

**The Ministry of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)
Order of Friars Minor Capuchin**



INFORM INTEGRATE INSPIRE

2015

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CAPS GO THE JPIC WAY

Br. Benedict Ayodi

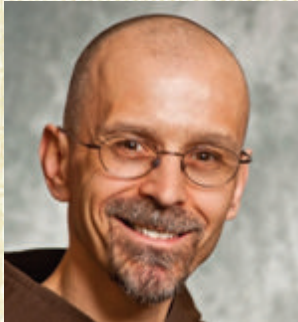
St. Francis of Assisi perceived God's creation as a whole, with each of its parts interrelated, interdependent and filled with the divine. Mutual respect, justice and peace were its natural hallmarks. The *Canticle of Creation*, written by Francis not long before his death, provides the foundation for his followers. For Francis, the constant awareness of the love of God for all life gives rise to living out the reality in one's own sphere. This spirituality guides Franciscans today where people are inspired to take action to restore justice, peace and integrity of creation in our world.

In recent years we have noted how the different dimensions of our charism are transverse. That is, they are intimately related, interdependent, and demand the presence of one another. If we are talking about our responsibility to evangelize, we must include our life with God, our fraternal life, formation, and JPIC in the reflection. If we are looking for ways to strengthen our commitment to JPIC, we must include

spirituality, pastoral activity, initial and ongoing formation, and fraternal concern in our plan as well.

Since being appointed to serve as the General Secretary (i.e., Director) of the JPIC Office of JPIC in July 2013, I have worked closely with JPIC Commission to set and implement our goals and objectives for the 2012-2018 sexennium. In 2014 we set our strategic plan based on "3 I's:" Inform, Integrate and Inspire. With these goals, we have carried out three major tasks: (1) the JPIC-Damietta Peace Initiative Peace Gathering in Pretoria, (South Africa); (2) a survey on social projects of the Order; and networking with FI, Roman VI, Pontifical Council and Catholic Relief Services (CRS).

I wish to thank the JPIC Commission members, our General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri and his Council for their support to our work. In the following pages you will read about our vision, mission and the activities of the General Office of JPIC during the year 2013-2014.



A NEW BEGINNING

Br. John Celichowski, OFM Cap.,

Our *Capuchin Constitutions* remind us that the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the message of salvation for the world; the foundational principle of the life of the Church; and the first rule of our life (see Chapter I). In his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, Pope Francis explains that, “The Gospel is about the kingdom of God (cf. Lk4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity” (180). The ministry of the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Office and Commission, then, is intimately linked not only to the authentic proclamation of the Gospel but also to the faithful living of our Capuchin vocation.

For that reason, our Commission has spent our first year trying to get a better understanding of the extent of JPIC ministries in the Order in their various dimensions: direct service, advocacy and formation or education. We have conducted a survey of the various social projects or direct services of the friars throughout the world and the preliminary results indicate that

this is currently our strength: friars and circumscriptions are committed to the Corporal Works of Mercy, especially among the poorest and most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters. We are grateful for those efforts and admire the dedication of the friars engaged in them.

At the same time, it appears that we have relatively few friars and circumscriptions engaged in the vital work of advocacy and working for changes in those social structures and conditions that leave too many people hungry, thirsty, ill-clothed, homeless, sick, incarcerated and in some cases even lacking the dignity of a proper burial. In relation to this, we also have inadequate initial and continuing formation in JPIC. Further, many of our circumscriptions and conferences do not have the structures in place to facilitate programs that could strengthen our direct services, advocacy and formation. In the remaining years of the sexennium, our commission will be working with Br. Benedict and collaborating with other secretariats and offices in the General Curia to address this. We hope that we can count on your support.



JPIC VISION AND MISSION

Br. Benedict Ayodi

Introduction

The values of justice, peace and the integrity of creation are integral to our way of life as Capuchin Franciscan friars and above all as Christians. Throughout biblical history and particularly in Jesus Christ, God reveals his desire to recreate humanity and all creation. The final document of the Synod of Bishops of 1971, *Justice in the World*, insisted that justice (which is linked to ecology and peace) is an integral part of evangelization. Our Constitutions affirm this commitment:

In keeping with the spirit of St. Francis we should be heralds of peace and salvation, not just proclaiming them by our words but spreading them by deeds inspired by fraternal charity (110.1).

We should promote respect for human rights and dignity, especially of the poor and outcast (110.3).

We live in very difficult times with wars and other conflicts,

climate change, secularization, consumerism, terrorism, and a host of other challenges. We must stand up as friars of this age to address these challenges and make a difference. This is only possible through deeper commitment to our values and charism of love and service to the needy. We must take advantage of the new enthusiasm and life injected in the Church by Pope Francis, who is emerging as a "Pope of the Social Gospel" with a Franciscan charism. Moreover, the upcoming PCO VIII, "On the Grace of Working," is an impetus and a challenge to us to rethink our mission and commitment to social issues that include justice, peace and the healing and defense of creation.

JPIC in the Documents of the Church

After centuries of separation from "the world," Pope Leo XIII signaled a new attitude on the part of the Church with the publication of *Rerum Novarum* in 1891. This encyclical gave specific attention to the social

context of the world, especially to the situation of workers. Other social encyclicals which followed *Rerum Novarum* formed an integral part of the development of Church's social teaching. These provide principles for social engagement of the Church, which is based on the living out of faith.

In the early phases of this development, primary concern was given to themes specifically dealing with issues of justice and peace. The Church later added a concern for ecology as environmental questions became more pressing, especially during the pontificate of John Paul II. This encouraged the inclusion of "Ecology" in our JPE (now JPIC) work (cf. Message of Pope John Paul II for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1990, *Peace with God the Creator, Peace with All Creation*).

As noted above, the final document of the Synod of Bishops of 1971, *Justice in the World*, insists that work for justice (which is linked to ecology and peace) is an integral part of evangelization:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation (6).

The statement from the Synod of Bishops in 1987 further develops the theme: "The Holy Spirit leads us to understand more clearly that holiness today cannot be attained without a commitment to social justice." In his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, Pope John Paul II commented that Christian Social Teaching "is an essential part of the Christian message...an essential element of the new evangelization".

Pope Francis

In his first six months in office, Pope Francis has shown a great interest in justice, peace and ecological issues. In his recent visit to Sardegna, Italy, he said, "If there's to be authentic promotion of the

person, work has to be guaranteed," insisting that work and human dignity are closely intertwined. The Pope also stressed ecological sensitivity. In his response to the crisis in Syria, the Pope called for vigil prayers and millions of people throughout the world joined him. In his first trip outside of Rome, Pope Francis chose to visit the Sicilian Island of Lampedusa to be in solidarity with thousands of immigrants now at our door-steps.

In a more recent peace initiative, the Pope invited the Presidents of Palestine and Israel, Mahmoud Abbas and Shimon Peres respectively, to the Vatican to pray for the gift of peace in their land. With this enthusiasm and support of Pope on social issues, I think we are in a blessed era. A Pope with Jesuit roots and using our Franciscan spirituality and charism is renewing the Church by his words and deeds. We can take advantage of this by re-energizing and refocusing our attention to the social issues that surround us.

Current engagement by the General Minister and Council

Our general ministers have written circular letters and convoked various plenary councils to animate the whole Order in the matter of JPIC. In reflecting on the need for CPO VIII, "On the Grace of Working," Br. Mauro reiterated some observations that he made in 2012:

We Capuchins, especially in countries of the southern world, are very involved in the pastoral apostolate. There are circumscriptions where the majority of the brothers are involved in parish work. Here and there, bishops are beginning to ask us to hand back the parishes

which at one time were entrusted to the friars because they now have a good number of diocesan priests. Let this be an opportunity to diversify our service to the Church and to the people of God, opening ourselves to new forms of evangelizing presence and paying particular attention to those forms that promote peace and dialogue among different groups and peoples.

