

INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE

A Franciscan Resource Book for Justice,
Peace and Integrity of Creation



Order of Friars Minor
Office of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

English
1999

Foreword

*“... The brothers who go
can conduct themselves among them spiritually in two ways.
One way is to avoid quarrels or disputes
and be subject to every human creature for God's sake (1 Pet. 2: 13),
so bearing witness to the fact that they are Christians.
Another way is to proclaim the word of God openly,
when they see that it is God's will ...” (Rnb 16, 5-7)*

“To lead a radically evangelical life in a spirit of prayer and devotion, and in fraternal fellowship”, “to offer a witness of penance and minority”, “to announce the Gospel throughout the whole world” embracing all in charity and “to preach reconciliation, peace and justice by their deeds” is essential to our life of Friars Minor (GG.CC. 1, 2).

The basis of our life in fraternal communion is rooted in the announcement of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have the mission of making Christ known, through our life, to a world that continues to be characterized by violence, war, marginalization and the destruction of the environment. St. Francis, our Founder, the “Saint of the Incarnation”, gave his brothers and his contemporaries an example without equal of how to be a herald of the Gospel, in word and deed, through commitment to justice, peace and harmony with creation. We cannot be heralds of the Gospel if we do not live open to conversion, reconciled with ourselves, with our brothers and with the whole of creation entrusted to our care (cf. Gen 2, 15), and if we do not do this reconciled with God in Christ, our Brother and Lord.

“To conduct themselves spiritually”, “to avoid quarrels or disputes”, “to be subject to every human creature” and to confess that Jesus is the Christ means, in other words, to be heralds and promoters of life, which we all have received as gift, but over which hangs various threats. The present-day mass media, such as the press, radio and television, allow us to verify easily how people and the entire creation live in “the shadow of death” (Lk 1, 79) and, therefore, we need the “rising Sun to visit us” (Lk 1, 78). There is a close connection between destruction of the environment and increasing impoverishment of many people in our world, and vice-versa. The stream of refugees, driven by the fear of losing their lives and in search of a bountiful existence, not only does not stop but, on the contrary, is increasing all the time. The search for immediate satisfaction of subjective needs does not respect the yearning felt by many to leave future generations a better world. It is difficult to control the reins and global connections of a life threatened by an activity whose guiding principle is constant and progressive development at any cost.

With greater reason, then, we Friars Minor are called to witness by means of our Gospel roots our fraternal communion and our simple life in reconciled diversity, of a liberated existence in Christ and for Christ.

That is the objective that the present book wishes to support. This book, in effect, is not a “manual”, as it does not respond to the criteria of a manual in the strict sense. It tries to be, a resource, a help for the brothers, with its articles on our Franciscan spirituality, on our option for the poor, on encouragement for our prayer and meditation, on dialogue in common about the values and bases of our Franciscan

vocation, on incarnated action in concrete situations in the light of “justice, peace and the safeguarding of creation”. It is a response to the request made by the International Council for Justice, Peace and the Safeguarding of Creation in 1995 in its congress of Seoul, to help the brothers become conscious of the fact that our Franciscan commitment in this area is an integral part of our spirituality.

Having studied this JPIC Resource Book, the Definitory General has agreed to making it available to all the brothers, especially to the Provincial and Conference coordinators of justice, peace and integrity of creation. There may be some who, expecting a greater depth of thought and a more restrained language, are not satisfied with what the book offers with its articles and examples. This also is positive as it could spur a deepening of the themes on their own part. We have tried to correct any errors in a series of revisions. Despite that, it may be that the readers will find inaccuracies and errors. Please forgive any oversights. We do not claim to be perfect. The book is meant to assist towards concrete actions in favor of JPIC.

The basis for our being in the world is contemplation, the interior listening, the calm attention to the signs of the times, the experience of the presence and activity of God. To-be-in-the-world means to be on a journey, to welcome with profound worship and respect life, creation and people, because the presence of God surrounds and penetrates all. Let's hope that this book may be an encouragement to all the brothers to live it.

I end by thanking all those who have collaborated in the creation and elaboration of this Resource Book. All have worked in an exemplary manner. In particular I name, as representing all, Francisco O'Conaire OFM, my collaborator in the office of “Justice, Peace and the Safeguarding of Creation”. May God amply reward and bless them and all those who have collaborated!

Rome, 25-III-1999.

Peter Schorr, OFM
Definitory General and Director of JPSC

Introduction

The Origin of the Resource Book

The Office of JPIC at the General Curia, the International Council for JPIC, composed of the 15 coordinators of the Conferences of the Order and the Provincial Delegates for JPIC have the important task of animating and urging the friars to make these gospel and Franciscan values their own so as to make them part of a lifestyle that is fraternal, peaceful and supportive of concrete liberating commitments. Preoccupied as to how best to provide a genuine service of animation, the International Council for JPIC in the Order decided at its meeting in Seoul in August 1995 to propose to the General Definitory the composition of a resource book on JPIC which might serve as a useful instrument for the promotion of these values within the Order. In its meeting of December 1995 the Definitory approved the proposal and entrusted the coordination of this project to the Office for JPIC in the General Curia.

Objective

This Resource Book is not a commentary on chapters IV and V of the GG.CC. although it draws its inspiration from them and can even be a help towards deepening a knowledge and observance of them. Rather it endeavors to offer materials and resources which can help Provincial Delegates and Commissions to make progress in the work of animation. It also hopes to be of use to those charged with initial formation, to local fraternities in their meetings for ongoing formation and to friars in their pastoral ministry.

Since we are dealing with a help or working document, we have not thought at any time of a complete treatise. We are conscious of this Resource Book's limitations. To begin with, in the themes found in Part 2 it is almost impossible to establish a viewpoint that is valid for all parts of the world. The questions at the end of each theme, however, can always be a help in opening discussions with the local reality. On the other hand, since a large number of friars from different parts of the world have collaborated in the Resource Book, it may suffer from a lack of unity and from some repetitions. If the themes in the second part had been more fully developed, the book would be much more bulky. But all in all, we believe that the material is worthwhile and can be a help towards the desired objective.

Format and Content

The Resource Book has four parts. In the First Part we set out the Franciscan vision of work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation as a theoretical framework for the whole book, drawing on our spirituality as found in the Franciscan sources, in the current GG.CC. and in the documents of the Church. For Franciscans the commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an inheritance coming down from St. Francis; it forms part of their identity as Friars Minor and of their evangelizing mission

and should therefore belong to the content of initial and ongoing formation.

The Second Part is made up of seven specific themes, which seem to us to be most appropriate and of greater interest to our charism. They have just a brief theoretical development because we have not wished to give a full treatment that would exhaust each theme; rather, we have desired that these themes should state the question and stimulate reflection and action. This brief theoretical development is completed by an account of the experiences and witness of friars from all over the world. These help us to see how the ideals which our GG.CC. propose to us are not utopias incapable of realization; such witness suggests to us multiple possibilities for action according to each location. Each theme ends with a questionnaire to facilitate reflection, whether personally or in groups.

We should like to recall that when this Resource Book was envisaged there was also the idea that each Conference could supply a bibliography for each of the themes that would facilitate a deeper study of them and be more attuned to the cultural sensibilities and the needs of each Conference.

The Third Part, entitled **How to Act?**, has several chapters which treat of the history of the movement in favor of JPIC within the Order over the last 25 years: of the International Council of JPIC; how the Provinces and Conferences are organized in the area of justice and peace; of inter-Franciscan cooperation in JPIC; of work for JPIC in daily life and in various ministries: parishes, communications media, education, missionary evangelization, initial and ongoing formation.

The Fourth Part gives some additions or appendices containing the texts which speak of these themes in OFM General Chapters or Plenary Councils, in the GG.CC., in Sacred Scripture, in Franciscan sources, in the social doctrine of the Church and in *Ratio Formationis*. Other additions give prayers, addresses of international organizations with which we can relate.

JPIC Office, Rome

Abbreviations

1. The Books Of The Bible

Acts	Ac
Amos	Am
Baruch	Ba
Colossians	Col
1 Corinthians	1 Co
2 Corinthians	2 Co
1 Chronicles	1 Ch
2 Chronicles	2 Ch
Daniel	Dn
Deuteronomy	Dt
Ecclesiastes	Qo
Ecclesiasticus	Si
Ephesians	Ep
Esther	Est
Exodus	Ex
Ezekiel	Ezk
Ezra	Ezr
Galatians	Ga
Genesis	Gn
Habakkuk	Hab
Hebrews	Heb
Haggai	Hg
Hosea	Ho
Isaiah	Is
James	Jm
Jeremiah	Jr
Job	Jb
Joel	Jl
John	Jn
1 John	1 Jn
2 John	2 Jn
3 John	3 Jn
Jonah	Jon
Joshua	Jos
Jude	Jude
Judges	Jg
1 Kings	1 K
2 Kings	2 K
Lamentations	Lm
Leviticus	Lv
Luke	Lk
1 Maccabees	1 M
2 Maccabees	2 M
Malachi	Ml
Mark	Mk
Matthew	Mt

Micah	Mi
Nahum	Na
Nehemiah	Ne
Numbers	Nb
Obadiah	Ob
1 Peter	1 P
2 Peter	2 P
Philemon	Phm
Philippians	Ph
Psalms	Ps
Proverbs	Pr
Revelation	Rv
Romans	Rm
Ruth	Rt
1 Samuel	1 S
2 Samuel	2 S
Song of Songs	Sg
1 Timothy	1 Tm
1 Thessalonians	1 Th
2 Thessalonians	2 Th
2 Timothy	2 Tm
Titus	Tt
Tobit	Tb
Wisdom	Ws
Zechariah	Zc
Zephaniah	Zp

2. Ecclesiastical Documents

CA	Encyclical <i>Centesimus annus</i>
CP	Apostolic Exhortation <i>Communio et progressio</i>
DH	Declaration <i>Dignitatis humanae</i>
DM	Encyclical <i>Dives in misericordia</i>
EN	Apostolic Exhortation <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i>
ES	Encyclical <i>Ecclesiam suam</i>
GS	Pastoral Constitution <i>Gaudium et Spes</i>
LC	Instruction <i>Libertatis conscientia</i> (Christian Freedom and Liberation)
LE	Encyclical <i>Laborem exercens</i>
MM	Encyclical <i>Mater et Magistra</i>
OA	Apostolic Letter <i>Octogesima adveniens</i>
TMA	Apostolic Letter <i>Tertio Millenio Adveniente</i>
PP	Encyclical <i>Populorum progressio</i>
PT	Encyclical <i>Pacem in terris</i>
QA	Encyclical <i>Quadragesimo Anno</i>
RH	Encyclical <i>Redemptor hominis</i>
RM	Encyclical <i>Redemptoris missio</i>
RN	Encyclical <i>Rerum Novarum</i>
SRS	Encyclical <i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i>
VS	Encyclical <i>Veritatis splendor</i>

3. Writings Of Saint Francis

Adm	Admonitions
BenLeo	Blessing for Brother Leo
<i>BenBern</i>	Blessing for Brother Bernard
CantSol	Canticle of Brother Sun
EpAnt	Letter to St. Anthony
EpCler	Letter to the Clergy
1EpCust	First Letter to the Custodians
2EpCust	Second Letter to the Custodians
1EpFid	First Letter to the Faithful
2EpFid	Second Letter to the Faithful
EpLeo	Letter to Brother Leo
EpMin	Letter to a Minister
EpOrd	Letter to the Entire Order
EpRect	Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples
ExhLD	Exhortation to the Praise of God
ExhPD	Exhortation to Poor Ladies
ExpPat	Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
FormViv	Form of Life for St. Clare
LaudHor	Praises to be said at all the Hours.
OffPass	Office of the Passion
OrCruc	Prayer before the Crucifix
RegB	Later Rule
RegNB	Earlier Rule
RegEr	Rule for Hermitages
SalBMV	Salutation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
SalVirt	Salutation of the Virtues
Test	Testament
TestS	Testament written in Siena
UltVol	Last Will written for St. Clare
VPLaet	Dictate on True and Perfect Joy

4. Early Franciscan Sources

1Cel	First Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
2Cel	Second Life of St. Francis by Thomas of Celano
3Cel	Treatise on the Miracles by Thomas of Celano
AP	Anonymous of Perugia
CSD	Considerations on the Stigmata
Fior	Fioretti
LM	Major Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
Lmin	Minor Life of St. Francis by Bonaventure
LP	Legend of Perugia
L3S	Legend of the Three Companions
SC	Sacrum Commercium
SP	Mirror of Perfection

5. Other Frequently Used Abbreviations

GG.CC.	General Constitutions
CFF	Conference of the Franciscan Family

FI	Franciscan International
ICJPIC	International Council of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
OFM	Order of Friars Minor
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
RFF	Ratio Formationis Franciscanae
Med F	Medellín Formation
CFI-TOR	International Franciscan Conference of the Third Order Regular

PART ONE

THE FRANCISCAN VISION OF THE WORK FOR JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION

This first part establishes the Franciscan vision of the work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, a theoretical framework for the whole of the book from the basis of our spirituality, from both the Franciscan sources and the present day reality of the GG.CC, the RFF and the magisterium of the Church:

1. Franciscan Presence to the World
2. Minority, Option for the Poor and Our Work for Peace
3. JPIC in Evangelization and Formation
4. Contemplation, Our Work for JPIC and Union with God
5. Justice and Peace in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*

Franciscan Presence to the World

A New Man

Among the numerous saints that have adorned the history of Christianity, Francis of Assisi is one of those who still today exercise most attraction and meet with most approval. His influence spreads beyond Christianity. He belongs to all. He appears “like a flower bud that has blossomed early,” giving a glimpse of a humanity that yearns to bloom in each of us. “It seemed he was a new man, a man of the age to come,” wrote his first biographer, Thomas of Celano (1Cel 82).

Thus it is not surprising that, in our current disarray, many turn to him to ask him the secret of that wisdom that he knew how to bring to bloom and that is characterized by a new quality of presence to the world. For the most precious gift that Francis gave to the world is this new type of presence. A presence that is profoundly human as well as evangelical and cosmic. A total presence that has the gift “of converting all hostility into fraternal tension, within the unity of creation” (Paul Ricoeur). “There is no doubt that there never was a man,” wrote Louis Lavelle, “who offered more perfectly to everyone that total presence and that complete gift of self that are nothing more than the expression of the presence and the Gift that God makes of himself in every instant to all beings.” (L. Lavelle, *Quatre Saints*, ed. Albin Michel, Paris, 1951, p.88).

What then was the secret of Francis of Assisi? How did he open himself to that presence to the world, in which all human conflicts seem to find their way to peace?

An Essential Message

The question is vital for us. Our industrial civilization is in a cul-de-sac. We are rightly proud of our scientific and technological progress. It has made us “masters and possessors of nature,” following Descartes’ wish. But we note today that the price to be paid is heavy, very heavy. On the one hand our environment and in consequence our quality of life are threatened by the growing control of humanity and human technology over nature. On the other hand, an ever more pronounced technological exploitation of natural resources, with the only law being profit, raises great human problems in the areas of unemployment and social justice. Situations of exclusion are multiplying within the human community and risk profoundly compromising peace. So far, the men and women produced by our industrial civilization have thought only about possessing. Now they must learn, with a concern for justice and peace, to fraternize with nature as their equal. Now, on this matter, Francis, the universal brother, has something essential to tell us.

