm, as we need to deal with children and the elderly to take them onto the boat. There can be problems because we don't have the money to maintain the boat, so the engine can break.

We have to be careful because of the waves, so we can't take many people. I can take 30 people, but 500 people live here and we have to evacuate five times a year.

This life is exhausting and frightening, because we know our community might be destroyed by the next storm. But life is also precious. So we do what we can. We

save lives. And we give thanks for Trócaire for helping us to do this, to save our people, and to continue helping those who have lost their homes.

To us, Trócaire means life and hope.

Thank you a thousand times,

Chico.

One of the many ways we're helping the people who live on Barra del Cuyamel is by providing them with new boats. This is a typical example of the way your support is turned into real, practical, hands on solutions for people threatened by climate change.

X For the people of Cuyamel, it's not a case of IF but WHEN disaster strikes next. We can't save their community, but we can save their lives. Please will you help?



Chico on his boat navigating part of the canal dug out by Trócaire, and funded by supporters like you.

Swallowed by the sea:

how Candido and Elvia lost their home...

Candido (70) and his wife Elvia (65) in front of their home of 40 years, before it was destroyed by a devastating 32 hour storm.



A lifetime in ruins - this is Candido and Elvia's home after the ocean swept through. Soon, even the wreckage will be washed away.

Candido has lived all his life on the Barra. He and Elvia have lived in the same house there for decades, fishing for food, growing crops, raising a family. They were happy.

Then the seas rose, and the land began to retreat. Storms brought flood after flood. The salty water destroyed the soil, so nothing would grow. But worst of all was the danger to their home and their lives.

Now Candido and Elvia's home is gone. Among the world's first victims of climate change, they have lost everything.

Thanks to Trócaire supporters like you, they escaped and survived. The future will be hard for them, but Trócaire will continue to support them as they build a new life.

“I've seen big changes here over the last 40 years. There were twelve houses in front of us, and now they are all in the sea. It feels so bad seeing the community destroyed by the ocean.” Candido

“I'll always remember our life on Barra del Cuyamel. We never suffered hunger because there are fish in the sea. We were happiest there. That's what I will remember.”

Candido

Another family in the path of this destruction needs your urgent help today. Please send a generous Lent Gift.