In most of our circumscriptions, the greatest focus of our engagement is within the diocesan structures of the Church, mainly in parishes. Because parochial work is so demanding, the majority of our energies go into catechetical or sacramental work. While this is a basis of evangelization, we need to re-examine our approaches by focusing on new forms that are more holistic. JPIC offers these new avenues in ways that serves the people of God and sustain the lives of our friars.

Commitment to the Franciscans International (FI)

The Order is concerned not only about documents and structures; we are also committed to more concrete engagements in the area of JPIC. Our involvement with Franciscans International (FI), the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI), Franciscan Action Network, and other grassroots social initiatives are very important steps in this regard.

The seedlings of FI were planted in 1982 when two Franciscans, Fr. Dionysius Mintoff, OFM from Malta and + Sr. Elizabeth Cameron OSF from the USA, saw the potential for effective Franciscan engagement at the United Nations (UN). In 1989 The UN Department of Public Information



(DPI) officially recognized FI as a non-governmental organization (NGO); and FI opened an office in New York in 1990. In 1995 FI obtained the critical General Consultative Status as an NGO, allowing it to contribute oral interventions and written statements at the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) of the UN. In 1997 FI and the Dominicans for Justice and Peace opened an office at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland to focus on the promotion and protection of human rights in their civil, cultural, economic, political and social dimensions.

All Franciscans within the jurisdiction of The Conference of Franciscan Family (CFF) in Rome—the Ministers General of the Friars Minor, Conventuals, Capuchins, Third Order Regular and Order of Franciscan Seculars and the President of the Inter-Franciscan Conference of the Third Order Regular—are automatically members of FI. FI is funded by voluntary contributions from members of the Franciscan Family, as well as foundations. Members and circumscriptions of our Order have historically provided significant financial support to FI.

Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI)

The Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI) was founded by Capuchin friars in the Vice Province of South Africa and has been supported by the Order. At the meeting of the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) held on 18 December 2005, our former General Minister, Br. John Corriveau, joined the other members of the CFF to endorse DPI.

The DPI is a Franciscan interfaith-driven peace enterprise for Africa built around the core values of



nonviolence, reconciliation and respect for creation. A key part of the initiative is to form Pan-African Conciliation Teams (PACTS) throughout the continent. These are trained to monitor tensions and conflicts in their local areas and learn to intervene quickly when these tensions can give rise to violence. Currently DPI is operating in several African countries, including South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Zambia and Nigeria.

Roman VI

JPIC has been working closely with the Roman VI, a group of JPIC representatives from the whole Franciscan family: OFM, Conventual, Capuchin, OFS, and TOR. Together they coordinate and animate JPIC issues pertaining to the Franciscan Family; they work closely with the CFF, FI, DPI and other Franciscan organizations and initiatives.

On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the naming of Saint Francis as Patron of Ecology, the Roman VI has prepared a series of resources to help our brothers and sisters throughout the world to commemorate this celebration. A new website, www.francis35.org, was launched on 22 March 2014 highlighting these resources.

Conclusion

The JPIC vision and mission as outlined above are meant to build up our work in the areas of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. As a long-term vision, the JPIC Commission looks toward organizing the collaboration of JPIC animators and promoters at the conference, circumscription, and local fraternity levels, so as always to have concerns about justice, peace, and the integrity of creation as central elements at all levels of our Capuchin life. We strongly believe that the current times demand us to give more attention to the social issues that affect us and the people we serve.

We therefore appeal for your commitment and support in carrying out the following:

- Establish JPIC working groups in your circumscriptions. If these do not already exist, appoint a Coordinator at the conference level (cf. PCO V, 97).
- Integrate JPIC values and activities into formation programs and institutions like Postulancy, Novitiate, academic institutions and continuing formation (cf. PCO VI, General Chapter 2000).
- In the spirit of PCO VIII, "On the Grace of Working," encourage and motivate brothers to examine their lifestyles to be in conformity with just practices (e.g., fair and healthy working conditions for our workers), peaceful engagements (e.g., inter-religious dialogue) and sensitivity to the environment (e.g., environmentally-friendly use of resources like water, energy, transportation etc.) (PCO VII).

(Summary of the Presentation to the New Ministers at Frascati, June 2014) ■

THE STRUCTURE AND WORK OF JPIC IN THE ORDER

■ Br. John Celichowski

Our commitment to JPIC has its foundations in the Bible, Vatican II, Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, Franciscan Charism, Capuchin Constitutions and PCOs. In the work of animation of the whole Order in the area of JPIC, there are two entities: (a) The International Office, and (b) The International Commission. The General Minister and his Council appoint the Director of the JPIC Office, members and officers of the JPIC Commission, and appoint General Council liaison to the JPIC Commission.

The **JPIC Office** is a permanent structure of the Order. The Director is the principal agent assisting in the animation, formation and coordination of the Friars in the areas of justice, peace and care of creation at the international and conference levels, as well as in individual circumscriptions.

The **JPIC Commission** collaborates with the JPIC Director in an advisory and consultative role, representing the concerns, needs, interests and expectations of the international fraternity. The members of the Commission are expected to gather information about

JPIC concerns and initiatives from circumscriptions and other relevant places in order to properly fulfill their consultative and advisory role.

The **Local JPIC Coordinators and Commissions** are intended to mirror the international structures as the circumscription level. Ideally there should be one JPIC Coordinator and Commission for each circumscription of the Order. However, where this is not possible or where there is no existing JPIC infrastructure, it may be more practical to appoint a JPIC Coordinator and Commission for an entire conference, provided that the commission is representative of the member circumscriptions of the conference.

The **Local Coordinator** assists in the animation, formation and coordination of the friars in the circumscription/conference and serves as the primary point of contact with the JPIC Office in Rome. He also helps to bring JPIC concerns of the circumscription/conference to the JPIC Office in Rome. In addition, he collaborates with the Local JPIC Commission of the circumscription/conference to ensure that the programs of the JPIC

Office and Commission in Rome are implemented at the local level. He serves as local Capuchin contact for work with other Franciscan groups engaged in similar work (e.g. with Franciscans International in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process for a country), as well as other NGO's. Finally, he serves as primary JPIC contact for the provincial/custodial council or conference and will meet with them at least annually to keep JPIC concerns, programs and projects on their agenda.

The **Local JPIC Commission** collaborates with the Local JPIC Coordinator in an advisory and consultative role representing, the concerns, needs, interests and expectations of the fraternities in the circumscription/Conference. The members of the Commission are expected to gather information about JPIC concerns and initiatives from the friars in the circumscriptions in order to properly fulfill their consultative and advisory role. They also assist the Local JPIC Coordinator in the animation, formation and coordination of the friars in the circumscription/conference. ■

JPIC AND THE CURRENT SEXENNIUM (2012 - 2018)



Mission

The Mission of the International Office for JPIC is to assist the General Minister and his Council in their ministry of evangelizing the international fraternity by animating the work of the Conferences and Circumscriptions in the areas of justice, peace and the care of creation.

To fulfill this mission of the Order, in March 2013 General Minister Br. Mauro Jöhri nominated Br. Benedict Ayodi from the General Vice Province of Kenya to serve as the Director of the International Office for JPIC for the sexennium 2012 - 2018.

In early 2014 the General Minister also appointed members of the International JPIC Commission: Br. John Celichowski (PR Calvary- President), Br. James Donegan (CG Guatemala-Honduras-El Salvador), Br. Darwin-Francisco Orozco Orozco (PR Ecuador), Br. John Corneli Sulley (PR Tanzania), Br. Henryk Cisowski (PR Cracovia) and Br. Jacob Kani (PR Krist Jyoti, India). Following their appointment, the Office and the Commission developed a strategic plan for the sexennium and are in the process of implementing it.