To hear his message properly, we must leave behind a certain image of the Poor Man of Assisi. We have made of him a sort of Prince Charming of creation. Charming perhaps, but desperately superficial. The true Francis is of a completely different stature and inspiration. He was one of the boldest innovators in all of Christian history. In faithfulness to the Gospel, he broke with the political-religious system of his time--a system in which the Church was often a feudal overlord--a system of holy wars and crusades. He also refused to make a pact with the new idol of the society of the communes: money. As for his fraternal attitude towards lower creatures, far from being sentimentality, it was inspired by a clear and profound understanding of creation.

The Starting Point: His Encounter with Christ

At the origin of the new presence to the world, inaugurated by the Poor Man of Assisi, there lies a spiritual experience that begins with the conversion of the young Bernardone. If we wish to discover his inspiration, we must join him at the heart of this experience.

Francis was not born the “Universal Brother.” He became it. At the price of a profound conversion. As an adolescent and a young man, he was not the man of peace that we admire. Certainly his first biographers present him as an affable, courteous man who was open to others. However, under this seductive exterior lay hidden depths of violence and ambition plus a desire for conquest and domination.

As the son of a rich merchant, Francis belonged to the rising class, eager for gain and avid for power. In the medieval communes that had freed themselves from the feudal yoke, the rich middle classes, headed by the merchants, intended to run their own affairs and exercise power. Carried along by this rising social force, the young Francis also nourished great ambitions. He liked to show off, shine like the sun, rise above others, have himself acclaimed king of the young social elite of Assisi.

As he grew, so did his ambitions. He did not want to stay in his father’s business and be only a draper. He had lofty dreams. He aimed high. He aspired to become a knight and even a prince! When he lay asleep and dreamt of his father’s shop, he saw it transformed into a palace whose rooms gleamed with the brilliance of a variety of arms. And all these arms shone for him. For him and his knights. In his youthful visions he imagined himself conquering the world.

The young Francis was fascinated by glory. And glory, at that time, was acquired in war. At precisely this time war presented itself to him; it had just broken out between Assisi and Perugia, neighboring and rival cities. Francis joined Assisi’s communal militia.

He took part in the battle of Ponte San Giovanni. But the fighting turned to Perugia’s advantage. Francis was taken prisoner. He spent a year in enemy jails. And when he returned to Assisi his health was broken. He fell sick.

This illness, which lasted a long time and condemned him to inaction and solitude, marked a turning point in his life. Francis looked carefully at himself. He experienced the emptiness of his youthful years. He realized their frivolity.

When health returned, however, he was again caught in the grip of his warlike ambitions and, together with a young noble of Assisi, decided to join the papal armies fighting against the imperial armies in the south of Italy. But the plan did not last long. No sooner did he reach Spoleto than Francis heard an interior voice enjoining him to return to Assisi. Francis obeyed. From now on his only concern would be to discover what God wanted from him.

He retreated willingly to the solitude of the small abandoned churches in the Assisi countryside. Especially to San Damiano. There, for long hours, he prayed contemplating the Byzantine Christ. This crucified Christ who radiated peace brought him the living and overwhelming revelation of the love of God for men and women. And

Francis let himself be completely captivated by the depth and splendor of this love. Through the humanity of Christ and his life given fully, Francis discovered the merciful manner in which God views men and women. And he too looked at them differently. His universe was opened to human misery.

In his *Testament*, Francis himself recounted the radical change that came over him: “The Lord granted me, Brother Francis, to begin to do penance in this way: While I was in sin, it seemed very bitter to me to see lepers. And the Lord himself led me among them and I had mercy upon them. And when I left them, that which seemed bitter to me was changed into sweetness of soul and body.”

A New Quality of Relationship

Let us tarry for a while on this change. Everything grew from this. Francis did not hesitate to present his conversion as a new openness towards people and towards the world. His universe had exploded. He now dared to seek out men and women from whom he would previously have kept away, people he did not want to see and whom he excluded from his world.

It was not just a case of a wider circle of relationships. The quality of his relating also changed. From now on it would no longer be inspired by ambition, by the desire for prestige and conquest. It flowed from another source. Francis had discovered the merciful way in which God looked on men and women. And this merciful gaze turned his world upside down; he moved from a desire for conquest and domination to an attitude of compassion and communion. His world opened up to the most deprived. In the past he had on occasion given alms to the destitute. But that was from the heights of his position of a young, rich member of the middle class. The destitute had not been part of his gilded world.

Now a wall had fallen. Francis saw the world differently. He discovered it in the light of the extraordinary love that had shown itself to him: the most high Son of God had shed his glory to become one of us, the brother of all, even of the excluded. Heaven had lost its pride. An overwhelming vision that inspired in Francis a new presence to the world. He no longer wanted to rise above others, to dominate them, but he wanted to be with, to fraternize with. No longer did he want to conquer the world, but to welcome and commune with all beings, and so to become, following Christ, the brother of all, especially of the humblest and poorest.

This new presence to the world would inspire and orient all of Francis' life. For the moment it rendered him attentive to and ready to welcome what God desired of him.

One day, attending Mass in the chapel of Our Lady of the Angels, at the Portiuncula, he heard read the passage of the Gospel in which the Master sent his disciples out on mission: “Take neither gold, nor silver ... In whatever house you enter say ‘Peace to this house’...” This was the moment of illumination in Francis' heart. He had discovered his vocation, mission (1Cel 22). Like the disciples he saw himself as sent to announce the messianic peace. He would go towards men and women, “without gold or silver or money,” without any sign of power or wealth, with his only mission being to announce peace. “The Lord revealed to me a greeting” he wrote in his *Testament*, “that we should use: ‘May the Lord give you peace.’” He presented himself not as a conqueror but as a friend, a man of peace. And wherever he went it worked to “convert all hostility into a

fraternal tension within the unity of creation”. He would be a builder of peace, a creator of communion between beings, by communing with all, “in great humility.”

Messenger of Peace

Turning his back on holy wars and the feudal dominion exercised by the Church, Francis began to travel the land, giving everyone his greeting “Peace and all good.” He invited men and women to reconcile themselves and live as brothers and sisters. In front of the whole city gathered in Bologna's central square, Francis' talk centered on the duty of extinguishing hatred and concluding a new peace treaty. At Arrezzo, he chased away the demons of discord. And, when conflict broke out in his own town of Assisi between the bishop and the podestà, he did not rest until he had reconciled the two men.

“To those who want to characterize, even superficially, the life of Francis of Assisi,” wrote P. Lippert, “it seems right from the start to be a life of love, with this word being understood in its most sacred and strongest sense.” To tell the truth, it was not just the love of a man for his kind, but the love of God for men and women, which had possessed Francis and which, through him, spread throughout the world, like the sun in springtime, as a force of communion and peace.

And this force was contagious. Soon Francis was no longer alone. Tens, then hundreds, of the young and not so young joined him, wanting to follow his example. They ran to him and to his ideal of poverty, as to a feast. For at the end of the road there was the elation of fraternity.

Creator of Fraternity

Fraternity! That was what they were looking for. It was the face of the peace that Francis announced. A great fraternal movement grew up in his wake. This movement responded to a desire and a deep aspiration of the time. The idea of association and fraternity was in the air.

Had it not been this idea that, together with that of freedom, had inspired the revolt of the communes? In rejecting the power of the feudal lords and erecting their cities as free communes, the people of the towns aspired to new social relationships. The feudal regime only knew about relationships of vassalage: men and women were always vassals of other men and women. The commune, as its name indicates, promised social relationships that would be more democratic, freer, more fraternal. At least that was what ordinary people hoped for. But this hope was quickly disappointed.

In the free communes, the rule of money, that of the rich merchants, replaced that of the lords. Thus the primitive Franciscan movement re-lit, in the hearts of the poor, the hope of a true fraternity. What the communes had not been able to realize, Francis and his brothers lived in the light of the Gospel.

Small fraternities, those of sisters as well as those of brothers, multiplied rapidly in Italy and then all across Western Europe. They seemed like so many centers of peace and reconciliation. In truth, the friars lived a double fraternity: between themselves, of course, but also with all the other men and women whom they met, and most particularly with the poorest, the smallest. None of them was allowed to exercise the power of domination (RegNB 5: 9). “We should never desire to be above others,” said Francis “but we ought rather to be their servants...” (1EpFid 47). Coming from different

social horizons, the brothers learned to live together with respect for their differences. Such a fraternity had nothing to do with dragooning. For Francis, each brother was an individual being, a unique person. Fraternity could only be built upon respect for persons. It was always the welcome of a “thou” into the atmosphere of a “we.”

Today we cannot imagine how revolutionary such a project was at that time. We need to remember that the Church, as a whole, was a seigniorial Church: the bishop at the head of a diocese and an abbot at the head of a monastery were true feudal lords with a temporal power that extended sometimes over entire regions. In this context, the countless Franciscan fraternities that grew up throughout Europe were a real breath of fresh air. They were a new presence of the Church to the world: a presence that created a fraternal communion where the humblest ones in society rediscovered their place and their dignity.

The Dimension of Humanity

But Francis’ gaze did not rest only upon Christendom. It looked much further. He wanted to reunite the whole of humanity in a universal fraternity. Now, at the time, the world was divided into two blocs: western Christianity on the one hand and Islam on the other. Between these two blocs there was war, holy war, crusade. Francis could not admit of this break. He planned to build a bridge between these two blocs. The time was not favorable to such an enterprise. The Fifth Crusade was reaching its climax. Was that all? Francis decided to go to the Sultan of Egypt. A foolish dream. And, incredibly, he was received with great courtesy, in the middle of a crusade, by Al-Malik al-Kamil, the head of the Muslims. The two men showed respect and esteem for each other. Could one have hoped for more? It was already a great deal. A great deal, but at the same time not a lot. The peace mission of the Poor Man of Assisi came up against its limit.

The Experience of Limits and of Depths

It would come to know one other limit. And this time within his own Order. This limit would wound Francis painfully and deeply. We must follow him through this trial where his presence to God and to men and women would be deepened by being purified. From there would be born a new man, one of the strongest and most original known to human history.

It was not, in fact, enough to desire fraternity between all beings in order to find “the unity of creation.” He needed to learn to desire this fraternity with a heart at peace, with a heart that let itself be troubled by nothing. In short, with the heart of a poor man. It was not enough to love; he needed to learn to be poor, even in love.

That was the most difficult but also the most important lesson. The desire to succeed whatever the cost is rarely more than egoism and self-love, even when it is used to bring men and women together. This desire often engenders new exclusions. That is why it weakens life instead of serving it. On the contrary, where life is free from all self-love, it can gush, spread out and create in all liberty.

One can see, in Francis’ *Writings*, the insistence with which he denounces agitation, irritation and anger, as major obstacles to charity within oneself and in others. He sees them as the infallible sign of a possessive attitude, of a secret and often unconscious appropriation (Adm. 4: 2; 11: 2,3; 13: 2; 14: 3; 27: 2). One may think one is pure, generous, disinterested. Until the day when some contradiction or dispute arises. Then

one gets agitated, irritated and becomes aggressive. The mask falls. With all *one's* weapons one defends *one's* good, *one's* territory. Truly then one has appropriated for oneself the good that the Lord was able to do through one; one has made it something personal.

If Francis expressed himself so clearly about agitation and anger, if he recommended his brothers to keep peace in their hearts, (Adm. 15:13; 27:4; RegNB 11:4; 17:15; RegB 3:11; CantSol 10) it is a sure indication that he himself was tempted by agitation and anger. And in the most insidious way: through his own work of peace and fraternity. Through his own effort to create among men and women a truly fraternal communion “within the unity of creation.”

Success seemed to be smiling upon him. The number of brothers was continually increasing. Popes, one after another, showed a particular benevolence towards the nascent Order. Francis had every reason to thank the Lord for all the good that he was accomplishing throughout the holy brothers of his Order.

But then suddenly the sky darkened. Serious disagreements arose within the fraternity. Given the growing number of brothers, a more rigorous organization was necessary. A certain vagabondage needed to end. Houses and times of formation were becoming necessary. Not all were in agreement about the new orientation. Francis realized well enough that five thousand brothers could not live the evangelical life in the same way as twelve. But he also saw dawning among some of the influential brothers the desire to bring the fraternity into line with the more established monastic orders. Now, in his eyes, it was necessary above all to safeguard the ideal of simplicity and of evangelical liberty, as well as the new presence to the world, under the banner of fraternal communion with the lowliest.

A profound anguish then seized Francis. Were they not going to turn the fraternity away from its original vocation by wanting to adapt it? He saw his work compromised and taken over by others who did not really share his spirit.

A Peaceful Man

This moral crisis, aggravated by illness, was for Francis the necessary path to a radical stripping of himself. “He was troubled within and without, in his soul and in his body” (LP 21; 1Cel 104). He retired into the solitude of a hermitage to hide his pain and his turmoil. There was a danger that he would close himself away in isolation and bitterness. God was waiting for him there. Francis was invited to a supreme purification. He would need to divest himself of his work in order to become himself the work of God. No longer to consider the Order as his affair, but as that of God. “Be agitated no longer... I am the Lord.” Francis heard the call. He threw his worry onto the Lord. God is--that is enough. Then the heart of Francis was lightened.

From then on he could give himself to his mission of peace with a heart made peaceful. With a radiant soul. What was important was not founding an exemplary fraternity but being himself a fraternal man, radiating the goodness of the Father. Now Francis could write in all truth: “...the truly peaceful are those who despite everything they have to suffer in this world for the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, keep peace in their souls and bodies” (Adm 15).

To a brother with responsibility for a fraternity, who asked his permission to retire to the solitude of a hermitage on the pretext that his companions caused him all sorts of vexation and prevented him from loving the Lord as he would have wished, Francis could reply with the authority that personal experience alone confers: "...what impedes you from loving the Lord God, all the impediments that come to you from the brothers or from others, even if they should beat you: these you should hold for a grace.... Love those who do this to you; think only of loving them... This will be more meritorious for you than a hermitage...."

The Unity of Creation

From now on, nothing could limit Francis' peaceful gaze. Nothing could oppose the action of the Spirit within him. He was as free as the wind. He then wrote a letter "to all the inhabitants of the world," wishing them the "true peace from heaven." Nothing shows better the measure of his horizon. But he did not only want to unite men and women in peace. He wanted to extend that peace to all creation, reconciling men and women with nature. This desire for a fraternal presence to the world finds its expression in the *Canticle of Brother Sun* or the *Canticle of Creatures*.

