

Julius and Mary

First Sunday of Lent (Year C)

Their Story



Julius and his wife Mary live in a small village, about a 4-hour drive from the Malawian capital of Lilongwe, with their five children.

Their oldest child, and only daughter Emily, is 14 and a proud sister to four brothers. The older boys, Yohane and Issa, are aged 14 and 13. And the youngest, Idilisa and Collings, are aged eight and two. The older children attend school and help their parents around the house. They all enjoy playing outside but Issa especially enjoys football.

Just like other families in their village, Julius and Mary grow their own food to eat. Some grow mangoes, peanuts, black-eyed peas (cowpeas) and pigeon peas (a type of green pea) on a small plot of land. Others grow sweet potatoes and leafy vegetables (similar to spinach) in pots at their home. With their harvests, they will feed their family all year round.

If a flood washes away their crops, or a drought kills the plants, the family lose their only source of food.

“Climate change has caused a lot of problems in my life, compared to the past.” Julius tells us.

“When you are growing food for your family, every person lives on optimism. But now my household – and many others in the village – are facing hunger because of the unpredictable rainfall patterns. Some people only have one meal a day. Some sleep on an empty stomach. Our main problem is hunger.

“Last year I grew cowpeas, which I planned to sell. But the rains stopped earlier than expected and the crops dried up. It was a loss.”

Julius and his family received help and training to adapt to the changing climate.

“If CADECOM (SCIAF’s partner) had not come to our community, we’d have remained stuck in poverty. I am ready to adapt because of the knowledge acquired from CADECOM and SCIAF. We are clever farmers now. We will survive.”

By teaching organic farming techniques, providing hardier seeds and crops, and offering access to money to pay for essentials, Julius has had his faith in the future restored. He is now more resilient in the face of the climate crisis.

“My focus is on my children. If you educate your children, you secure the future”