Strategic planning

The JPIC Office and the JPIC Commission have established three broad goals for their strategic plan: *Inform, Integrate, and Inspire*.

Inform

The first goal is to inform the brothers at all the levels of the Order and their collaborators (employees, volunteers, benefactors, people whom we serve) about our mission, the JPIC involvement throughout the Order, and the models of JPIC work in general. Our first objective in this work was to create by 1 September 2014 a database of the social outreach projects sponsored by the circumscriptions of the Order. An online survey for this database of the various justice and peace activities of the Order was implemented; the data was collected and analyzed; and a sample from the data—the social

projects of one circumscription—will be presented in this report.

Integrate

The second goal is to integrate our JPIC involvement throughout the Order and with other Franciscan organizations such as Franciscans International (FI), the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI), the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) and Roman VI, as well as with the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, JPIC working groups, and other NGOs, Catholic and ecumenical organizations.

Our first objective in this area is to integrate the values of the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI) within the Order by first building the relationship between the Capuchin circumscriptions of Africa and the General Commission of JPIC with the DPI. This objective was substantially achieved at the DPI Peace Gathering held in Pretoria, South Africa, 23-25 October 2014. Friars from the Conferences EACC and CONCAO involved in the JPIC work, as well as other Franciscans participated in this event. The General Minister Br. Mauro, the General Councilor for Africa, Br. Jean-Bertin Nadonye Ndongo, and all the members of the JPIC Commission attended the summit.

The second objective is to carry out continental meetings of JPIC themes and JPIC initiatives throughout the sexennium, in order to create and strengthen a structure of JPIC animators and promoters in each Conference and circumscription. Planning is underway for its implementation.

Inspire

The final goal is to inspire the brothers to greater consciousness and involvement in JPIC work and values in all aspects of our lives. The first objective is to collaborate with the General Formation Secretariat and Commission to develop a plan for integrating JPIC into the *Ratio Formationis* by 31 December 2015.

A second objective is to suggest to the PCO VIII Planning Commission at least three ways to encourage

friars to embrace the grace of working in social projects and other JPIC-related activities beyond traditional pastoral or parochial work by 1 March 2015. This will involve the task of dialoguing with members of the Planning Commission to see what sort of JPIC-related input would be most useful in the planning of the PCO.

Some Signs of Encouragement

Our Order is committed to addressing the many JPIC challenges that confront us throughout the world. It is clear in our official documents and some concrete strategies, like writing letters, providing occasions for reflections, and our commitment to FI. At the moment there are more than 40 circumscriptions that have JPIC offices. Friars in our circumscriptions have been engaged in the area of JPIC through various movements and activities, such as education for peace; advocacy and mediation for justice and conflict resolution; ministry to the poor in the agricultural sector; support for migrants, the homeless and the landless; and environmental conservation programs.

Some Challenges

Despite the efforts made by the Order to animate the brothers toward greater involvement in JPIC work, there sometimes seems to be a certain lack of conviction and interest among quite a number of friars. Common reasons cited are:

- JPIC is a very large field, and it is often difficult to know where to start and what to do.
- JPIC concerns are complex and often sensitive. Hence they demand an expertise many brothers believe they do not possess.
- Many brothers do not feel sufficiently equipped to face these challenges.
- Those who are actually interested and are engaged in the JPIC activities do not find adequate support and encouragement from their confreres. At times they are even criticized. Thus they may become discouraged and become inactive.
- Some circumscriptions are not willing or able to set apart personnel for this specific ministry.

Other challenges include:

- Lack of organizational structures and budget planning for JPIC;
- Inadequate funds and lack of professionally-trained and experienced friars in JPIC;
- Prejudiced perceptions of JPIC by some brothers

or the belief that those involved in JPIC work are driven by particular political ideologies;

- Discontinuity in management and policy implementation;
- Lack of information about projects and how they relate to JPIC;
- Provincialism, individualism and self-fulfillment throughout the Order;
- Diverse concept of what it means to be a friar, including in JPIC issues; and
- Intercultural/intertribal conflict within the Order.

Looking Ahead

There may be various things that prevent us from active engagement in the area of JPIC. But the Church and the Order have nonetheless made it clear that we are called to help wake up our society to meet the challenges of JPIC. There is a need for “re-imagining religious life, the Church and her mission from the perspective of JPIC” (*Manual for Promoters of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation* published by the International Commission on JPE of UISG/USG, 1998). The quality of our commitment to JPIC also affects the quality and the significance of our Order in building the Kingdom of God.

PCO V mentions that one of the ways to encourage and enable Friars in the areas of JPIC is in the formation of experts (98). But it is not the only way, realizing that commitment to JPIC differs somewhat from social action or social ministry which often demand professional capabilities. Commitment to JPIC, while admitting the importance of professional ability at some stage, is about a way or style of life, how one personally and communally lives out the JPIC values. Therefore, we all need **intellectual conversion** (eager to study in order to better understand JPIC); **moral conversion** (willingness to put JPIC principles into action); and **spiritual conversion** (conviction that part of our obedience is to participate in the vision and mission of Christ).

To develop the expertise and deepen our passion for JPIC work, we can utilize existing institutions like FI and the Damietta Peace Initiative. The International JPIC Office and Commission are at our disposal to help make efforts to find suitable ways for the animation of the friars. At the same time, friars and circumscriptions are expected to collaborate with the JPIC Office and Commission and the Office. We do what is possible within the framework of our limitations and to the horizons of our opportunities and potential. ■

A FRAMEWORK FOR JPIC WORK

Although the Order's Justice, Peace and Ecology (JPC) Commission was formed in 1982, it took many years before it developed a formal and systematic approach to its work. Cardinal Joseph Cardijn of Belgium had proposed a method for a *revision de vie* (reflection on our life as Christians), and provided us with the following three steps: (1) See; (2) Judge; and (3) Act.

This method is designed to first examine the life of an individual and then that of a community. As it is used, the root causes of marginalization and extreme poverty became more apparent, along with the various courses of action that can be followed to help the poor to help themselves out of poverty.

"See, Judge, Act" on the Individual Level

See: To see means not only to look carefully at the surfaces of people and things but also to examine what enters one's receptive systems of the senses and the brain.

Since perceptions are most powerful when they are immediate, the places where we perceive are crucial. For Capuchins, our perceptions should reflect the points of view of our brothers and sisters who are poor and marginalized. Since many friars do not originate from places of poverty and marginalization, we need a process to change the social locations of our perceptive fields. Sometimes the process of initial formation may tear us away from those critical situations. In such cases intellectual formation, as important as it is, may lead to a further removal of ourselves from the poor and marginalized instead of leading us towards them with increased insight.

This change in our perceptive fields requires deep and on-going immersion into such situations so that we really have the chance to perceive with all our senses (seeing as mentioned above is perception with all our senses). Seeing is not an entirely intellectual act: it also involves our feelings in a situation. Our

concrete perceptions of marginalization, poverty and the degradation of nature, intellectually and emotionally, are keys to seeing.

Judge: The real perception of a situation calls for a judgment (of the situation, not necessarily of people). In order to make good judgments we need to gather adequate information. Judgment requires us to look into history, to ask people with experiences of the local situation, as well as up-to-date and relevant scientific analyses of the situation.

Judgment also demands that we consider who will be our potential allies in searching for change. Allies can be found within and outside of the boundaries of the Order or the Church. Collaboration is possible, even if we do not agree on all the positions of our collaborative partners. Collaboration to reach a shared goal, while disagreeing on some points which are not essential to the achievement of that goal, can even be a good start to experiencing and modeling the peace building process.