This *Canticle*, composed by Francis in the twilight of his life, is a veritable spiritual testament. It expresses a great surge of praise. The small Poor Man praises God for all his creatures. This praise has the brilliance of the sun, the gentle clarity of the stars, the wings of the wind, the humility of water, the ardor of fire and the patience of the earth. It celebrates the beauty of the world. Three times the adjective "beautiful" is repeated in the *Canticle*. This cosmic praise is in the true tradition of the biblical songs and psalms. But there is something new here: a desire for fraternal communion. Francis fraternizes with creatures. Rejecting all spirit of domination, he welcomes them as brothers or sisters. He associates them with his highest destiny. It is with them that he raises himself up to God in praise.

This fraternal communion with creatures is not sentimentality nor is it dreaming. It does not oppose the turning of natural resources to good account and their use by men and women. One could even say that, according to Francis, material elements are all the more fraternal when they are useful for men and women. As well as their beauty, he celebrates their usefulness. He hails sister Water as "very useful." Similarly brother Wind, whose breath is life, or our sister mother Earth who nourishes us by producing all sorts of fruits.

There is, in this fraternal communion with the creatures, a great love of life that is akin to and melds into that of the Creator for his work. From this came Francis' religious respect for everything that exists and lives. To his brothers who went to cut wood in the forest, he recommended that they not leave behind them a desert but allow life to burst out again in new foliage. He condemned all human cupidity that rapes the earth and tortures life. How many times did he give back their freedom to animals caught uselessly?!

Beyond Every Conflict

Those who fraternize with the creatures open themselves at the same time to all that those creatures symbolize. They fraternize with that obscure part of themselves that is rooted in nature: with their body and all its vital forces. Francis rejected nothing. He assumed everything in his surge towards God. His spiritual life did not take place in a

separate universe. He went to God with his cosmic roots, with his “sister mother Earth who carries us and governs us.” All duality was overcome. The dark forces of life were here transfigured. They became forces of light. They lost their fearsome aspect. The wolf was tamed. Not only the wolf that ran in the woods, but also and especially the one that hides in each of us. The aggressiveness of life was transformed into strength of love. It is this strength that sings in “brother Fire who illuminates the night: he is beautiful and joyous, robust and strong.”

At peace with oneself, one can fraternize with all one’s kind. Francis wanted to add to his praise of the creatures, the praise of men and women of pardon and peace. These he hails as the crowning glory of all the work of creation:

“Praised be you, my Lord,
for those who pardon through love of you,
who endure infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in peace,
for by you Most High they shall be crowned”.

The *Canticle of the Creatures* is the language of a man open to his whole being, born of a complete personality, in whom the forces of life and desire are themselves integrated; they have become the forces of love and light. This gave to Francis’ spiritual life, in addition to its plenitude, a solar radiance.

Francis discovered the luminous meaning of creation through an interior experience of a new genesis. “He appeared to be,” said Celano “a new man, a man of the age to come” (1Cel 82). His *Canticle* is not only a vibrant homage to the Creator; it is also the celebration of becoming. He is singing the new creation in the heart of the fraternal man.

The secret of this divine dawn is the poverty that Francis lived, not only in relation to the goods of this world, but more deeply in the heart of his relationship with God. Letting God be God and handing himself over completely to him, he identified with the total and loving presence of the Creator to his work.

Eloi Leclerc OFM

Minority, Option For The Poor And Our Work For Peace

1. Awareness

Poverty has always been a part of the Franciscan charism. Francis himself frequently recalls our vocation with the words: “that we observe the poverty and the humility and the Holy Gospel of Our Lord Jesus Christ which we have firmly promised” (RegB 12:4). However, the understanding and the practice of Franciscan evangelical life has changed with the times. From the pontifical declaration on the observance of the Rule (*Quo Elongati*, 1230, by Gregory IX) down to our pre-conciliar GG.CC., the greatest emphasis was on the literal fulfillment of the Rule with a juridical-moral interpretation. Poverty basically consisted in not owning property and a limited use of things, under the authority of the Provincial or the Guardian. There was a distinction between vow and virtue, but both aspects were part of the same perspective: the religious life as a way of Christian perfection within an objective, institutional framework.

What happened just after Vatican Council II? In the beginning we thought that it was just a matter of readjusting some points of observance. Now we are aware that the Order is going through a difficult stage, a radical rebirth or re-creation of its own identity.

So we shall speak of **minority**:

It is not sufficient to observe the precepts and counsels of the Rule. Rather there is question of an option for the poor.

Austerity is not sufficient. It is necessary to create lifestyles that make us minors in society.

The use of goods in obedience to superiors is not sufficient. Rather are we called to promote justice and to be heralds of peace.

To look for the perfection of the vow of poverty is not sufficient. We must discover a way of living the beatitudes of the Kingdom today in a world of conflict, injustice and secularization.

No doubt minority is a spiritual attitude; but it is also a form of gospel living. Is this what is actually happening?

2. Analysis

It would seem that two factors are influencing this change of perspective:

A. New ecclesial consciousness

We can speak of a new “displacement” of gospel centers. Each epoch re-reads the Gospel; today significant stress is laid on:

- 1) The history of Salvation as an action of God in favor of the poor. The Kingdom, Good News for the despised. Messianic preferences and options of Jesus.
- 2) If this is God's way of acting and consequently the mission of the Church, in continuity with Jesus, what then is the meaning of religious life today? The following of Jesus, which is the nucleus of our vocation - does it consist in a

personal relationship, in reproducing his attitudes and virtues after the manner of ascetic practices not related to history? - or are we called to follow the footprints of Jesus, the dynamics of the Kingdom, in the actual conditions of our world?

- 3) There are indications that confirm this displacement:
 - the theology of the Kingdom as integral, not exclusively spiritual, liberation;
 - the search for a model of Church which is more participative, more egalitarian;
 - the creation and consolidation of base communities;
 - the constant preoccupation on the part of religious institutes for a presence among the poorer classes, in marginalized barrios;
 - the proliferation of the so-called “inserted” communities;
 - the participation in platforms of struggle on behalf of human rights;
 - the adoption of the principle of nonviolence as a method of socio-political change.

B. Socio-cultural context

Since Vatican II, the Church is adopting a positive attitude towards the world and its hopes. For some time now, human history has begun a process of self-liberation that has taken on certain significant characteristics:

- 1) Every person has an inviolable dignity and rights, which should be respected by every authority, civil and religious. The first right is that of liberty, of being a protagonist of one's own history.
- 2) Equality and solidarity are irrenounceable values of human progress. A suspicion that in every inequality there exists an injustice. An attitude of participation in social and political change.
- 3) A sensitivity towards groups of people who cannot attain to liberty: the proletariat, colonized peoples, women, the Third World and other groups.

This widespread movement which belongs to western modernity has been characterized at the beginning by an excessive optimism and very soon has become a source of contradictions which create conflicts. (For example, the confrontation between liberal capitalism and socialism). It has later produced profound disenchantment regarding every attempt at a social utopia (post-modernity).

Within religious life even today, we notice a different appraisal of social commitment. But it is certain that our Order has incorporated many aspects of modern humanism in the current GG.CC. Chapters IV and V give a clear reflection of this. What that means is that we Franciscans, having made a discernment of the socio-cultural context in which we live, have come up with certain options because we are convinced that they are in line with the original gospel project of the Franciscan movement.

In effect we believe that minority, in as far as it shows a new way forward in accordance with the sensitivity of many friars and the GG.CC., corresponds faithfully to Francis and his project, even though it may not reproduce literally the Rule and Life.

3. In the light of the Life and Rule.

The *Regula Bullata* 3:10-14 gives a synthesis of the characteristics of the Franciscan mission: “I counsel, admonish and exhort my brothers in the Lord Jesus Christ that, when they go about the world, they do not quarrel or fight with words or judge others; rather, let them be meek, peaceful and unassuming, gentle and humble, speaking

courteously to everyone, as is becoming. And they should not ride on horseback unless they are forced by manifest necessity or infirmity. Into whatever house they enter let them say: Peace to this house. And according to the Holy Gospel, they are free to eat of whatever food is set before them.”

In synthesis (then) the franciscan mission consists in (our) being minors and the text highlights the great themes which derive from this mission of minority:

3.1. Mission and itinerancy. Franciscan life is not “mixed,” a kind of equilibrium between contemplation and action, after the manner of regular clerics of the time or later semi-monastic forms of life. Our cloister is the whole wide world of the children of God, our brothers (SC 63); our house is the fraternity. Consequently, our mission is not a concrete function to be fulfilled (like preaching, caring, teaching, doing works of charity) within an efficiently organized institution. We are supposed to live in a permanent state of mission. For this, a form of living without fixed property is a help.

3.2. Mission and insertion. We need mobility, like Jesus, who “did not have where to lay his head” (LP 57). Minority places us in solidarity with the lowest in society (cf.RegNB 9). That is how our salvation was achieved, “from within,” taking on the human condition, looking for the lost (2EpFid 45; Adm 6; 9; 11).

3.3 Mission and Beatitudes. The correlation between mission texts of the Gospel and the Sermon on the Mount is not arbitrary. Why has Francis spoken of the franciscan apostolate in terms of a life based on the Beatitudes of Jesus? The answer is clear: the friars are being sent among the people to be minors. That is the reason for having example as a priority rather than the ministerial function - not by way of exclusion but by deliberate preference. What is most urgent for the Kingdom is that it become a reality among peoples, that the friars become disciples of Jesus and announce him by the witness of their lifestyle (EpOrd 9; Test 19; LP 58, 103).

3.4 Mission of peace. The whole Christian ministry can be summarized in the concept of reconciliation (2 Cor 5; Eph 2); but the option of Francis is to bring this about by non-violent action, preferring to suffer injustice rather than create divisions and to rely on that love which waits and endures without limits; in other words, following the footprints of Jesus who bore our sins (Adm 5; 15; VPLaet; RegNB 16; 22:1-4; RegB 10:7-12; Test 23).

In reality, this process in Francis' vocation is inseparable from the world of poverty and suffering. The biography of his companions points out that one of the elements which preceded his conversion was his compassion for the needy. The decisive steps in that conversion were marked by a progressive insertion into the condition of the most wretched: lepers and beggars. In spite of the exceedingly spiritualist interpretation which the biographers have given us of the vision of the Crucifix of San Damiano, there is no doubt that we must relate it to the consciousness which Francis acquired of the identification between the following of the poor and humble Jesus, sharing the lifestyle of minors (L3S 3; 11-14; 2Cel 8-12; Test 1-5).

The franciscan movement was born in the context of social marginalization and service of the lowly. The original project and life, namely, the non-approved Rule, presupposes this as an habitual and determined option (2:7; 7:1; 7:13-14; 8:8-11; 9:2; 11). In spite of

the rereading which Celano has left us of some anecdotes concerning poverty, it is obviously still the primitive inspiration: the friars minor do not offer charity to the poor, they feel themselves identified with them (2Cel 84-85; 87; 92). It is true that with the responsibilities of serving his brothers and the numerical and ecclesial burgeoning of the fraternity, Francis could scarcely have dedicated himself to his preferential mission. But he still insistently maintains the principle of minority: that the friars may not preach without the permission of the bishops or when any priest impedes it; that they should choose menial jobs at the pastoral level or manual work. Their role is not to possess anything but “to do penance” and to be minors (RegB 9; Test 7-8; LP20; 58; 2Cel 146-147; Test 24-26).

4. In the light of the GG.CC.

Although it may seem strange, the importance which the theme of minority has acquired in our actual rule of life, the GG.CC., fits in more directly with the original franciscan movement than with regular observance which tends to portray a franciscan life in which minority is reduced to the asceticism of poverty.

Since the theme is extensive and since it will be treated later under its specific aspects, we shall limit ourselves to explaining in outline the dynamic which the GG.CC. bring to the actual renewal of the franciscan vocation of minority:

- 1) The definition of our charism (art.1,2) treats minority as a forming element of the following of Jesus, which is closely united to evangelization by means of the commitment to peace and justice.
- 2) The vow of poverty is understood not only in the juridical-moral or ascetic sense but as a sharing of the lot of the poor (art.8).
- 3) The spirit of penance/conversion takes root not only in the interior being but also in the service of the lowliest of people (art.32).
- 4) Our following of Jesus is one of minority, as disciples who live the Beatitudes of the Kingdom in the world, as servants of all, submissive, peaceful and humble (art.64). Let us note the saying of RegB 3 (“let them go through the world”), which presupposes a life not centered in the cloister.
- 5) Art. 65 sets out the theological basis of our minority, without which every plan of living and every commitment to the poor remains radically vitiated.
- 6) The vocation to minority is in practice molded by adopting the life and condition of the lowly in society.
- 7) This dynamic of “incarnating” is not to be confused with the uncritical assimilation of worldly values (art.67).
- 8) The option for forms of life known as “presence” (which do not need to be justified by means of specific tasks: cf. art. 83-84) is united to the mission of justice and peace. The first feature of franciscan fidelity is the principle of nonviolence (art.68-69). This presupposes a gospel-centered heart, reconciled with all people and with creation (art.70-71).

So this is a dynamic of witness and of action which is born of the same gospel experience of minority. There are many more examples in Chapters IV and V of the GG.CC. which confirm and complete the dynamic of minority. Those mentioned are sufficient to make one aware of the challenges which the present GG.CC. bring to franciscan life in the 21st century.

Javier Garrido OFM

Justice, Peace And Integrity Of Creation In Evangelization And Formation

1. Evangelization and JPIC

The word “evangelization” was not commonly used in Catholic circles until the publication, in 1975, of *Evangelii Nuntiandi* by Pope Paul VI to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the close of Vatican II. In the decade before Vatican II and in the face of the de-christianization of the West, a number of European theologians such as Karl Barth had been calling for a kerygmatic theology: a confident proclamation of the basic message of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. The sermons of Peter and Paul, as found in ACTS, were used as models for this basic evangelization.

Vatican II, a preeminently “pastoral” council, built on this experience of Europe's pastoral theologians, both Catholic and Protestant and emphasized evangelical terminology. A comparison with Vatican I is instructive; that council used the word “gospel” only once and never the words “evangelize” or “evangelization.” Vatican II, by contrast, used the word “gospel” 157 times, “evangelize” 18 times and “evangelization” 31 times.

The concept of evangelization proposed by Paul VI is broader than that of the kerygmatic theologians, who thought of it as a “first proclamation” followed by catechesis. For Paul VI evangelization is the “grace and ... deepest identity of the church; she EXISTS TO EVANGELIZE, that is to preach and teach, to be the channel of the gift of grace, to reconcile sinners with God and to perpetuate Christ's sacrifice in the Mass” (EN 14).

Evangelization proclaims “salvation” which -- and this is very important for our theme - - is understood to be “this great gift of God which is LIBERATION FROM EVERYTHING THAT OPPRESSES HUMAN BEINGS (in the official Latin text: *liberatio ab iis omnibus quibus homo opprimitur*) and especially liberation from sin and the evil one, in the joy of knowing God and of being known by Him, of seeing Him and of being given over to Him” (EN 9). While all accept the final clauses of that description of salvation, not all are enthusiastic about seeing salvation as “liberation from everything that oppresses human beings.” Nonetheless that understanding is in keeping with the biblical and Christian tradition.

The Exodus, for example, was not a “purely spiritual” event -- it was also, and very prominently so, economic, social, political and cultural liberation. Salvation then includes, but is not identified with, liberation from the dehumanizing poverty that afflicts hundreds of millions of people in our world today. Very early in Israel's history God explains His loving plan: “For Yahweh will bless you in the land Yahweh your God gives you for your inheritance... Always be open-handed with your brother and with anyone in your country who is in need and poor” (Dt 15:4.11) -- something that can happen only if the abundance created by God is equitably shared by all God's sons and daughters.

In a similar vein, St. Paul told the Corinthians: in the matter of riches there should be a certain equality among you (Cf. 2 Cor 8:13ff). The gap between rich and poor

nonetheless continues to widen and we need to see this as contrary to God's plan. Indeed, this widening gap “is a threat to the very future of the human race” (*Octogesima Adveniens*, 7). As the numbers of desperately poor people (think, for example, of the millions of refugees) increase dramatically, we need to recall that evangelization involves “a message especially energetic today about liberation” (EN 29). Working for the Kingdom of God “means working for liberation from evil in all its forms” (*Redemptoris Missio*, 14). Of fundamental importance for the JPIC ministry is the emphatic teaching of the 1971 Synod of Bishops: 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.

Justice

Transformation of the world and liberation from oppression -- all this is part of the church's mission. A spirituality that is so “otherworldly” that it is not concerned about justice, liberation and transformation of the world is thoroughly inadequate and unbiblical. In a surprisingly candid statement, the 1987 Synod of Bishops said: “The Holy Spirit leads us to understand more clearly that holiness today cannot be attained without a commitment to justice.” Failing to commit ourselves to the great cause of justice is failing to grow in holiness! For that very reason Christian social teaching is “an essential part of the Christian message...and an essential element of the new evangelization” (*Centesimus Annus*, 5).

At the heart of the church's social teaching is the “preferential option for the poor” an option “to which the whole tradition of the church bears witness” (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 42). St. Francis was conspicuous in his preaching and living that option. In his *Testament* he explains that the Lord led him among the poorest of the poor--the lepers he had so studiously avoided. It was then that Francis was given the grace to redefine what is bitter and what is sweet--a beautiful description of conversion. Very much like contemporary papal teaching, Francis considered the help given to the poor to be a matter of justice: “Alms are a legacy and a just right due to the poor, which our Lord Jesus Christ acquired for us” (RegNB 9:8).

Peace

Similarly, while it is true that the young Francis was keen on becoming a warrior-knight, after his conversion he became the most ardent promoter of peace and this at a time when not only the “world” but also the church had recourse to violence--e.g., the Crusades. The earliest Franciscan movement was known as a “delegation of peace” (1Cel 24). Francis claimed that violence delighted the hearts of demons and had an exorcism prayed over the strife-torn city of Arezzo, for he saw violence to be a sign of diabolical possession (cf. 2Cel 108.). Francis was convinced that the Lord revealed the greeting of peace to him; in his writings the vices he most warns against are those that disrupt peace in oneself and in others: arrogance, greed, haughtiness, vanity, jealousy, detraction, an unforgiving spirit. On his deathbed Francis reconciled two bitter enemies, the bishop and the mayor of Assisi. He was a peacemaker until the end; literally he died making peace. The “spirit of Assisi” is a spirit of peace and so when Pope John Paul II wanted to gather the world's religious leaders together to pray for peace, he invited them to Assisi.

St. Francis speaks to us today just as he urged his early followers: “Since you speak of

peace, all the more must you have peace in your hearts. Let no one be provoked to anger or scandal by you, but may they be drawn to peace and good will, to kindness and concord through your gentleness. We have been called to heal wounds, to bring together what has fallen apart and to bring home those who have lost their way” (L3S 58).

Integrity of Creation

Vatican II reminds us that to fulfill our mission we must read the “signs of the times.” “Signs of the times” may also be called “Signs of the Spirit” since they point to the many ways the Spirit of God is present and active in the world and the church, raising our consciousness to new levels of awareness. The ecological movement is one of the signs of our times. More and more people are coming to see ecological concerns as a matter of basic justice to future generations and find it easy to agree with the judgment of Pope John Paul II: “the ecological crisis is a moral problem” (Message of 8 December 1989).

An eminent scientist-member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences claims that “we have violated the Genesis trust. We have gotten carried away with the concept of dominion and subjugation and have lost the concept of caring.” He claims that “the way we are treating the world is not sustainable. To continue to shuck our clear obligation in what often seems to be nothing more than a relentless quest for material prosperity must eventually come to seem unacceptable to any moral person.” Over-consumption and waste, especially in affluent countries, are the chief causes of environmental destruction. This is a call to serious conversion.

While as Franciscans we do not have the scientific expertise to solve the ecological crisis, we do have a Franciscan vision of reverence for all creation and this attitude is the key to solving the ecological crisis. For this reason many scientists today propose a partnership between religion and science so that the ecological movement can have a “soul.”

St. Bonaventure beautifully expresses Francis' mystical vision of creation: Aroused by all things to the love of God he rejoiced in all the works of the Lord's hands and from these joy-producing manifestations he rose to their life-giving principle and cause. In beautiful things he saw Beauty itself and through his vestiges imprinted on creation he followed his Beloved everywhere, making all things a ladder by which he could climb up and embrace Him who is utterly desirable. (LM IX,1) In a simple sentence Bonaventure expresses Francis' vision as well as his own: “Every creature is a word of God, because it speaks of God” (*Comment. in Eccles.*). For obvious reasons Pope John Paul II declared St. Francis the Patron Saint of those dedicated to ecological concerns in his letter *Inter Sanctos Praeclarosque Viros* (29 November 1979). The ringing challenge of Pope John Paul II can fittingly close this section: “We cry out once more: Respect the human being, who is the image of God! Evangelize so this may become a reality, so the Lord may transform hearts and humanize political and economic systems.” (Puebla, 1979)

2. Franciscan Formation in Justice, Peace and Ecology

Our General Constitutions (art. 126ff) remind us that ALL friars are in formation. The distinction is not between friars “in formation” and friars “out of formation” but between those in initial formation (from the day a man is received as a candidate until

the day of solemn profession) and those in continuing formation (from the day of solemn profession until death). Continuing formation is seen as “the journey of one's whole life” (*itinerarium totius vitae*) (art. 135). Understood this way, our continuing formation is very closely related to our continuing conversion of our life as “men of penance” (L3S 37). We are encouraged to be like St. Francis, described by both Thomas of Celano and St. Bonaventure as “always new,” “always beginning again,” *semper novus, semper inchoans* (cf. *Analecta Franciscana* X, pp.80, 222, 366, 577, 621). Francis continues to encourage us, as when close to his death he encouraged his first followers, “to begin again to serve the Lord God, for up till now we have made little or no progress” (1Cel 103). Our Franciscan vision can grow ever more dim just as a fire can be gradually extinguished if it is not continually rekindled. So St. Paul reminded Timothy: “REKINDLE the gift of God that is within you” (2 Tim 1:6). If the gift--in our case, St. Francis' vision of radical gospel living--is not treasured and nurtured, it can be lost. We have two options: growth or decline; progress or stagnation. Continuing formation/conversion is the path of progress and growth.

This understanding of continuing formation as a lifelong process is confirmed by Pope John Paul II: “Every life is a constant path towards maturity, a maturity that cannot be obtained except by constant formation. There is no profession, job or work that does not require constant updating, if it is to remain current and effective” (*Pastores Dabo Vobis*,70). For this reason, continuing formation “is particularly urgent today, not only because of rapid changes in the social and cultural condition of individuals and peoples, but also because of that 'new evangelization' which constitutes the essential and pressing task of the Church at the end of the second millenium.”

The new evangelization needs new evangelizers” (ibid.82). As noted earlier, this new evangelization--which we too must see as our “essential and pressing task”--“must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the church's social doctrine” (*Centesimus Annus*, 5). We cannot proclaim that doctrine if we are unfamiliar with it; study and reflection on the church's social teaching is an essential element in our continuing formation. Cf. GG.CC. art. 96. That teaching, a real call to conversion, was enunciated for the universal church by Vatican II, especially in the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* and in numerous papal encyclicals. Episcopal conferences have provided an extremely valuable service by applying the universal social teaching to the conditions of their own continents and countries. Most notable among these efforts have been the meetings of the Conference of Latin American bishops (CELAM) and especially CELAM II (held in Medellín in 1973).

Medellín injected new vitality into much of the Latin American church, giving it a new direction: the “preferential option for the poor.” A five-centuries old way of “being church” in Latin America (allied to the oligarchies and ruling classes, even as it preached “charity” to the poor) died at Medellín, and a new way, more evangelical, was born. Medellín is a brilliant example of continuing formation and conversion, for the church on an entire continent and thus constitutes a grace not only for Latin America but also for the church universal. (Interestingly, in its Message to The Peoples of Latin America, Medellín coined the term “new evangelization,” used countless times since, especially by Pope John Paul II.). One important lesson we can learn from Medellín, especially for continuing formation in matters of justice, peace and ecology, is the importance of experience. At that conference the Latin American bishops used the inductive method -- they began, not with a study of abstract doctrines, but with an analysis of the lived

experience of millions of Latin America's poor. They made their own the words of Vatican II: "The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope, the grief and anguish, of the followers of Christ as well" (GS 1).

St. Francis too was converted, not by reading books about leprosy but by his experience of going among lepers and serving them. Cf. Test 2. It was that lived experience that led him to redefine what for him was bitter and what was sweet. He wanted his brothers to have a similar experience and a similar conversion. Friars are "to rejoice when they live among people who are considered to be of little worth and are looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside" (RegNB 9:2). Reading books and articles and attending lectures about poverty, hunger, homelessness, the plague of violence and environmental destruction may be helpful and even necessary. We need to be well informed to address these issues with competence. But the experience of sharing the lives of the poor and working with others committed to a Christian solution to dehumanizing poverty, violence and environmental destruction is of even greater importance for our continuing conversion and formation. "People today put more trust in witnesses than in teachers, in experience than in teaching, and in life and action than in theories" (*Redemptoris Missio*, 42).

All friars should have the experience of direct involvement, at least on occasion, in ministries dedicated to issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. One happy result of this experience may well be that we begin to attach more importance to these issues in all our ministries, whatever they may be. We can thus raise the consciousness of the people whom we serve, thereby fostering their continual conversion also, so that together with them, we may more effectively advance the Kingdom of God on earth. This has special relevance in our youth ministries, for with their energy and enthusiasm young people are called to make their own unique and necessary contribution to promoting Kingdom values. Trained in social/cultural analysis, young people will better understand the root causes of the social ills that plague our world and dedicate their energies to eliminating them; and while instruction in the peaceful resolution of conflict is beneficial for all, it is especially so for the young, who are so often victims of violence and easily tempted to have recourse to it. In summary we propose three steps:

3. Summary

Prayer

Although the issues of justice, peace and ecology are often considered to be "secular" concerns (and do interest many sincere secular humanists), we approach them as men of faith. Prayerful reflection on scriptural texts dealing with these issues is of primary importance, for we seek above all else to discover and implement God's plan for creation. Prayer to the Holy Spirit is especially necessary, for the Spirit is always the principal agent in the whole work of evangelization. In the Constitution on the Liturgy (35 #4), Vatican II recommended sacred celebrations of the Word of God, also called Bible Vigils. Our GG.CC. (22 #2) recommend the same, both in our fraternities and with the people. Such celebrations on justice, peace and the integrity of creation could easily be compiled, using the biblical texts in the Lectionary for the Mass for Justice and Peace. In addition to the biblical texts, many Franciscan sources, both early and modern, deal with these themes. While there is no corresponding Votive Mass for Ecology, many biblical texts could easily be found dealing with the integrity of creation, e.g., Gen 1; 2:4-

7, 15; 9:8-17; Lev 25:23-24; Psalms 8,65,104,147,148; John 1:1-5; Rom 8:18-25; Col 1:15-23; Rev 21:1-5. Among the many Franciscan sources, St. Francis' *Canticle of Brother Sun* is especially noteworthy.

Study and Reflection

In his letter *Tertio Millenio Adveniente* (36), the pope asked a challenging question: “how many Christians really know and put into practice the principles of the Church's social doctrine?” These words invite us, and especially friars entrusted with the preaching and teaching ministries, to a serious examination of conscience. How well do we ourselves know the Catholic tradition on the pressing issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation? Is our thinking truly catholic: do we “think globally and act locally?” How much importance do we attach to these compelling questions in our ministries? If the people to whom we minister are largely ignorant of the Catholic social tradition, to a great extent the fault is ours. We need to recall that the “new evangelization” -- so urgently and repeatedly called for by Pope John Paul II, in the new millennium, “must include among its essential elements a proclamation of the church's social doctrine” (*Centesimus Annus*, 5). This doctrine, with its principles of universal validity, needs to “take flesh” in the concrete situations of each continent, country and locality. These concrete applications also require competence, the fruit of study, reflection and social/cultural analysis. In this context we need to emphasize the importance of the laity's role since the practical solution to problems in the areas of justice, peace and ecology depends almost exclusively on the competence and goodwill of the laity. The question for us is: are we forming a Christian social conscience in the laity we serve? The laity's road to holiness is not by a monastic *fuga mundi* but by living in the world dedicating themselves to the renewal of the temporal order so that it might correspond to God's plan. As Pope John XXIII noted: “We should not artificially see opposition where it does not exist: in this case, opposition between personal perfection and each one's activity in the world, as if a person could become perfect only by leaving aside temporal concerns. On the contrary it corresponds perfectly to the plan of Providence that each one become perfect (sic!) through his daily work, and for practically the whole human race that work will be in the temporal order” (MM 2249f). So the lay state too is a “state of perfection,” lived in the world while striving for the renewal of the temporal order. Do lay people hear that message from us?

Action

Some suggestions have already been made, such as study and giving more attention to the issues of justice, peace and the integrity of creation in our ministries. Other activities will depend largely on local conditions and so are best left to the conferences as well as provincial and friary chapters. Chapters have an important role, for just as our continuing formation is both personal and communal (GG.CC. 135), so too we are called to respond to the pressing needs of our times in the light of the gospel, both as individuals and as a brotherhood. We simply note that without action, study and reflection remain sterile.

Conclusion

As we prepare for what Pope John Paul II calls “The Great Jubilee of the Year 2000” (*Tertio Millenio Adveniente*, 17), we Friars Minor recall gratefully that the example of St. Francis has so much to offer us in meeting the most pressing social challenges of our times; Francis was truly the “Father of the Poor” (1Cel 76), whose early brotherhood was known as a “Delegation of Peace” (1Cel 24) and who considered himself the

Brother of all Creation (Canticle). As loving sons of Francis and of the Church, we need to respond to the pope's urgent plea: if we recall that Jesus came to “preach the good news to the poor” (Cf. Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22), how can we fail to lay greater emphasis on the Church's preferential option for the poor and the outcast? Indeed, it has to be said that a commitment to justice and peace in a world like ours, marked by so many conflicts and intolerable social and economic inequalities, is a necessary condition for the preparation and celebration of the Jubilee of the year 2000. Thus, in the spirit of the Book of Leviticus (25:8-12), Christians will have to raise their voice on behalf of all the poor of the world (TMA, 51).