While intellectual reaction and emotional discernment are very important in the process of judging a situation, it is important not to forget to bring all these concerns to the attention of God and to ask for the illumination of the Holy Spirit. Prayer and meditation, raising our concerns and preoccupations and lifting our hopes and fears to the Lord will help us to find the right ways ahead. They will help us not to lose our patience or our love for all God's people - even those who might oppose our initiatives and our involvement.

Act: All the seeing and judging in the world is futile unless it is followed by concrete and strong action. This means that we need to get organized! It requires us to assess our resources in a realistic way, knowing that we cannot do everything and cannot do it all on our own. Authentic action means looking for strong partners wherever we can and

work with them. Networking is crucial. We work not for the sake of the Capuchin Order but rather for the sake of the dispossessed and displaced people and the fractured earth on which we all depend. We give hope by lighting a light, a concrete and tangible sign of hope for those living in despair and in the shadow of untimely death.

Concrete, strong actions help us to focus on what we are able to achieve. They also mean not to lose patience when it seems that hardly anything is moving.

“Listen, Decide, and Act Together” on the Community Level

The methodology of “See, Judge, Act” needs to be recast when we are dealing with communities, and even more with those who are poor and marginalized. Our roles in and with a community need to be redefined so that we move from being the ones who do everything to those who accompany others: we listen to and empower the community.

Listen: This first step is meant to be a community exercise. We need to help establish a sense of community where it does not yet exist. Trust must be established within the community so that people feel encouraged to speak. A community also needs a vision to understand its purpose. Developing a vision with and for the community goes with trust-building.

It is very important that members of the community have time to tell their stories and believe that others are listening to them. Listening is not the mere absorption of acoustic signals. It needs a great amount of empathy to encompass peoples’ stories, sufferings and feelings. Empowerment is important for building a community, giving the necessary skills to people so that they can move on their own, learning skills in terms of how to interact in community, how to organize it, and how to tackle concrete issues identified by the community. This in turn requires brothers who are highly skilled in various fields of knowledge.

Decide: Out of its vision, the community identifies the issues and projects it wants to address. Any friar in charge will require a great deal of humility and minority to subordinate himself to the decisions of the community, which might identify something never envisioned. In order to identify a need which the community is really capable of dealing with and to make a good decision as to how to approach it, it

may be necessary to organize some input in terms of empowerment. Here, too, collaboration with other people and organizations is crucial.

Prayer in community is important in this step: “What the gospel is calling us to do and how we can translate that into the daily life of this community?” Sometimes we will need to work with people of different faiths, cultural backgrounds and traditions. So it will be necessary to embrace their richness and to make them fruitful for the community as a whole.

Act—Together: A sober and realistic view on the capacities and resources is important, so as not to overstretch people and oneself. The community needs to get organized. Structures are unavoidable, but they should be kept as simple, democratic, and non-hierarchical as possible, to ensure the inclusion of everyone in the community process.

The community may need some assistance from other groups. This will also help in the empowerment of the people. The communities should be open to anyone of good reputation and standing in the relevant field of expertise. We need to know whether the measures put in place can really achieve the envisioned goals. After a sufficient period of implementation we need to evaluate what we have achieved.

“See, Judge, Act” within the Capuchin Order

The “See, Judge, Act” method has proven to be a powerful tool. However, because it was first developed for reflection on the life of individuals, it carries the danger of being limited to this simpler and more comfortable level. Today it is essential that we adapt this method to communities. With this shift of perspective, our role as Capuchins within the communities we serve changes significantly. We become facilitators and moderators—servants of a community process—instead of agents acting on the communities. Living with the poor and witnessing the gospel can gain an additional aspect here.

Tangible changes in the situations of the poor and marginalized can be achieved by each friar working on the individual level, using the three steps—“See, Judge, and Act”—and through our commitment to a community-based approach—Listen, Decide and Act Together.” ■

JPIC ACTIVITIES 2014

The First Meeting of the JPIC Commission (10-12 March 2014, Rome)



JPIC Commission with Br. Mauro Jöhri and Br. Jean-Bertin Nadonye

The General Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) had its first meeting of the 2012-2018 sexennium at the International College in Rome, 10-12 March 2014.

The purposes of the meeting were to provide an orientation for the newly-formed Commission and to create a strategic plan for its activities. The orientation portion of the meeting included remarks by Br. Mauro Jöhri and Br. Jean-Bertin Nadonye, who outlined the priorities of the General Curia with respect to JPIC. Presentations were made by Br. Jaime Rey, Vice-secretary for Formation, and Br. Aklilu Petros, Promoter of Solidarity, to encourage inter-departmental collaboration with the Offices and Commissions of Formation and Solidarity. Br. Joe Rozansky, OFM also gave a presentation on the experiences that our OFM brothers have had with the spiritual and structural dimensions of JPIC and our Franciscan vocation.

The Commission then discussed plans for the structures and activities of JPIC in our Order for the next two years. The Commission organized this strategic plan around three goals: **Inform**, **Integrate**, and **Inspire**. Consequently, the Commission decided to create a database of the social projects of the Order around the world to **inform** the friars as well as our collaborators and benefactors about the good work that we are already doing. In order to collect this data, the Commission

planned to conduct an online survey of our provinces and custodies.

In an effort to **integrate** our JPIC promotion with the mission of the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI), the Commission decided to collaborate with and promote the values of the DPI in order to foster unity, reconciliation, peace and justice within and outside the Order. This effort began with an international peace gathering with the DPI on 23-28 October 2014 in Pretoria, South Africa. The provincials and custodes in Africa were requested to send the JPIC promoters from their circumscriptions to this meeting. The Commission also explored the possibility of carrying out continental JPIC encounters in other parts of the world in the future.

In its efforts to **inspire** the friars and those we encounter with JPIC values, the Commission decided to work with the Secretariat of Formation and the General Formation Council in their updating of the *Ratio Formationis* in order to include an orientation to JPIC in the initial and ongoing formation of all our brothers. The Commission also decided to provide input for the Eighth Plenary Council of the Order on "The Grace of Work."

The Commission meeting was graced with a Mass to pray for our JPIC-related work and spiritual growth. Br. Mauro Jöhri presided. We pray for continued spiritual and fraternal growth in this important work.

25th Anniversary of Franciscans International (FI)



Br. Markus OFM (left), Br. Benedict OFM Cap (Center) and Mgr. Fridolin Ambongo, OFM Cap (Bishop DRC)

On 17-21 March 2014, Franciscans International (FI) celebrated the 25th Anniversary of its recognition as a nongovernmental organization (NGO) by the United Nations. Br. Benedict Ayodi represented the Capuchins and FI's Board of Directors.

FI began in the early 1980's and was officially recognized by

the UN Department of Public Information as an NGO in 1989. Since its beginning, FI has worked at the United Nations (UN) to address human rights injustices that impact on the poorest and most vulnerable. FI is inspired by Franciscan values envisioning a global community in which the dignity of every person is respected, the resources are shared equitably, the environment is sustained, and nations and peoples live in peace. FI's priority areas in advocacy are extreme poverty, the environment and peace-building, which it addresses from an integrated rights-based approach.

To celebrate this occasion, FI organized several events at its office and at the UN in Geneva. On March 19 FI held a side event at the UN on "Extreme Poverty and Human rights."

On behalf of the General Minister, Br. Mauro and the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchins, JPIC OFM Cap congratulates FI for its 25th anniversary. We wish you many blessings on your work in the next quarter of a century and beyond at the UN, Pace e bene.

The CONCAO Meeting (Kinshasa, DRC)



The conference of the French and Portuguese speaking Capuchin Ministers in Africa (CONCAO) held their annual meeting in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in the beautiful capital city of Kinshasa on 5-9 May 2014. The meeting brought together ministers from DRC, Benin, Angola, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Gabon, Chad, Central African Republic, Cape Verde and Nigeria. During the meeting, Br. Benedict Ayodi presented the JPIC strategic plan for Africa for the year 2014-2015. All attending Ministers committed to strengthening the values and mission of JPIC in their circumscriptions.

The EACC Meeting (Kampala, Uganda)

Two days after the completion of the CONCAO meeting, the English-speaking EACC Capuchin ministers held their meeting on 12-17 May in Kampala, Uganda. Provincials and custodes from Tanzania, Eritrea, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Sudan and South Africa attended this meeting. The plans of JPIC for Africa were also presented to the ministers. Like their counterparts in CONCAO, they committed to supporting the mission of JPIC in their circumscriptions.



Franciscans at the “People’s Climate March”



On September 21, 2014 more than 300,000 people turned out for the “People’s Climate March” in New York City just days before many of the world’s leaders were expected to debate environmental action at the United Nations Climate Summit. This event was said to be the largest climate march in history. High-profile environmentalists including Bill McKibben, Leonardo Di Caprio, Jane Goodall and Vandana Shiva marched alongside policymakers such as UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and former U.S. Vice President Al Gore.



Capuchins and Jesuits at the march

Thousands of Catholics, Jews, Muslims, Hindus and indigenous people were in attendance. Many Franciscans, led by the Franciscans Action Network (FAN), marched together singing and waving placards calling for protection of mother earth. Br. Benedict Ayodi represented the Capuchin friars. He was joined by many other Franciscans from the USA and some FI representatives from New York and Geneva.

Many Franciscans participated in this march to highlight the reality of climate change and to underscore that we stand at a critical moment of Earth’s history. Social, economic and environmental crises call for an assessment of our current situation and for the discovery of more effective ways to promote responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, to future generations and to our planet.

We as Franciscans following in the footsteps of our Father Francis are in solidarity with all others calling for policies and actions to protect and conserve our environment. We need to act now because we have only one atmosphere, our planet mother Earth.

Inter-Franciscan Peace Gathering, Pretoria (23 - 25 October 2014)

Padre Pio Friary of the Capuchins in Pretoria, South Africa is the birthplace of the Damietta Peace Initiative (DPI) formed by Br. Donal O’Mahoney. It houses the offices of the DPI. Br. Kees Thonissen OFM Cap., DPI Director and Director of the Padre Pio Spirituality Center, welcomed the members of Franciscan Family from various countries for an Inter-Franciscan Peace

Gathering focused on building justice, peace and care for God’s creation.

Franciscans from South Africa, USA, Italy, Tanzania, France, Switzerland, India, England, Nigeria, Poland, Kenya, Benin, Mozambique, Colombia, Ecuador, Guatemala, Ivory Coast, Madagascar, South Africa/

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Albania, Zambia, Ireland, Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Angola and Philippines participated.



Some of the participants with Br. Mauro

Br. Sean Cahill, Custos of the Custody of South Africa, welcomed everyone. Br. Benedict Ayodi, Director of the JPIC Commission, joined in the welcome and thanked participants for their efforts to come to South Africa at a time when the African continent is facing a host of challenges. The proceedings were in English, with translations in French and Spanish.

Br. Kees gave a series of presentations to help provide some theological and spiritual foundations for the work of the coming days. In the evening, Br. Mauro Jöhri, General Minister of the Capuchin Order, presided over the Eucharistic celebration.



Br. Kees Thonissen OFM Cap (in checked shirt) and some participants during a session

Next morning Rev. William Slattery OFM, Archbishop of Pretoria, addressed the assembly. He noted that JPIC is an essential element of the Church's evangelization ministry. Franciscans offer the world simplicity, frugality and freedom, humility and minority, gratuity and generosity, in contrast to the world's consumerism and materialism, pride and competition, and the impersonal "logic of the marketplace." We offer cordiality, magnanimity and mercy against the partisanship and the "virtual" world. We offer reconciliation and pardon against hatred, tension and exploitation. We offer joy in our vocation, depth and a life of reflection against uncritical existence and an often superficial media. He

added that living in justice and peace demands that we allow ourselves to be evangelized.

The participants provided a brief overview of the JPIC efforts in their countries. Many noted the lack of a JPIC office, commission or any sort of infrastructure. At the same time, friars and other Franciscans are doing JPIC work, particularly in the form of social projects. They encounter many problems and challenges.



Most Rev. William Slattery OFM and Br. John Celichowski

Br. John Celichowski, OFM Cap., President of the JPIC Commission, presented an overview of the JPIC structures within the Capuchin Order. He noted that a significant weakness today is the lack of a strong JPIC infrastructure within the Order. Most notably, there are many conferences and circumscriptions that do not have a JPIC office or commission. This makes communication difficult and hinders the effectiveness and coordination of our efforts.

Br. Henryk Cisowski, OFM Cap. (Province of Krakow, Poland) gave a presentation on one of the many fine social projects. In Krakow, the Capuchin friars have a large center for people who are homeless that provides counseling and other support. They also operate a large meal program with the Felician sisters. They offer laundry, shower, clothing, healthcare, job search and other services. In addition, they provide transitional and supportive housing in other apartments. They are currently developing a farm program. The Krakow project relies on a mixture of private donations and tax designations for support.

Enkeleda Papa and Sr. Odile, FMM of Franciscans International (FI) shared with participants the history and work of the NGO. The mission of FI is to be "a Franciscan voice at the United Nations, protecting the vulnerable, the forgotten and our wounded earth." FI's work is focused on advocacy and education, particularly with Franciscans at the grassroots. Enkeleda and Sr. Odile emphasized that it is critical for Franciscans at the

grassroots to communicate with FI about those concerns that can properly be addressed at the UN.

Br. Jude Winkler, OFM Conv., a member of the FI Board of Directors, gave a presentation on the restructuring of FI, which was necessitated by a significant drop in donations in the wake of the global financial crisis in 2008. Br. Mauro Jöhri strongly encouraged those gathered and the wider Franciscan Family to support the work of FI, including by providing financial support. He noted that the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF) is united in its support of FI.



A session with Br. Mauro

Br. Darwin Orozco OFM Cap shared how FI had been very helpful in supporting the Franciscan Family in Latin America.

Br. Michael Lasky, OFM Conv. next outlined how his province engaged in a 12-year process to develop a spirit of renewal in JPIC. In the USA, he remarked, the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) does advocacy on the national level and creates “tables” where members of the Franciscan Family can gather to focus on particular issues: the federal and state budgets as moral documents; food deserts and food security, etc. FAN also engages in acts of civil disobedience in Washington, DC; promotes the spirituality of JPIC; and collaborates with FI on particular issues, such as human trafficking.

Mr. Attilio Galimberti of the Order of Franciscan Seculars (OFS) talked about the work of the Roman VI and their efforts to promote JPIC from Rome. Speaking of JPIC in the OFS, he noted, is a challenge given that the seculars number over 400,000 and are in over 100 countries. Peace, he maintained, is more a value than a concept; and values are a dynamic part of a culture. The OFS vision of peace is in their Rule and Constitutions. The Rule develops a spirituality of peace, e.g. going “from the gospel to life and life to the gospel;” and it includes a path of continual conversion. The OFS Constitutions urge, among other things, nonviolence and collaboration with institutions that promote peace. He recalled that an OFS fraternity in Kigali, Rwanda was reduced to perhaps 10 members after that country’s civil war and genocide;

but after committing themselves to reconciliation, they now number about 400.