Charles Finnegan OFM

Contemplation, Our Work for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation and Union with God

When speaking of contemplation and the work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation, we frequently are at a disadvantage, as these important aspects of our gospel life are often stereotyped unfairly. Some people assume that there is a dichotomy between contemplation and the work for justice. Contemplation, some think, is a withdrawal from the activities and business of society to a calm, peaceful, abstract presence that avoids the pain, confusion and questions raised by the suffering involved in our histories and personal lives. The work for justice and peace seems to be a more extroverted activity in which people are caught up in the social order with its problems and challenges. Expanding these stereotypes, we could say that contemplative prayer is a withdrawal to a private, isolated interiority and that the commitment to work for justice, peace and the integrity of creation is for marginal friars often motivated by a dedicated anger to challenge and change the political order. It is an activity caught in urgent social problems that do not appreciate interiority or time for quiet reflection.

Contemplation and meditation are frequently confused. Meditation is an activity that limits, concentrates or restricts our attention and consciousness to a particular point of focus. As a mental activity, it involves intellectual discipline and emotional withdrawal for concentration. Contemplation (con – templo, to be in a sacred place) has some of the same characteristics: for example, it is a focus of our attention. But the goal of contemplation is different. Not content with observation, it actively involves the whole person, intellectually, affectively and physically to seek union with God. It is about conscious union rather than observation. There are different schools and methods for both meditation and contemplation.

Jesus asks his followers to pursue the discipline of being awake, alert to what is happening around them and prepared to act. “The Reign of God is like a merchant who searches for the finest of all pearls” and when he finds it he acts decisively to have it; the Reign of God is compared to the bridesmaids, who while waiting for the groom, stay awake to keep their lamps burning so that they can see the bridegroom when he approaches. “The Reign of God is like a servant waiting for his master’s return . . . (it) comes like a thief in the night, you know neither the day nor the hour, so stay awake and be ready.”

The disciple stays awake and alert not for an intellectual appreciation of the meaning of life, but to re-enter life as an enlightened person of service. Jesus tells his followers that he has come so that we “may have life and have life abundantly.” In the parables of Jesus, we find that people are awakened to participate with others, for example, to be one with the bridegroom or to be of service in the story of the servant waiting for the master. Contemplation follows the path of compassion: awareness, action and union. These stages are connected by reflection that is done in a communal or personal setting.

The person who follows the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, as Francis describes Franciscan life, does not withdraw from society to preserve his life but gives his/ her life so that we can become a new creation. Jesus points us toward commitment, action and change. The Reign of God is compared to yeast that loses its own life in flour, becoming

something new and helpful for others, that is bread to nourish others.

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the simplest and most concise descriptions of the movements within Christian contemplation. The Samaritan is united to God's will by being alert and acting out of compassion. In this parable the priest, lost in thought or wanting to keep himself ritually pure by not touching a person who appeared to be dead, walked past the beaten man. The Levite, who knew the laws and the prophets also walked past the victim. The priest and the Levite are absorbed in their own internal--probably well-intentioned--world that was protected by external rules, regulations and judgments. Even if they saw the suffering man, they had practical, religious and legal reasons to avoid his pain and misery. The man who was awake and alert, who saw and responded was the Samaritan. He understood his place in creation and acted accordingly.

A bridge of compassion, the physical care of the beaten man by the Samaritan, was an active response in love. His response fused a union of three wills: those of the Samaritan, the beaten man and God. Frequently the action of compassion is caught up with the preoccupations of the mission or emergency and only later upon reflection do we realize that we were participating in God's life and activity.

Like the response of the Samaritan, the life of St. Francis parallels a similar movement of observation, compassion and action. His personal conversion is a key that helps us to understand Franciscan contemplation. It was a moment of affective union with God that involved different movements and levels: an experience; his reflection upon and understanding of the experience and the identification of the experience as being of and with God. The grace was not initiated in the abandoned chapel of San Damiano or in the quiet of Mount Subasio. Francis experienced his liberating union with God one day on a road outside the security of Assisi. Surprised by a leper, Francis spontaneously embraced and kissed the man. Later he knew that in his embrace of the leper he somehow had been embraced by God and that his whole life changed. The "sweetness and light" that Francis describes as flowing from the act of compassion was not God's paternalistic reward to Francis for being kind to a wretched man. It was the manifest result of the union of wills to love. The event on the road and not the process of reflection is what Francis identifies as his moment of conversion, his encounter with God.

Jesus and Francis each had moments of personal, private prayer when they were "away in a quiet place." We know little of these private moments. The scriptures and the biographies of Francis contain many stories of Jesus and Francis being in direct contact with God while they were interacting with people and creation. Jesus had his most significant and direct contact with God not in a dream but in the River Jordan, where he was standing in a crowd of people before John the Baptist. He went into the desert to understand more clearly his experience in the river. He did not go there to find his vision. Jesus regularly experienced direct union with God when he was in the presence of another person who was in need and had faith. He could feel the power of God physically move through him as the sick are healed. He could command the storm to be still and the fig tree to wither. These moments of conscious connection, union, being in a sacred place, with God were "contemplation in the action." There are many stories about Francis that describe the saint's delirious delight in God in the midst of people and creation (Greccio, *Canticle of the Creatures*, preaching to the birds.) Jesus withdrew to the desert and Francis to the mountains where they each reached a profound

understanding of who was interacting with them in their lives.

St. Francis' love for the incarnation of God in the poor Jesus of Nazareth was pivotal in the development of social awareness within western Christianity. Francis' embrace of the leper, the marginalized person of his society and his entering into the community of the lepers outside of Assisi opened a new path of contemplation. His joyful, passionate embrace of the Incarnate Love of God inspired others to believe in and to love God, who is seriously involved within our history. This in part is why the Order tells us: "Following the example of Francis who was led by the Lord to go among the lepers, each and every brother should show a preference for the marginalized, poor and sick. The brothers should look at all things from the perspective of the poor...." (GG.CC. art 96. 1-2). The growing trust and appreciation of the Incarnation and its implications opened new paths for the western Church and civilization. On the other hand, for eastern Christianity, which did not have a Francis of Assisi, most of the sacred mysteries have remained mainly behind the iconostasis, within its icons, music and incense and not within the hospitals, orphanages, schools and social documents of the Church.

For our ancestors in faith, the Jews, justice was restoration not punishment. A judge performed an act of justice by restoring what had been stolen or broken. Occasionally he would imprison a person until everything was paid back. In the Bible the books of Genesis and Revelations see God's original plan for creation and humanity and its restoration symbolized by the Garden of Eden and the New Jerusalem. Justice is working so that the kingdom of God "may come on earth as it is in heaven" so that humanity will live peacefully and consciously in the presence of God.

Faithful to Francis and our tradition, we should resist creating a false dichotomy between contemplation and the work for justice that leads to a dualistic view of life. Each of us, called by God to be a lesser brother, a friar minor, has the responsibility to be alert to what is happening around us, to develop a habitual pattern of observation and preparedness to join God in the loving work of restoration. "The friars minor, joined as they are to the People of God, shall scrutinize the new signs of the times and always relate to a world in continual development" (GG. CC. art 4.1). Prayer reflection secures, identifies and reinforces the experience of God's saving activity. It reminds us that God does not live outside of our history but within it. We need time to move away from our activity to understand what has been happening and to incorporate ourselves more wholeheartedly into God's action around us.

Discernment helps us to understand where the Spirit is leading our community. Our projects, the structures that we have, the associations and the collaboration that we have with other people and organizations of goodwill should lead us to become more awake to what is happening in our society, then to embrace reality--even the parts that we want to avoid--and to join God where God is living and working. In our structures, our chapters, our work, our life together, we must be united with God so that his "kingdom will come on earth as it is in heaven."

John Quigley OFM

Justice and Peace in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*

Introduction

a) *Origin, objective and structure of the Ratio*

The *Ratio Formationis*, approved in 1991, is the orientative Document of both initial and ongoing formation for the whole Order. It is a reply to the conviction that "the formation of its members in fidelity to the roots of its special charism and to the signs of the times constitutes the greatest challenge to the Order and to the Provinces" (Presentation). In order to help the Provinces and all the friars to respond to that challenge this document has endeavored to gather up and to apply to formation the fruits of reflection on renewal in the area of formation from the time of the General Chapter of 1967. That reflection was given form and shape especially in the GG.CC. of 1987, although this occurred also in the chapters of Medellín in 1971, of Madrid in 1973 and in the Plenary Council of 1981, all of which had precisely formation as their central theme.

In the meetings of Novice Masters in 1988 and of Directors of those in temporary profession there was clear evidence of the need for an instrument for formation which would offer some agreed principles and some common guidelines to the whole Order.

Fruit of all this is the *Ratio Formationis* which is an orientative and inspirational document rather than a juridical one.

It is divided into three parts:

I. THE GOSPEL VOCATION OF THE FRIAR MINOR: It begins with art.1 of the GG.CC. and collects the fundamental features of the Franciscan charism as developed in the first five chapters of the GG.CC.

II. FRANCISCAN FORMATION: it develops Chapter VI of the GG.CC. on formation, following the same structure as the themes of Chapter VI.

III. GENERAL, THEOLOGICAL, PROFESSIONAL AND MINISTERIAL FORMATION IN THE FRANCISCAN SPIRIT: it develops Chapter VI, title VI, of the GG.CC. on "Other aspects of formation".

The *Ratio* corresponds closely to the GG.CC. It contains eighty explicit citations from them, without counting those in the appendix. Its influence is visible in what pertains to Justice and Peace. It also makes many allusions to the Medellín Document on formation (nine references without counting those of the appendix).

b) *Justice and Peace in the document*

Is the question of Justice and Peace so evidently present in the *Ratio* as to deserve to be the object of study? No doubt the person who approaches this document from a JPIC perspective will say it does. Not only are the basic key elements of Justice and Peace present, they even constitute the underlying perspectives for all principal aspects of formation.

It is evident that there is not a question of a document on formation expressed in terms of justice and peace. Nevertheless, all the fundamental coordinates of Justice and Peace are found there explicitly, often as an explicit focus, always as a real background.

Some limitations are noticeable:

- There is a notable silence concerning the structural character of injustice and its implications in formation (just one allusion in this sense).
- The cultural dimension of Justice and Peace seems to be more present than its socio-political source.
- There is no allusion to the problem of the marginalization of women.
- Most notable: it does not offer pedagogical guidelines which are concrete and distinguishable for the purpose of developing the theme of Justice and Peace in the various stages of formation.

Having said that, we must acknowledge that it would not be realistic to ask much more from a document such as this which sets out to offer general guidelines for the whole Order in all its plurality and complexity. In other words, it is not the job of a document of this nature to offer concrete pedagogical instructions but rather to offer inspirational principles, attainable horizons and criteria for discernment.

c) *My aim*

I am not going to read the *Ratio* or present it line by line. Neither am I going to enter into its pedagogical aspects. I shall simply try to gather up the affirmations which seem to me of basic importance, pointing out some commentaries and outlining some deeper reflections.

I am arranging these affirmations in three sections: some principles of spirituality, some objectives for formation and some formative places, instances or means.

I am aware of the fact that in so doing I am pitched at a level that is too abstract and vague, almost cliché and for that I hasten to beg pardon.

I. Some Principles of Spirituality in "Justice And Peace"

All formation is sustained by a particular spirituality. Formation for Justice and Peace likewise presupposes a spirituality, that is to say a manner of conceiving the meeting between the human being and God, a way of knowing the journey of the human person towards God in society and in the world in which that person lives. In Part I, I am going to emphasize three elements which are very much present in the *Ratio* and which in one way or another shape the form of "a spirituality of Justice and Peace", a spirituality, that is to say, of following Jesus, the Just and the Peaceful; a spirituality which contemplates God in the victims; a spirituality of incarnation and of praxis.

1. A spirituality of following Jesus.

Following Jesus is one of the dimensions most often alluded to in the *Ratio*, above all in the first part; It uses the expression "following Jesus Christ" more than twenty times (Presentation: nn. 1; 3; 5; 6; 8; 9; 10; 11; 12; 16; 17; 20; 30; 35; 36; 41; 44; 56 3a; 132; 142). The brother in formation is, above all, a "disciple" (1; 5; 26), called to "follow in the footsteps of Christ" (1; 17), more precisely, to "witness before the world to the poor and humble Christ" (24), of "poor and crucified Christ" (1; 15; 29; 36; 57), of "the poor,

humble and crucified Christ” (17). This is the identity of the brother in formation. This is the perspective and horizon for formation.

I believe that here we are given the key to a formation in Justice and Peace. The following of Jesus is what gives foundation and meaning to the cause of Justice and Peace, encompassing the friar minor. The first thing, therefore, which formation must try to do is to make followers, disciples of Jesus. From the Franciscan perspective, formation in Justice and Peace is the same as promoting formation in following and for the following of Jesus.

What then does formation from the perspective of being a follower require? It requires something more than learning principles, ideas and values related to Justice and Peace. It has to do with the active and personal following of the One who both Just and Peaceful. It is only in following that one is formed and molded, not by mere ideological instruction nor praxis through force of will nor even by superficial imitation. Otherwise, Justice and Peace runs the risk of descending into ideology or voluntarism. Justice and Peace is not just an initiative by a brother but rather a continuation of the Jesus mission. It is not merely a program of activities. Instead, it is above all personal identification with the Risen crucified in solidarity with all who have been crucified along with their hopes and their despairs.

2. A Spirituality of the contemplation of God in the victims

Let us pick out some affirmations of the *Ratio*. The person in formation needs to develop the “attitude of contemplation which is capable of listening to God” in his daily life (60), “a sense of the God’s presence in the world” (56 2b) “who discovers in the world the good which God works there” (32; cf. Med F 52). Valid for all formation is what the *Ratio* says concerning ongoing formation: that it “is a journey lasting the whole of life, both personal and communal, consisting in the discovery of the poor and crucified Christ in oneself, in one’s brothers, in one’s service, in one’s particular culture, and in the whole of contemporary reality” (57). In no.33 it says: “To be faithful to their own vocation, the Friars Minor incarnate themselves in the concrete situations of the people among whom they live. They discover in them the different faces of Christ and find in them the appropriate form of Franciscan life”. And where will the Friar Minor discover those various features of Christ poor and crucified? Simply in the poor and crucified members of the people among whom they live, in all the disfigured faces of today, where is hidden and where is revealed the glory, the passion and the tenacity of a God who is near and is partial (towards them).

The friar in formation must familiarize his heart and his gaze with the face and those (other) faces of the Crucified. That is the gospel and Franciscan way of recognizing the presence of God in the world. This gaze is a fundamental principle of spirituality as well as being an objective and means of formation: the purpose of formation is to help develop this gaze and it is this gaze which forms the friar. For the friar minor who is a follower of Jesus and a believer, it is not simply a matter of looking at the world from the perspective of the poor; it is also a matter of discerning the presence of God in the world and in the poor. And that is the way “to be genuine” (J. Sobrino), the way to be faithful to the world’s as well as God’s reality because God is defined as *the one who sees the misery, hears the cries and knows the suffering* (Ex. 3,7) of the victims.