Br. Mauro with members of FI and Roman VI

The next day’s sessions began with a presentation on JPIC in the Franciscan Family in India (AFFI) by Br. Nithiya Sagayam, OFM Cap. He recalled that India has a very large Franciscan Family. It is a land of contradictions and manifold problems like discrimination, social divisions, and economic gaps. He talked about his work in India, especially on the Food Security schemes.

Later the participants were given a presentation on the Damietta Peace Initiative by members of the DPI Staff. The DPI is focused on reconciliation and building bridges between people and communities. They do this primarily by forming Pan-African Conciliation Teams (PACTs) through training in grassroots communities across Africa, respecting and celebrating diversity and collaborating with groups who have similar vision and mission. Their goal is to promote a culture of non-violence as an instrument of personal and social transformation. Today there are 105 PACTs in South Africa, 88 in Kenya, 26 in Nigeria and 23 in Zambia. DPI needs more Franciscans to be actively engaged, especially as companions for their PACTs. It was suggested that DPI be included in the initial formation programs of the Franciscans and can be incorporated into the lives of the communities.

Sr. Mary Francis of Kenya shared the work of JPIC-Franciscan Africa. The office was established in 2007 in the wake of the World Social Forum in Nairobi, through FI and the OFM JPIC Office. Its mission is to be a center for advocacy, lobbying, communication, cooperation and animation for the Franciscan Family in Africa. Working in partnership and collaboration with FI, Edmund Rice Advocacy Network, DPI, Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), and other NGOs, JPIC-Franciscan Africa engages in a variety of programs, including: civic education, human rights training, Spirit of Assisi, Conversations for Social Change, water stewardship, tree planting, and formation for Franciscans and the wider community. Sr. Mary Francis gave a very moving testimony of the dangers that she had taken in her JPIC work, even to the point of risking her life.



Conference participants at Soweto Memorial

Visit to Soweto

On 26 October the group had the opportunity to spend the morning and afternoon visiting Soweto (Southwest Township) outside of Johannesburg. In addition to being the home of many of those who struggled against Apartheid, Soweto is where a seminal uprising took place in 1976.



DPI/JPIC Meeting, Pretoria, S.A.

Students protesting the oppressive system of Bantu education were killed by South African Police as they engaged in marches and school strikes. Dozens of young people gave their lives, including a boy named Hector Pieterse. Near the place where he was shot, there is now a museum that bears his name. Nelson Mandela's home is also nearby. The simple three-room brick structure is now a museum and memorial to this extraordinary man, who emerged over a quarter century of imprisonment and hard labor to lead his nation as its first black President.

A ten-minute drive from *Mandiba's* house is Regina Mundi Catholic Church, a ministry of the OMI priests. Regina Mundi served as a sanctuary and meeting place for Soweto residents during the uprising. Bullet holes in the church's ceiling remind all visitors of the police shooting to disperse those who had gathered there. It was moving to kneel down and pray for a moment in thanksgiving for the Church's witness there and to remember those who gave their lives for the liberation of their nation from the grinding oppression, violence and the other injustices of Apartheid.

The Capuchin JPIC Meeting with General Minister (25 October, 2014)

During the inter-Franciscan gathering, there was also a Capuchin JPIC meeting with the Minister General, Br. Mauro Jöhri. General Councilor for Africa Br. Jean Bertin, JPIC Director Br. Benedict Ayodi, all the members of the JPIC Commission, and friars engaged in JPIC work in various African countries participated.



JPIC Commission members and Coordinators

The group briefly reviewed the strategic plan for the current sexennium and received an update on the survey of social projects of the Order that was conducted earlier in the year. Br. Jim Donegan reported that the JPIC Commission received 106 responses to the survey. It was acknowledged that this was a small sample of the many social projects and that the Order needed to find a way to share the results of the survey with the friars and to allow them to continue to contribute information, e.g. by posting them on the General Curia/JPIC website. Br. Mauro suggested that results from the survey would be particularly relevant to PCO VIII, on "The Grace of Working." He also noted that the General Council, Economo and the Economic Solidarity have recommended that the JPIC Commission needs to be more involved in the process of seeking grants for social projects from Economic Solidarity and to work with the international funding agencies.

Br. Mauro revisited some of the JPIC Commission's work in recent years, including the meetings on migration in Bangkok, Krakow and Lima in 2011. He observed that African Friars are taking charge of many social projects; he also mentioned several concerns that had been raised by recent visitations. He noted that many circumscriptions do not have a JPIC Commission, and

even if there are brothers working in this area, some of the work is not very well transmitted to concrete action. The JPIC Commission and their work, he concluded, suffer because of the lack of support from the circumscriptions and conferences.

Br. Mauro noted that the Order had organized a number of JPIC conferences over the years, but it was hard to discern many concrete results beyond the production of documents. In planning these conferences, he cautioned, we need to focus on concrete follow-up and the integration of their work in the life of fraternities throughout the world. It is not enough to publish and show our brothers what we are doing. We need to build upon it. The three General Ministers of the First Order communities have noted a certain malaise in the JPIC work and a lack of collaboration, noted Br. Mauro.

Br. Mauro then invited the friars to consider several questions: Do we need to develop a single JPIC Office and Commission for the Franciscan Family? Should there be a JPIC theme for Africa? Can the work of JPIC and DPI be better integrated? Friars then broke into three language groups (English, Portuguese and French) to reflect on these issues and later came with several observations.

The friars then considered further steps to follow this gathering. While they did not discern a central theme to guide their work, they did recommend that JPIC work on the continent be organized on the conference (EACC and CONCAO) level, with the JPIC Director assisted by a commission composed of friars from each of the member circumscriptions.

Regarding the Damietta Peace Initiative, it was observed that while DPI is focused on peace and reconciliation, it needs to be integrated into JPIC and more fully infused with Franciscan values. Further, DPI needs to move beyond the Capuchins and move to the entire Franciscan Family. This will require a change in structure, statutes, etc. The DPI model can also be adapted for other work in different contexts, e.g. in our own Capuchin fraternities that may be marked by conflict between friars of different groups. DPI needs to evolve to maintain touch with people at the grassroots.

Attilio Galimberti, OFS, a member of the JPIC Commission of the Franciscan Family, concluded the day by sharing some of the Roman VI's work. The group promotes collaboration, shared projects, and better communication and complement each other's strengths and weaknesses.

Meeting of the Second JPIC Commission (27-29 October 2014, Pretoria)

The meeting of the second JPIC Commission began after the Franciscan Peace Gathering with brief reports from the Commission President and the Director of the JPIC Office. Br. John Celichowski thanked Br. Benedict Ayodi for his leadership of the office and Br. Jim Donegan for his great contributions to the development of the online survey of the social projects of the Order.

In his report, Br. Benedict noted that he needed clarification from the Minister General regarding Social Projects Fund. He reported that he, Br. Jim and Br. Darwin Orozco were all planning to participate in the upcoming Inter-Franciscan JPIC Training Course in Quito, Ecuador. A similar course is being planned for Manila, Philippines in 2015.



JPIC Commission Members: (L to R) Darwin (Ecuador), James (Guatemala), Henrik (Poland) Sulley (Tanzania), John (USA), Benedict (Kenya), Jacob (India)

The Commission spent time reviewing the implementation of the Sexennium Strategic Plan that was formulated at our March 2014 meeting and subsequently endorsed by the General Minister and Council. We reviewed the data received from the survey of the social projects of the Order and decided to tabulate it in order to rank the ministries in the revised list and select some models that could be highlighted for the rest of the Order. The goal of the Commission was to compile and publish a report for the General Curia by 1 January 2015 and to post the report online, along with a world map showing the locations of the surveyed ministries, as well as an exposition of some of the model projects by 1 July 2015.

Since Br. Mauro had requested that the Commission provide some input on JPIC concerns and issues related to PCO VIII, we spent some time doing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis and came up with the following recommendations:

- Encourage Friars to engage JPIC/social work
- Emphasize the need to support ourselves as far as possible through our own work, especially at a time when parish ministry may be less available.
- Pay a living wage as a minimum to anyone who works in our friaries and ministries
- Empowering Friars by training them in the skills of managing social projects and development/fund raising in ways that are integrated with our Capuchin Franciscan values.
- Give stronger witness to JPIC values in our lifestyles by:
 - Moving away from individualism and excessive work, to the detriment of fraternal life.
 - Developing a stronger spirit of contemplation, reflection and prayer.
 - Avoiding middle class, consumeristic lifestyles and moving toward those that are simpler and closer to the poor.
 - Promoting stronger transparency, accountability, solidarity and fraternal spirit (e.g., by ensuring that money we earn in our ministries goes to the fraternity so that we do not create classes of "rich" friars/friaries and "poor" friars/friaries).
 - Stronger witness to fraternal spirit by avoiding prejudices of tribe, ethnicity, province, etc. and treating our brothers with equity.

- Doing as much as possible of the domestic work of our friaries ourselves.
- Renewing our spirit and practice of regular fasting.
- Modeling environmentally responsible practices (e.g.: recycling, composting, water and fuel conservation).
- Address the problem of extreme poverty by:
 - Helping the unemployed and underemployed to find suitable work.
 - Fighting for the human rights of people who are exploited economically.
 - Supporting the development of social entrepreneurship projects.
 - Providing spiritual support and formation for people in the face of the extreme spiritual poverty wrought by secularism, materialism and consumerism.

The Commission then discussed the problem of funding for social projects at a time when the funds of the Economic Solidarity Office are dwindling. The Commission proposed two ways to address these issues. The first was to encourage the Minister General and Council to appoint a JPIC Liaison to the team of Project Managers for Economic Solidarity. This liaison would work with the Project Managers to: receive proposals from Friars/circumscription; evaluate and approve proposals; and require and receive reports using a simple standard form. The Commission recommended Br. John Celichowski for this role. In time, it may be necessary for the Order to add a Social Project Manager with requisite skills to work with Economic Solidarity Fund and act as a consultant for Friars and a contact person for funding agencies.

The second recommendation was to create a special JPIC/Social Projects Fund within Economic Solidarity and to provide the suggested criteria for funding social projects. The JPIC, alone or in collaboration with Economic Solidarity, would set the criteria. Information on projects would be available through an enhanced JPIC website. The JPIC Office would work with the General Curia to develop a webpage on www.ofmcap.org that would showcase some of these projects.

Another follow-up from the Commission's March meeting was to come up with some ways to include JPIC concerns in the *Ratio Formationis*. Members made a number of suggestions:

- Creating a more just environment within our fraternities and ministries by establishing policies and practices that will protect the vulnerable, esp. minors, from abuse
- Creating a JPIC curriculum for all levels of formation
 - Initial Formation
 - Inviting younger friar to serve as *Economo* of the local fraternity to learn values of transparency, accountability, etc.
 - Training in manual work.
 - Engaging friars in the process of planning, managing and evaluating simple social projects.
 - Experiences of intentional insertion into poor communities.
 - During Advent, Lent and special times avoid consumption of meat and give the money saved to the poor.
 - Engaging the brothers in a communally discerned social justice issue and project.
 - Continuing Formation
 - Prayer life that mentions contemporary issues and that keeps God at the center of a lifestyle that is simple, austere, joyful and committed
 - Community participation in discussing the just compensation of lay employees.
 - Socially responsible consumption (e.g., purchase of “green” and fairly traded items).
 - Finding ways to develop a culture of the preferential option for the poor and solidarity with them.
 - House chapters: reflect on JPIC issues and discern some concrete actions.

- Ongoing communal critical evaluation of our lifestyles.
- Stronger witness to JPIC values in our lifestyles.

The Commission also met with Br. Kees Thonissen and the staff of the Damietta Peace Initiative to evaluate the joint JPIC/DPI gathering that had just been completed. Everyone agreed that the gathering went well overall. There was a good spirit among the participants, and the Commission expressed their gratitude to the staff of DPI and the Padre Pio Center for all of their work and gracious hospitality. At the same time, a number of challenges were noted. After considering them, we considered the following as part of the way forward:

- We need to get more friars actively engaged in DPI and JPIC.
- DPI-Nigeria is reportedly working on a gathering of all Franciscans in the country to introduce them to DPI and the process.
- DPI needs to participate in the survey of social projects in from the General Curia.
- DPI could be part of the JPIC website.

The Commission then turned its attention to planning for JPIC training weeks. The OFM friars are sponsoring JPIC training in Quito on 1-14 February 2015 and have invited the Capuchins to participate. Each circumscription has been asked to send one friar. The course is based on the one at the Antonianum in Rome.

A similar conference has been proposed for Manila in July 2015. As in Quito, Capuchins from the conferences of ASMEN, PACC and Australia, Guam) would be invited to participate. The International Formation Council is sponsoring three workshops in India on 1-14 December.

There have also been some preliminary discussions regarding a proposed JPIC gathering for the friars and circumscriptions of Continental Europe. The Commission decided to defer this matter to our next meeting at the General Curia in Rome on 4-8 May 2015.



“CARE OF CREATION” IN THE RENOVATED CURIA

One of the greatest changes noticeable in the newly renovated General Curia is the elimination of the use of plastic water bottles. Before moving back to *Via Piemonte*, plastic bottles were mostly used for drinking water. However, considering the dangers posed on health, the high costs, and above all the negative impact on the environment, the curia community, through the initiative of the Guardian and the JPIC, decided to eliminate the use of plastic water bottles.

Plastic a problem

Plastic bottles are made from a petroleum product known as Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET), and they require huge amounts of fossil fuels to both make and transport them. In addition, these bottles contain Bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used to make the plastic



General Curia then ...



and now ...

hard and clear. BPA is an endocrine disruptor which has been proven to be hazardous to human health. It has been strongly linked to a host of health problems, including certain types of cancer, neurological difficulties, early puberty in girls, defects in newborn babies, and many more.

It is harder to recycle plastic bottles than most people think. Of the mass numbers of plastic bottles consumed throughout the world, most of them are not recycled because only certain types of plastic bottles can be recycled by certain municipalities. They either end up lying stagnant in landfills, leaching dangerous chemicals into the ground, or they litter our streets, sidewalks, parks, yards and rivers. Even if they are chopped into tiny pieces they still take more than a human lifetime to decompose.

What we can do

Since moving back to the newly renovated curia, the plastic water bottles are replaced by glass bottles. Recycling bins have been installed around the house with information about the **3 R's - Reduce, Reuse and Recycle**.

Reduce

- Avoid the need for bottled drinks altogether. You can save resources by drinking from glasses or water fountains whenever possible when you are out.
- Do the research. Don't fall for advertising that tells you that bottled water is purer or safer than tap. If you are concerned about your tap water you can obtain a water quality report for your area and buy a water filter if necessary.

Reuse

- Buy and carry a refillable, BPA-free bottle when you are on the go, and refill it whenever the option arises.

Recycle

- Find out which plastics your municipality recycles and sort them accordingly. But above all, reduce. Think of the whales and albatrosses and buy fewer plastic products in general, particularly when you know that you are unable to recycle them. It will have a larger and more positive impact than you think.