Contemporary man does not ask who is God or whether God exists, but where is God?

Where is God in Auschwitz, in El Salvador, in Rwanda. Well then, God is always "outside the city", with those who are outside, crucified with the crucified. The God who beholds and prefers the victims is looking at us from (the faces of) the victims and wishes to be seen in them. The injustice which creates victims hides God dramatically, but in a world where there are victims God does not want to be sought and found if not in them. It is not simply a question of believing in God but of "believing in God from (the reality of) the victims" (J.Sobrino). It follows then that nearness to the victims and the option in favor of them, in other words, the option for justice and peace, is the "Christian opportunity for the experience of God"

Christian spirituality does not consist in acquiring certainty that God exists or knowledge of God's nature; rather it consists in the heartfelt and existential experience that God has a preference for the poor. Likewise, the question of formation does not consist in preparing oneself to prove to the world of today that God exists; rather it consists in the mental, heartfelt, existential preparation for being able "to say that God loves the poor" (G. Gutierrez).

3. An Incarnated and Practical Spirituality

The *Ratio* affirms that "the Friars Minor incarnate themselves in the concrete situations of the people among whom they live. They should discover in them the different faces of Christ" (33). According to the famous expression of D. Bonhöffer, "Christ adopted man in the center of life"; not at the edges but at the heart of the world and of life, not in the quiet open spaces but in the struggle against injustice and in the conflict for peace. Formation in the spirit of Justice and Peace is animated and sustained by a spirituality that is rooted in life with all the confusion of injustice and conflict, of hopes and of projects.

We have here a criterion that is decisive for human and spiritual formation. If God makes himself incarnate in the very heart of our lives, then only from the heart of life, of the world, of mankind can we continue the transforming experience of meeting God. This is what spirituality is about. An incarnated spirituality, attentive to reality regarding the place of its manifestation and its meeting with God. Not an intimist spirituality but one open to others; not an inward looking spirituality but one aware of others. Not a spirituality of flight but one of commitment. Not a quietist or self-centered spirituality but an involved and active one; not spiritualist but spiritual and fed by the Spirit which vivifies and transforms; a spirituality that is all the more personal in the degree that it is involved in society. It is deeper and more interior to the degree that it is more open to the outside and from the outside.

All of this demands a bond between spirituality and a vital day-to-day praxis. That is not for the purpose of losing the content of spirituality in activity but to make of it an opening and a source of transformation. What the *Ratio* says of formation in general is valid also for spirituality: that it is an "experiential, that is to say it is based on the particular life and gifts of each person, and encourages the concrete experience of the particular Franciscan style and values in daily life" (47); and it is "practical, inasmuch as it aims at transforming into action whatever is learned" (48). It insists on the need for formation that comes from life and from concrete experience both in relation to the postulants (128&3) and in relation to the novices (142), the friars in temporary profession (153) and those who are preparing for any ministry (175;177). Mere doctrines and mere ideal identification do not form. That comes from contact with reality, illumined by and lived in faith. A spirituality arising from the depth of reality which makes us into admiring servants of life in all its forms,

above all the forms which are most threatened.

II. Some Objectives of Formation “for Justice and Peace”

It is important to point out these spiritual principles by which formation is oriented. It is also necessary to be more precise and more concrete. In this second part I am going to look at the objectives which the *Ratio* assigns to formation and which are related to Justice and Peace. In a world where all revolutions seem to have failed and all the utopias have disappeared, where skepticism, the feeling of perplexity, the sensation of powerlessness and the “ideology of the inevitable” grow, Franciscan formation must endeavor to have friars disposed to effectively incarnate the Gospel in today's world. And this objective is not just one other among the other objectives of formation; instead, it is that which authenticates and gives meaning to the other objectives. More concretely, Franciscan formation must engage itself in fomenting among the friars a triple attitude and activity: a view of the world in a Franciscan perspective, a real and effective compassion towards the very poor, and action in favor of justice in peace and of peace in justice.

I. Seeing Reality from the Perspective of the Poor.

This is well expressed in the *Ratio* in a short article referring to the Novitiate, but which is applicable to all stages of formation: “The novice should develop the capacity to perceive, to judge critically and to participate in the realities of life in a Franciscan perspective” (143). What is the Franciscan perspective? Without a doubt those preferred by Jesus and by Francis, those bereft in this world of an advocate or an ally. Like all perspectives it is partial, but it is the partiality of God which Jesus made into Good News and Francis into a form of life. “To know”, “to judge critically”, “to participate in the reality” of that perspective: this is the objective of Franciscan formation.

The way in which we behold, know and judge the reality is important. It is true we live in times of radical uncertainty, of general disorientation and instinctively we doubt global judgments on reality. That, however, could also become a temptation; the temptation of renouncing any kind of criterion. It is true we live in a “galaxy of complexity” (J. Garcia Roca). We need to avoid simplification and not wish to return to dogmatic certitudes, ideological doctrines or omni-comprehensive systems. At the same time it is imperative the friar minor apply himself to having “a critical attitude to society and to the world” (162) as in the *Ratio* developing a “sensitivity for the real state of things so as to see the problems and understand their causes” (180), and still more acquiring “the Franciscan vision of the world and of man, develops a balanced and critical judgement regarding events” (32). Obviously a “balanced judgment” is not an impartial or neutral one which consciously or unconsciously ratifies and supports situations of injustice; rather, it is a judgment animated by gospel clarity and partiality. The *Ratio* also says that formation must endeavor to provide the friars with capacity *to read the signs of the times* (65 & 1c), and the great sign of the times is the increasing gulf between the wealth of a minority and the misery of a majority. Formation tries to create and deepen a lucid and critical view of the world in the friar minor; not a neutral one but a view that is partial from the perspective of the poor; a view that looks at God in the world and looks at the world with the eyes of God.

We must also understand these objectives similarly to what the *Ratio* points out for the theological studies of the friar minor, namely, “to confront his faith with the problems of the today's world”, “to clarify and to promote a personal and social ‘practice’ of the faith”

(165), to make possible an “understanding of the world today and of the human person” (151). We will not understand the modern world and the human being within it except to the extent we understand that misery and hunger are more unjust to the extent that they are more avoidable. In the face of injustice there is no place for an impartial theology.

In this sense it is worth taking note of some features which theology should possess according to nos. 166, 167: “a theology associated with prayer; a theology close to real life, directed towards concrete action” (166); “a theology of Creation, nourishing the praise of the Creator, teaching men respect for created things, bringing the light of faith to bear on the ecological problems of our time; a theology and a Christology making present the salvation and the liberation offered by God in response to the appeals and the needs of the poor of today; a theology leading to respect for the human person and his rights; a theology which aims at the construction of a fraternal world (justice, peace, ecumenism) (cf. Document on formation by the General Chapter of Medellín, 59); a theology firmly tied to an eschatological vision in which it finds the force for a daily self-commitment” (167).

2. An effective compassion for those who are poorest

L. Feuerbach correctly judged that "suffering preceded thought". In effect, only that which is suffered is known, or more exactly, that which is suffered jointly. Our world is more in need than ever of "compassionate reason" (J. Sobrino). In this sense I have declared in a previous point that we only come to know today's world when we take upon ourselves the pain of the poor. But we must also declare the opposite: knowledge must also bring with it compassion, to "take charge of and to bear" (I. Ellacuría) the suffering of that "surplus population", an increasing majority each day on our planet.

In the Franciscan vocabulary this compassion is called *minority*. The *Ratio*, quoting Francis and the GG.CC., reminds us that the friars have been called to “live as Minors among the poor and the weak” (Art. 10, RegNB 9:2), to live “in poverty, humility and meekness among the least of the people, without power or privilege”, “like a pilgrim and stranger... a brother and subject of every creature” (22); that the friars minor imitate Francis “choosing the life and the condition of the poor, identifying with them, serving the oppressed, the afflicted and the sick, and they let themselves be evangelized by them” and make “an explicit option for the poor, becoming a voice for those who have no voice, as an instrument of justice and peace” (25). In particular the *Ratio* recalls that formation must ensure that the friars choose and take up work “in the spirit... of minority, simplicity and sharing, especially with the little ones and the poor of this world” (159). And just as love is real only when it is concrete, and is concrete only when it is exercised with the one nearest at hand, compassion towards those of little importance and the option for the poor must begin and must express itself in the first place in the fraternity, in relation with the friars of the fraternity who are in greatest need. In this respect, the *Ratio* says, speaking of the Novitiate, that respect and care of the old, infirm and weak friars (144) of the fraternity is one of the criteria for discerning the suitability of the novice for first profession.

That minority-compassion, since it is an essential element of the identity of the friar minor, constitutes a fundamental objective of Franciscan formation for Justice and Peace. Formation must stimulate in the friar that identification of judgment and of sentiment, of mind and heart with the least of all: with the Third World, with the Fourth World and with that social fringe - every day greater - which is identified by what J. Garcia Roca calls “vulnerability” that is to say, all those who are neither completely marginalized nor completely integrated into society and have a precarious existence: precarious work,

precarious affective relations, a precarious feeling in their lives.

But to be evangelical and Franciscan, the option for the poor must get its impulse not from motivations of the moral order nor from ideological convictions, but from a compassion which emanates from the heart, reaching and transforming the whole person. Then that option becomes an experience of grace and can be lived authentically as an expression of gratuitous love: “it was changed for me into sweetness of soul and body”. Indeed, “there does exist a form of love of justice which suffers from the threat of not loving people.”

Within minority-compassion, which constitutes a principal objective of formation we can include a medullar aspect of the Franciscan charism, *respect for Creation*. This is an expression which is repeated many times in the *Ratio*: 21;56 &3c; 156;162. What does "respect for Creation" mean? It signifies admiration and consideration for everything that exists, because it is a creature of God and possesses the dignity of a brother, and in it Christ is present and is encountered (cf.12). The *Ratio* points out that this "respect for Creation" is one of the criteria for the suitability of a friar for solemn profession (165). Formation should help discover that in ecology there is no question of an egoistic preoccupation of an opulent society, nor a superficial manifestation of some bourgeois spirituality, but rather something that is at the very heart of Francis' faith: the understanding of creatures as subjects and not mere objects of manipulation and human consumption, and the feeling of respect for the inviolable right of every creature. Formation ought to help discover that the ecological problem is precisely the right to existence of every creature and the right to survival of those who come after us on Mother Earth.

Here then are the existential preferences of mind and heart, which formation should stimulate and reinforce in the friars. For this it is indispensable to establish a pedagogy which is concrete, operative, coherent and part of a process which, evidently, the *Ratio* cannot offer. How can we ensure that the criteria of judgment and the practical options of friars in formation are going to take shape from compassion-minority? How can we set about purifying and authenticating the over-superficial idealizations of many candidates?

How can we substitute the eyes and habits proper to the more privileged in our world by replacing them with the preferences of Jesus and Francis? How can these preferences be motivated and spiritually consolidated above all starting from the Novitiate? How are we going to offer during temporary vows levels of experience and real encounter with the very poor, so that this option may continue to take root in everyday life? These are vital questions for formators and those in formation. Otherwise Justice and Peace run the risk of being reduced, as so often happens, to a vague desire or an empty formula.

3. Action in Favor of Justice in Peace and in favor of Peace in Justice

Action for justice and action for peace. They are inseparable. They are one and the same. They form one sole objective and are impossible to separate in formation. The friar minor, says the *Ratio*, “works for justice and peace, and he respects creation” (21); he must convert himself into “an instrument of justice and peace” (25; 32), into “a herald of justice, peace and reconciliation” (180a). That is what Franciscan formation looks towards by what is measured. “A pursuit of justice and peace” (56 2b) figures among the specific principles of Christian growth for the one in formation; the “sense of justice, peace and respect for creation” (156) is featured among the criteria for suitability for solemn profession. The efficacy of the “engagement to transform society towards justice, peace

and respect for creation” (162) is included among the objectives of formation in general. To sum up, justice and peace together with respect for creation form a principle, a criterion and an objective of formation. In line with the *Ratio* let us be more specific.

On one hand: action in favor of justice. To the degree that the marginalized and the “vulnerable” in our world and our society are victims of injustice, compassion for them must be changed into action against injustice and action in favor of justice. The *Ratio* points out that “The Friar Minor seeks to become aware of and work for the elimination of every form of injustice and the dehumanizing structures which exist in the world” (25); and “The Friar Minor...is prepared to denounce vigorously all that is contrary to human dignity” (34). That element also belongs to the essential objective of formation. Nor does the *Ratio* omit to indicate a line of action for justice which should always be remembered and put into effect, namely: that it is important to “care for the recipients of charity, so that they may become protagonists of their own human promotion and liberation” (180a).

Thus, working for justice is inseparable from working for peace. just as working for peace is inseparable from working for justice. If “justice is the name for peace” (Paul VI), peace is the name for justice fully realized. The *Ratio* insists in the First Part that the friar minor is called to be a “man of peace” (28) and “a messenger of reconciliation and peace” (3) to live as one “reconciled and peaceful” (22); “as the herald of peace, carries it in his heart and offers it to others” (34; cf GG.CC. 68,2). A “commitment to reconciliation and forgiveness” (56, 3c) should distinguish the growth of one in Franciscan formation, and “a spirit of compassion and reconciliation” (156) is a criterion for suitability for solemn profession.

Evidently having “a spirit of compassion and reconciliation” is not the same as being pusillanimous in situations of conflict and injustice. Formation to be “a man of peace”, a “herald of peace”, does not mean teaching one to avoid conflicts but to prepare to confront them. Formation must take care that the one in formation continues to acquire the “ability to communicate and face up to conflicts” (56, 1b), beginning with one's own fraternity. One's own fraternity is the first place in which the friars must promote this ability for communication and “of resolving conflicts” (64).

Finally, it is important to point out that struggling for justice in peace and for peace in justice is a job full of risks and prone to making mistakes. Whoever wants to be an instrument of justice and peace must learn to take on complexity and incertitude, even ambiguity and errors. He must learn how to enter into conflicts without making a covenant with injustice and without yielding to any sentiment of hatred or rancor. This demands great internal freedom and courage of spirit. But that strength is not the property of supermen but of those who recognize that they are poor and pardoned, indigent and graceful.

III. Some spaces and some formative instances "arising from Justice and Peace"

Having pointed out by following the indications of the *Ratio*, that Justice and Peace constitute a spiritual foundation and an objective for formation, I should like to emphasize in the third place that Justice and Peace indicate a place and a means for formation, a formative instance and factor. If all spirituality, like all knowledge and action, is conditioned by place and context, the same must be said of formation. Formation is not a transmission of ideas but of vitality. Nor is formation a program of information but a road to transformation. In the last analysis formation, like spirituality itself, is a way of life.

And life is taught and learned above all by adaptation and contact, by intuition and affection. Ultimately it is built up from a style of life. In this third part I am going to point out three features of Justice and Peace as a place from which a friar is formed: fidelity to the world, insertion-inculturation, dialogue.

1. From fidelity to today's world

In the *Ratio* we frequently meet the expression “today's world”, “people of today” (3;15;66;35;132;137;144...), and also “fidelity to the exigencies of today's world”, “fidelity to the signs of the times” (Presentation), or simply “faithfulness to mankind and to our time” ... (15)

What does this fidelity mean? In the first place it indicates “attention”. In the expression of *Populorum Progressio* taken up by the *Ratio*, it requires the brothers to be attentive “to the human person, the whole human person, and all human persons” (157); that formation be “attentive to the present appeals of the world” (50), that the friar in formation be “attentive to the signs of the times” (26; 32); that the “formation house is aware of the world and its history, of its present social context” (79). Fidelity to the world and to people of today evidently is not a servile and uncritical adhesion but a vigilant and accepting attitude. It does not mean conformity or facile adaptation but an alert listening to voices, calls and demands of today's people.

Fidelity also signifies an answer to the actual needs of the world. Speaking of the program of formation of the friars in temporary profession it is said that we must respond “to the longings and needs of the world today” (150), and this presupposes an understanding of the modern world (151&3), a listening, understanding response. And even more so: communion. Formation must foment an in-depth communion with the world and people of today. Speaking of the Novitiate, the *Ratio* says that the friar novice “prepares himself to enter both intellectually and practically into a deeper communion with the men and women of today in their historical, social, political, cultural and religious reality” (137; cf GG.CC. 127, 3; 130). Formation in the spirit of Justice and Peace requires attentive listening, a positive response, a heartfelt communion with the world in which we live, contrary to such frequent temptations of reproach and censure. We must engage in formation in harmony with people of today rather than in condemnation of them, so as to walk with them rather than impose (ourselves), to be companions rather than impart magisterial warnings.

Fidelity to the real world requires, finally, a constant creative effort on the part of formators and those in formation. The *Ratio* points out that the friars make creative efforts to discover new ways for the promotion and diffusion of gospel values (39). That, says the *Ratio*, is the source of the need for ongoing formation. Formation means opening oneself up “to new forms of life and service” (50) and “to adapt himself continually to the needs of the Church and of the historic moment” (180a).

The Gospel is always novel because it is always unknown news and because there is an announcing and a hearing in a human history that is always changing. It is ever more changeable in our time of accelerated transformations, where yesterday's schemes and solutions have failed today, where each new transformation brings with it new injustices and where all injustice acquires planetary dimensions. In that kind of world, formation must help keep our eyes wide open and our entire existence free, at the service of others, and creative.

2. From insertion in the life and culture of a people

The *Ratio* insists that life itself in fraternity and in the world is the appropriate place and best medium of formation. “Franciscan formation takes place in the fraternity and in the real world” (43). Well then, for a gospel and Franciscan view, the starkest reality in the world in which we live is the contrast between the riches of some and the poverty of others. Franciscan formation, therefore, requires insertion - which may be very varied, but which must be authentic - in the reality of the poorest in the world, of their surroundings and in the fraternity itself. The friar in formation is to “integrate himself positively in social and community life” (45).

That feature is valid for all phases of formation but is especially applicable to the time of temporary profession: “The friar in temporary profession should become a part of and be in solidarity with the real situation of the world and the problems of the country in which he is called to live out his vocation” (155). “Practical formation for any ministerial service takes place above all in the daily experience of life in the fraternity, in the ecclesial community, in society and in particular among the poor” (177). The words “in particular among the poor” always define what is peculiar to Jesus and Francis and, consequently, also to the peculiar aspect of the place of Franciscan formation. Franciscan formation not only has its place in the spirit of minority but also as coming from the experience of minority.

Evidently the forms of insertion may be very diverse, but effective proximity to and experience of the reality of the world in which the friar in formation lives is a condition and medium just as much an objective of formation which is for and emanating from Justice and Peace. This acquires a special validity in ongoing formation: “Ongoing formation takes place in the context of the daily life of the Friar Minor, in his prayer and work, in his relations both within and outside the fraternity, and in his contact with the cultural, social and political world in which he moves” (58). The experience of real life in the real world is what forms, in the last analysis.

How are we to apply this criterion and put it into practice? The *Ratio* does not give details - which is understandable. At any rate, it is interesting to point out that it considers the possibility of “small formation fraternities inserted among the poor” (80).

One of the fundamental exigencies of this insertion is inculturation. The *Ratio* formulates the following principle: “Franciscan formation is inculturated in the conditions of the life, the environment and the time in which it is carried out” (49). It also says that the formation of one in temporary profession must include an “introduction to the understanding of their own culture and of popular piety” (151,3); and the preparation of the friar minor for evangelization requires “an openness to inculturation, and to a positive evaluation of popular piety...closeness to the life and the language of the people; knowledge of, and dialogue with, other religions and cultures” (179). All of this imposes an obvious demand on formators: “The formation directors should do their best to integrate their work into the cultural context of the places in which they are called to serve” (100).

Culture is the whole aggregate of the references of meaning, values of conduct, symbolic horizons which shape and motivate the lives of individuals and of peoples; culture is the subsoil which we share with those nearest to us, but also at the same time that which permits us to approach and understand those furthest removed, that which permits us to

enter into dialogue and a search in common. It is possible and necessary to open oneself from one's own culture to that of others. Finally, it is other people's culture which allows us to understand ourselves at greater depth. Culture, therefore, is not a mere adaptation but a penetration down to the vital root of individuals and peoples which enables us not only to announce the Good News but also to receive it from them. That meeting and encounter is the privileged place for a formation which wishes to be of service to justice and peace.

3. From Dialogue and Respect for Difference

The *Ratio* insists on dialogue both within and outside the fraternity: a friar lives "in listening and dialogue" (23), in "respect for diversity" (75) within the fraternity and "in dialogue with the people of his own time" (33). He "cultivates an attitude of good will and dialogue in his encounters with different cultures and religions" (26). In the formation house "an atmosphere of confidence, dialogue and courtesy" should prevail (76). The formators should "possess the ability to work together, to dialogue and to listen to the other friars" (84). "Training in active listening" (163) is one of the major objectives of the study of human sciences. "To dialogue with other Christians, with other religions and with agnostics" is one of the objectives of theological formation. "Knowledge of, and dialogue with, other religions and cultures" (179) is one of the requisites in the ministerial preparation.

Each one of the places in the world in which we live is more and more a crossroads where we find ourselves in the irreplaceable and irreducible presence of the other - the other with his/her language and logic, religion and moral code, ethics and politics. We inhabit a world which each day is becoming more our village but is nevertheless more pluralist. So-called post-modernity is essentially the result of the radical pluralism of our societies. In particular, today there are cultures and religions being imposed on us which were unknown for centuries and which were relegated by our Christian Occident and by our Euro-centric Church. They are cultures and religions which in no way can be reduced to what we already knew or believed them to be. They are cultures and religions which perturb our securities and contradict our pretensions, and so they convert us and incite us to believe in a more human way in a more human God.

Pluralism is one of the greatest challenges for formation: to help (it) to accept this pluralism in a positive way; even more, to help in such a way that this pluralism will be changed into a stimulus and a means of formation, into an exercise in growth and in common searching, without falling into skepticism or dogmatism, without yielding to relativism or intolerance. The narrow road to follow is dialogue which will allow the crossroads to become a meeting-place, allow difference to become a dialogue and allow divergence to become a common road towards justice and peace.

In conclusion, formation contributes to justice and peace in the world initiating the friars into a spirituality incarnated in the following of Jesus and into faith in a partial God. It leads the brothers to look on the world with God's eyes and to involve themselves with him, with the compassion of the Crucified. It teaches the friars to grow as human beings and as believers from the standpoint of insertion in the world and dialogue with people.

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PART TWO

THEMES OF SPECIFIC INTEREST

As we said in the introduction to this section, this second part is composed of seven specific themes of great social and ecclesiastical importance at the present time. They could have been more but, not being able to make the book longer, we have selected these as the most apt and of greatest interest for living out our charism.

Each theme has a brief theoretical development that does not claim to be exhaustive but rather makes a presentation of the theme to stimulate reflection and action. This theoretical development of each theme is completed with the experiences and testimonies of friars from all over the world.

The theoretical part of each theme, having been written by a different author, can throw up some repetitions. However, we wanted to leave it this way because this section is not to be read at one sitting but rather each chapter should be consulted and worked on separately.

At the end of each theme or chapter a long questionnaire can be found. The reason, in effect, is to be found in its instrumental character. If these chapters are to be used for meetings on formation, both initial and on-going, or even in meetings of reflection with the laity, the long list of questions will better facilitate the group that is going to reflect.

Themes:

1. Option for the Poor
2. Peacemaking
3. Integrity of Creation / Environmental Justice
4. Life
5. Human Rights: Individual and Collective
6. Women and the Charisms of Francis and Clare
7. Dialogue: Ecumenical, Interreligious and Intercultural

1. Option for the Poor



OFM General Constitutions, Article 97

1. The brothers should follow the example of St. Francis who was led by the Lord to go among lepers. Each and every brother should show a preference for the marginalized, for the poor and the oppressed, for troubled and sick people and be happy to live among them and show compassion.

2. The brothers should look at what is happening in the world from the perspective of the poor, in fellowship with all those considered unimportant. They should take pains that the poor themselves become more conscious of their own human dignity that they may protect it and enhance it.

From the life of Francis ...

His embrace of the leper, the marginalized person within medieval society, was the identified moment of conversion for Francis (Test.). After this experience Francis left the world to live among the lepers, and what before had been bitter now was sweetness and light (Test.). His identification with the lepers was more than pity or a social protest. The leper helped Francis to understand his place in life, his place before God. He saw himself to be a poor man, like every person to be born naked and to die naked, *sine proprio* before God. The brothers of his community were to be known as *minores*, men who lived without appropriating anything to themselves. In effect Francis chose to walk through life with the poor as one of them. He accompanied them and all those who could understand their identity as being utterly dependent on God. No one should lord it over another.

Regret over refusing a beggar while working in his father's shop caused Francis to resolve “never again to refuse anything that might be asked of him in the name of God” (L3S 3). Francis had a deep love and respect for the poor, seeing them as the image of Christ, the son of a poor mother (2Cel 83). When a friar spoke harshly to a poor man, Francis told the friar, “Who curses a poor man does an injury to Christ, whose noble image he wears, the image of him who made himself poor for us in this world” (1Cel 76). When he saw someone in need, Francis was grieved; during cold weather he asked wealthy people for a mantle which he could pass on to a poor person. Francis invited a poor man to bless him when Francis' own father cursed him (2Cel 12). If Francis could not offer material assistance, “he lavished his affection” and affirmed that the poor have a right to alms (LM 8:5). Francis wanted the rich to make extra provision for the poor and those hungry at Christmas (2Cel 200). Francis chastised a friar who spoke uncharitably to a poor man; the Poverello said that the person's poverty and sickness “are a mirror in which we ought to contemplate lovingly the poverty and weakness which our Lord Jesus Christ suffered in his body to save the human race” (LP 89).

Francis' love for the poor did not mean that he despised the rich. Indeed, Francis cautioned his friars not to look down on those “wearing soft or gaudy clothes and enjoying luxuries in food or drink” (RegB c.2). All the members of the brotherhood were equal, no matter what their social or economic background; no one was to cling to office within the brotherhood (LP 83). He called them “the Order of Friars Minor”--of lesser brothers--so that they would be subject to everyone (1Cel 38).

Option for the Poor

Throughout the centuries Franciscans have been challenged to make their own the words of Francis: “The rule and life of the Friars Minor is this: to observe the holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ by living in obedience, without anything of their own, and in chastity.” While each vow has offered its particular difficulties, it is undoubtedly safe to say that poverty has generated the greatest amount of debate and the sharpest polemic. Over the years the controversy has centered on the question of whether or not it is possible to live the radical poverty of Jesus Christ as espoused by Francis and his earliest followers. The intellectual discussions paid little attention to the concrete situation of the poor because the issue was not seen as essential to the controversy.

Contemporary developments, however, have made it vitally important to include the poor in the reflection on the meaning of our vow of poverty. The insistent cry arising from the Third World, which served as a catalyst for various documents of the Second Vatican Council and several papal pronouncements, makes us aware of the dehumanizing poverty that is characteristic of the situation of so many of our brothers and sisters throughout the world. The Order of Friars Minor has been moved by this clamor and is presently in the process of redefining its life and its mission in terms of the least of God's people.

In the General Constitutions promulgated in 1987, the Order highlights the need to make the poor an integral part of our lives and our works. Article 66:1 states: “The brothers should adopt the lifestyle of people considered unimportant in society, and live among them as lesser brothers. From this place in society, the brothers make their contribution to the coming of God's reign. In this way they pursue more closely the Savior's self-emptying and witness to it more clearly.” Article 78:1 declares: “Exercising the freedom

the Rule affords in the choice of work, the brothers should prefer those works in which the witness of Franciscan life is most evident. They should take into account the needs of different times and places. They should prefer especially works that express solidarity with the poor and service to them.” Article 97: 1 and 2 affirms: “The brothers should follow the example of St. Francis who was led by the Lord to go among lepers. Each and every brother should show a preference for the marginalized, for the poor and the oppressed, for troubled and sick people and be happy to live among them and show compassion. The brothers should look at what is happening in the world from the perspective of the poor, in fellowship with all those considered unimportant. They should take pains that the poor themselves become more conscious of their own human dignity that they may protect it and enhance it.” In many other places the Constitutions exhort the friars to be aware of and to include the poor in the elaboration of our life together. Contemporary terminology has labeled this inclusion of the poor a “preferential option for the poor.” What is this “option” that has become so central to the Franciscan project?

In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Social Thought* (Liturgical Press, 1994), Donal Dorr treats the topic of “preferential option for the poor.” He asserts that such an option is a commitment to “resisting the injustice, oppression, exploitation, and marginalization of people that permeate almost every aspect of public life. It is a commitment to transforming society into a place where human rights and the dignity of all are respected.” It is generally made by those who are not poor and who have come to realize their relative wealth or prestige. They choose to forego at least part of this wealth or prestige and to become identified with the underprivileged. Such a choice is most often based on a deeper understanding of the Christian faith. It includes a political dimension as well since individuals come to see the inequities that exist in society and opt to take the side of those who are relatively powerless. Once the friars see that this option is made in favor of those who are relatively powerless, it is a small step to extend concern beyond those who are strictly speaking the “poor,” that is, the economically deprived, to all those who are deprived of fundamental political, cultural or religious rights. In this definition we can include women, the victims of racial discrimination and all those who suffer structural injustice.

Dorr points out that individuals who make this option for the poor do so in a spirit of compassion. It demands first of all an attitude of solidarity with the poor in their sufferings. Practically, it has to do with our lifestyle: “the kind of food we eat, the clothes we wear, the way our homes are furnished.” But even more importantly it touches on the questions of “the area in which we live, the friends we cultivate, the kinds of work we undertake, and the attitudes and style we adopt in doing all these things.” Compassion also demands a commitment to action that seeks to overcome structural injustice. Effective action includes careful analysis of a situation, a conscious distancing of oneself from those guilty of injustice plus planned and concerted action at the political level to challenge the injustice and then the elaboration of realistic alternatives. Finally, in the process of opting for the poor, great care must be taken that the poor do not become the objects of our actions, no matter how well-intentioned they might be. The struggle is that of the poor; they must be the subjects of this struggle. Our role will always be defined in relation to this central reality.