JPIC AND SOCIAL PROJECTS

AN EXAMPLE: ST. JOSEPH PROVINCE, CALVARY, USA

Direct services to the poor and marginalized continue to be the hallmark of the ministries of the Province of St. Joseph (Calvary, USA). While many of our parishes have or participate in local food pantries to feed hungry families and individuals who are still struggling to make ends meet even as the U.S. economy slowly improves, we continue to operate very large programs to provide broader assistance to help meet people's basic human needs for food, clothing, shelter and healthcare. At the same time, the Province is always looking for new and more creative ways to educate and engage the wider community to help address these needs and create a society that is more fundamentally just and which reflects the principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

Direct Services

The Capuchin Soup Kitchen (CSK) in Detroit, Michigan has operated continuously since it was founded by Br. Herman Buss and the Ven. Solanus Casey during the Great Depression in 1929. Brothers Jerry Smith (CSK Executive Director), Joe Monachino (Jefferson House Director), Bob Malloy (Chaplain) and Ray Stadmeier (On the Rise Bakery) all serve in this ministry.

In addition to serving over 2000 meals per day at its two sites on the city's East Side, the CSK through its Capuchin Services Center also provides clothing, packaged food,



Br. Ray Stadmeier and brother bakers at On the Rise Bakery, Detroit

furniture and household appliances. It also operates Jefferson House, a nine month residential treatment program for men suffering from alcoholism and other drug addictions. The Rosa Parks Children's Program provides tutorial services and social development programs for youth, particularly in the area of peacemaking. Earthworks urban farm not only grows organic produce that is used to provide nutritious meals at the CSK, it also trains local residents to grow and sell their own food in the dynamic Detroit urban agriculture economy. Volunteers also provide dental, legal and other services to neighborhood residents.

The CSK also operates 'On the Rise Bakery', which is run by participants in the ROPE (Reaching Our Potential Every Day) program. The bakery, which is open six days a weeks and sells its products at churches, the Solanus Casey Center, and local businesses, recently opened a new retail store and café. ROPE participants are men, many of whom have been imprisoned in the past, who are committed to learning a trade, developing job skills, and maintaining their sobriety after years of drinking, using drugs and committing crimes.

Later this summer, the Capuchin Services Center will undergo a major renovation. The chief purpose is to transform the packaged food program into a "client choice pantry." What it essentially involves is transforming a substantial part of the warehouse into a supermarket, where guests are free to choose (within limits and dietary guidelines) the items for their families. This will hopefully enhance their human dignity, encourage healthy dietary planning, and reduce food waste. Volunteers and CSK staff will help to



Br. David Schwab at the St. Ben's Community Meal, Milwaukee

stock the shelves, check-out lines, etc. It is hoped that this \$1.5 million project will be completed by the end of 2014.

Education

On the other side of Lake Michigan, the St. Ben's Community Meal and the House of Peace in Milwaukee, Wisconsin operate programs that are generally similar but smaller in scale than the CSK. St. Ben's works with over 80 volunteer groups to provide a meal to an average of 350 guests six nights per week. In addition, they also provide clothing, personal hygiene products, bus tickets, and assistance in paying for prescription medicines. Volunteers provide other services, including legal assistance and haircuts. They also provide financial support for the Capuchin Apartments, which are owned and operated by a separate corporation and house people who have been chronically homeless and/or mentally ill.

The House of Peace

The House of Peace provides packaged food, clothing, health, legal and educational services and counseling to thousands of people every year. As at St. Ben's

and the CSK, their dedicated staff is supported by strong network of volunteers and donors. Br. Rob Roemer is Director of the St. Ben's Meal, and Br. Perry McDonald is the Pastoral Director at the House of Peace. (Rev. Gerri Sheets-Howard, a pastor and former law enforcement officer, is the first woman to serve as Executive Director.) Capuchin postulants also serve as volunteers in these ministries during the course of their year in Milwaukee.

The Capuchin Run/Walk for the Hungry is held annually in conjunction with Milwaukee's German Fest. With strong corporate support, this 5K run and 2 mile walk has grown exponentially in recent years and now raises tens of thousands of dollars to benefit St. Ben's and the House of Peace. It also provides an enjoyable forum to educate the public about the thousands of their brothers and sisters in Milwaukee who are poor, homeless and lack even the necessities of life. Thousands of people participate in this event, which also features "Team Capuchin," a group of friars and friends dedicated to fitness and the mission of these ministries, which have served the Milwaukee

community for well over 40 years.

Advocacy

Br. Michael Crosby, who is internationally known for his over four decades of work in the area of corporate responsibility, has spent the past year with other activists in the USA working to launch the Catholic Campaign for Clothing with a Conscience (CCCC). The program originated as a response to the Rana Plaza disaster in Bangladesh in 2013, where a building collapsed on garment workers, killing hundreds and calling attention to severe and even fatal flaws in the supply chain that brings clothing from developing countries to department stores and consumers throughout the world.

Its purpose is to not only help the public understand how their clothes are made and the plight of the people (mainly women) who make them but also to advocate for stronger safety standards and enforcement, better wages and working conditions, etc. CCCC is launching a pilot program in several parishes to help people make more informed choices as consumers and, at a deeper level, to critically examine the economic systems and assumptions underlying those choices, the consumer culture, etc. and to consider alternatives.

Br. Michael has been assisted by Br. Fred Cabras, a Friar in post-novitiate formation. Rosa Kang, a member of the Capuchin Franciscan Volunteer Corps (Cap Corps Midwest), serves as a community organizer. CCCC has received seed money from the Provincial Minister and Council through the Friars' gifts and grants program, which is funded by a ten percent tithe of their remittances to the Province.

(For more information on these programs and the other ministries of the Province of St. Joseph, please visit our website at www.thecapuchins.org)



The House of Peace, Milwaukee



'WOLAT', TANZANIA

Br. John Sulle

During my service at San Damiano Friary in Dar-es-salaam Tanzania, I came across many widowers and widows who live miserably due to their ignorance, or insufficient knowledge, of legal rights, particularly on the question of inheritance of properties.

Together with Mrs Pendo J. Ngowi and some other advocates, I registered an NGO, 'Widowers/Widows And Orphans Legal Assistance In Tanzania' (WOLAT), in January 2007 with the objective of providing legal aid to them.

Widowers, widows and orphans face problems on the administration of properties/estates. When one or both of the parents die, or one of the dependants dies, their relatives misuse the properties of the orphans/widows/widowers. Soon after the funeral the legal widow/widower/orphans are often thrown out from their homes and denied their rights over the properties.

WOLAT represents affected widowers/widows/orphans in courts of law, educates the society and conducts awareness programs at the community level and national level.



Since its establishment, WOLAT has been assisted by the Capuchin Brothers of the Province of Tanzania, with the Provincial as its Patron.

We have made our presence known in many parts of the country. So far we have received 156 cases; of them 43 have been solved by means of court and the petitioners had their rights conceded to them; 89 have been solved by means of reconciliation, 8 are in the stage of being registered and 16 are in the process of reconciliation.

Through Radio Tanzania (PRT) we give legal education to the society about the law relating to grants of probates and wills, letters of administration to the estates of the deceased persons, powers and duties of executors and administration of wakf (Islamic law) properties, benevolent payments in Islamic estates and related matters. Also people are getting time to ask questions on line through radio Tanzania.

WOLAT is preparing a project of educating the society about their basic rights, law relating to administration of estates and how to handle cases in court where their rights have been infringed.

It is also planning to go to orphanages to identify the properties left by the orphans' parents and to make sure that all orphans benefit from their properties.

Likewise WOLAT is collaborating with the **Cornel A'ray Peace Foundation (CAPF)** working at the grassroots for reconciliation, mediation and dispute resolution on traditional and religious principals. CAPF is working in Arusha and Manyara, the northern part of Tanzania, for empowering the traditional tribunal and religious leaders within their localities. ■