Francis as Model

Franciscans have always turned to Francis as a source for inspiration and renewal. As

we seek to integrate the “option for the poor” into our approach to life and ministry, the question arises as to whether Francis can serve as a model for our search. The answer, simply put, is both yes and no.

In *Francis of Assisi* (Crossroad, 1992), Arnaldo Fortini lays out in painstaking detail the social structure of the world of Francis. The era was one of monumental change, with the structures of feudalism slowly giving way to those of rising capitalism. Feudalism was characterized by the *maiores* and the *minores*, the greater and lesser. These Latin terms were used to measure and classify the power, virtue, nobility and authority of the various members of society. The lords held sway through access to land and formation of large estates meant that most people became enslaved to the land. Even the free farmers needed to turn to the lord for protection. But with the greater importance of cities and trade as well as the inexorable growth of the money economy, the lords found themselves increasingly preoccupied with the rise of the *minores*, including merchants, artisans and workers in the fields. These lower classes opposed both the tolls levied by the *maiores* and the hated system of forced labor. Francis belonged to a well-to-do middle-class family in Assisi, with its fortunes tied to the cloth trade. As such, in his youth Francis participated in the social upheaval of the time. In 1198, when he was sixteen, Francis witnessed the fall of the Rocca Maggiore, the fortress that symbolized feudalism in Assisi. The following decade was one of bloodshed and violence as the *maiores* struggled to retain their dominance in increasingly difficult circumstances.

It was at this time that Francis heard the call of God to follow the true Lord. As he attempted to discover what it was that God wanted of him, all of the biographies attest to the fact that Francis showed special tenderness to the poor, with priority given to the poorest of the poor, the lepers. In *Saint Francis, A Model for Human Liberation* (Crossroads, 1984), Leonardo Boff states that the first conversion of the saint was to the poor, the crucified of society and then afterwards to Jesus Christ crucified. In various passages of his *Lives*, Celano attests to the compassion of Francis for the poor and his tender care of the lepers; Celano adds that the first friars followed in the footsteps of their founder. The path of Francis led him to challenge the feudal structures in two ways. First, he refused to accept the wealth and privilege attached to being part of the *maiores*, and instead threw in his lot with the poor who were hated and oppressed, and with the lepers who were loathed, segregated and then neglected by society. Francis looked at the poor not from the viewpoint of the rich, but through the eyes of the poor themselves, thus allowing the discovery of the value of the poor. Second, in his approach to communal living he sought to break the feudal hierarchy by treating all members as “brothers.” In 2 Celano 191, Francis made it known that in his group he would like the *maiores* to unite with the *minores*, the wise to unite with the simple. His style was not theoretical, but affective, and he expressed opposition to class distinctions by making all his followers “brothers” on an equal footing.

However, as both Fortini and Boff make amply clear, Francis' option for the “*minores*” of his time was not an option for the *minores* who were forming as a new social grouping. The *minores*, as noted above, included the merchants, artisans and workers in the fields. As a social class they were just as avid as the *maiores* to participate in the accumulation of wealth and in the power that comes with wealth. In this vein, Fortini, in chapter 8 of his book, advises caution in dealing with the relationship of the Franciscan movement and the growing movement toward establishment of a commune in Assisi. First, in commenting on the social pact of 1210 that ended years of hostility

between the different classes in Assisi, Fortini asserts that it did not come about as a result of a spirit of harmony inspired by Francis and his first followers, but was rather designed to increase the power of the commune. Second, he says that it is just as wrong to see the Franciscan movement as a result of the revolt of the *minores*. Rather: “The new communal society arises....from a desire for commercial expansion. It sees in war the means of obtaining it. It opposes the pride of merchants to the pride of the feudal lords. It bases its major social force on wealth and on industry. It sanctions the vendetta against those who offended it. It was cruel in meting out penalties and punishments. This society of greedy, violent, quarrelsome, ambitious, brutal people was the perfect antithesis of Franciscanism, as Francis was the antithesis of Pietro Bernardone.” So Francis' use of “minors” to describe his brothers did not come from the name of a class or a faction, but it rather came from the adjective that indicates “the lowest, the inferiors, those who take orders rather than give them.” Boff adds that Francis chose to change his social class, moving from the position of being a rich burgher to that of living with and as the poor.

Thus Francis can be a model for us today as we choose to make a “preferential option for the poor.” He was able to “liberate” the poor in that he gave them a renewed sense of their dignity and worth as human beings. His intuitive choice of the poor as the privileged place to meet the crucified and poor Jesus Christ plus his understanding of how poverty helps us to clear our minds and hearts to better receive both God and one another, stand as timeless inspiration to us who would follow in his footsteps. Yet we cannot expect of Francis a contemporary consciousness of the issues surrounding this option. Although Francis was able to see the consequences of the social divisions characteristic of feudalism and was able to catch glimpses of the meaning of the rise of the *minores* in the communes, his was not a consciousness of “structural injustice,” nor was he able to make a “political” commitment to redress such injustice. In the spirit of Francis we, who are capable of making these distinctions, are called to dedicate ourselves to understanding the causes and the workings of structural injustice and in the process to make a “preferential option for the poor”, who stood so close to hearts of both Jesus Christ and Francis of Assisi.

Franciscans and a Renewed Call to Opt for the Poor

Even during the lifetime of Francis, the question of poverty had become controversial among the friars. It is not surprising, then, that little more than thirty years after the death of Francis, when Bonaventure was elected Minister General of the Order, he was soon embroiled in the controversy and found it necessary to defend the virtue that was so near to the heart of his spiritual father. In his first encyclical letter, Bonaventure called the friars to task: “Brothers are all too eagerly invading the area of burials and legacies. The residences of the brothers are being changed frequently and at great expense...(which) denotes capriciousness and compromises our poverty.... Finally, expenses are rising to an outlandish level.” In his *Instructions for Novices*, Bonaventure reminds his readers that poverty is “the primary foundation of the whole spiritual edifice.” He further encourages the friars to “embrace poverty, then, with all your strength, for as Scripture testifies, she is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called happy [Prov 3:18]. Thus, if you maintain holy poverty to the end, you will enter the kingdom of heaven, for the Truth himself has promised: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven [Mt 5:3].”

But for all his concern, Bonaventure differed from Francis in treating the question of

poverty. Francis' conversion was effected through contact with those who were most despised by society, and his vocation was sustained by constant encounter with the crucified and poor Jesus Christ in and through the poor of the world who were likewise crucified. His was a relational approach to poverty, one in which those who suffered the effects of concrete poverty in their lives played an essential role. By contrast, the poverty defended by Bonaventure was more of an entity-in-itself, one that could be measured without reference to the poor of the world. It lent itself to scholarly discussion, and the stage was thus set for centuries of debate about the concept of poverty with little regard to those who, in fact, were poor and lived it in the flesh.

Today there is a new urgency for Franciscans to reconsider the issue of poverty or, expressed in a more contemporary manner, to make a “preferential option for the poor.” We Franciscans, faced with the enormous poverty of masses of our brothers and sisters throughout the world, are challenged to renew the spirit of Francis in our midst. We are invited to take this step by the cries arising from places like Latin America, Asia and Africa, by the teachings of Church leaders like John XXIII, Paul VI and John Paul II, and by many of the documents elaborated by our Order. Francis responded to the condition of poverty in his day with a literal and immediate embrace of those who were poor. We are called to do no less.

How might we fashion this contemporary “option for the poor?” One possible model is that of “accompaniment.” In *St. Francis and the Foolishness of God* (Dennis, Nangle, Moe-Lobeda and Taylor: Orbis, 1993), the authors contend that our best response to the conditions of poverty that exist, to the rage and mourning that they incite, to the grace and goodness that we find among the poor, to the need for analysis and alternative structures, might best be summed up in the word “accompaniment.” In their words that means: “to deviate from other pathways for a while (and then forever), to walk with those on the margins, to be with them, to let go. Through this encounter with Christ at the margins, we, who with Francis once saw the poor only as the 'other,' the feared one, the object of dread, then pity, then charity, can, as individuals and societies, experience a profound, ongoing, Spirit-led conversion of heart, soul, and mind. Slowly our centers of gravity move outside of ourselves and we find ourselves suddenly dancing with the Poverello and his despised friends in unknown places and with great joy.” For Francis, the decision to come down off his horse to embrace the leper, to accompany those who inhabited the margins of society, was a difficult and protracted one. Once made, however, it oriented the rest of his life and brought him into contact with the source of Life. A decision on our part to walk with the outcasts of society will likewise bring us into contact with the suffering Jesus who brought life through his death on the cross, and will reanimate our desire to follow in the footsteps of the Poverello.

Joseph G. Rozansky OFM

Examples from the lives of the friars...

To the outsider, the figures of St. Francis and St. Clare embody perhaps more clearly than any other church figures the concept of becoming one with the poor while sharing in their life experience. “Il Poverello,” as Francis is still known in Italy, and the founder of the Poor Clares were controversial characters in their own day because of their identity as *minores*, and their openness to those--like the lepers--considered to be of

least value to society.

The issue of poverty has consistently been a point of renewal and division within the Franciscan family. Francis and Clare discovered the freedom that accompanies a life lived *sine proprio*. Their poverty was not a commitment to frugality, but it was a choice, a passion of soul that freed them to live generously within God's creation, not claiming anyone or anything as his or her own property. Francis' commitment to this way of life was motivated by the poor Christ.

Today too, that radical option for the poor continues to be a controversial choice -- both in the context of an increasingly materialistic and success-oriented society and within the Franciscan family itself. As friars, sisters and seculars struggle to follow in the footsteps of their founders, they are faced with the complex questions of how far they can or should identify with the poor of today's world. Some friars see their mission to remain within traditional community structures where they can work best on behalf of the poor. Others believe they are called to work alongside the poor, providing vital services in shantytowns, slums or isolated rural areas. Still others opt to identify with the poor in every way possible, sharing in their life situations, their oppression--and even their death.

In some countries radical options for the poor have been forced upon the friars by governments or circumstances beyond their control. In Vietnam for example, all the friaries were confiscated by the communist rulers who took over the country in 1975. Many friars now see such apparent hardship as an act of providence, obliging them to give up their "comfortable" lifestyle and make a conscious decision to share in the life of the people there. By handing over larger friaries to the government and joining manual work brigades, the friars became more aware of certain Franciscan values and were able to witness to them in a new way. Today the Church in Vietnam is facing the renewed challenge of how to best serve the people in a country making radical moves towards modernization and a free market economy. ALEXIS TRAN DUC HAI, Minister Provincial of the province of St. Francis in Vietnam, was ordained in 1975, the year of the communist "revolution" and is increasingly concerned about the role Franciscans can play in his rapidly changing homeland. As the country moves towards modernization, he says, "I am convinced that the Church in Vietnam can compete with other sectors in society, not by establishing a prosperous facade but by strengthening the moral and human dimensions of our people."

Among the friars who have decided for this most radical of options we find DIEGO URIBE who joined up with a group of guerrillas who fought to liberate their country from injustice and social inequalities. Always working with a desire to serve the people and to remain faithful to his vows, Diego came to occupy a high rank in the hierarchy of his guerrilla group before being assassinated by the military in Columbia on 2nd December 1981. Even before solemn vows he was greatly disturbed by the extreme poverty and the injustice that he saw around him when he was studying theology in Bogotá and compared this with the privileged life enjoyed by those who lived within convent walls. Inspired by the profound changes of attitude introduced by the II Vatican Council, Uribe and some other Franciscan students decided to leave their comfortable quarters in the seminary and move to one of the poorest areas of the city. After his ordination he was sent to work in the western coastal region, one of the most humid and inhospitable enclaves of the country. This region is still populated by descendents of

the African groups brought there some two or three centuries ago as slaves to exploit the ancient gold mines, now exhausted, and many still continue today living and working as virtual slaves. During the course of time Diego began to question even more deeply the existent structures of society and the meaning of his own mission. In 1974 he returned to work in one of the peripheral zones of Bogota where for the first time he came into contact with members of the National Liberation Army. *"Diego was a very humble and lovable person"*, says his brother Fernando Uribe who now teaches in the Antonianum, Rome. *"We were eight children, five boys and three girls and he was the most lovable of us all. But his gentleness did not stifle his deep sensitivity to the misery of the poor people and, in his desire to do something effective for the poor, he believed that the armed struggle was the only way to free them from oppression"*. Fernando says that the National Liberation Army to which Diego affiliated towards the middle of the 70's went through a fierce evolution during the last ten or fifteen years, especially in regards to the methods employed to finance and advance its cause. Fernando was the first to know the decision of his brother to join the group - *"always respected, but never shared."* He also was the only one to go to the mountains at the end of December 1981 to identify the body of his brother. *"Diego and another of his companions were assassinated when they were holding a work meeting along with two other members of the group in a farm located on a high mountain. The survivors of the group and the inhabitants of the house, including the children, were tortured. At the time, the actions of Diego were the cause of controversy among the Franciscans of Columbia, but the General Administration in Rome, taking into account the particular situation of the country, respected his personal options"*.

The friars of Columbia are still committed to the poor and oppressed who continue even today to be victims of serious abuses of their human rights that are not always highlighted by the press. The statistics compiled by the Inter-Congregational Commission for Justice and Peace of Columbia show that in 1995 the victims of violence reached the number of 9,500 approximately. The 1996 report of the American Department of State on the abuse of human rights in Columbia show that the armed conflict and indiscriminate killings continue to destroy society -- the police and the armed forces being responsible for the greater part of this violence.

In many countries around the world, making an option for the poor also means standing on the side of the persecuted. In the Holy Land today that means running the risk of being caught in the crossfire of the violent conflict which has pitted Arabs against Jews since the state of Israel was founded half a century ago. Under Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza strip, almost a million Palestinians have had to leave their ancestral homes and move into squalid and overcrowded refugee camps where many of them survive in subhuman conditions. They are in need of everything from fresh food to medical supplies, from basic education to employment. Above all they are in need of lasting political solutions throughout the region that will bring hopes for a better and more peaceful future. The Franciscans have been present in the Holy Land since the time of Francis himself, making them the oldest legally established organization in the region. Over the centuries they have found themselves caught in the center of the many "holy wars" which have devastated the region. Traditionally they have been the custodians of the holy shrines, providing a constant witness of Christian charity amidst the power struggles that have raged around them. "This is still the most visible aspect of the Franciscan presence today", says GIUSEPPE NAZARRO, former Custos of the Holy Land. Yet, behind the scenes, more than 300 friars from some 32 different

countries are working in many different ways to improve the lives of the poor--Christians and non-Christians alike. Their mission extends throughout the areas where the refugees have settled--Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus and Rhodes. They run some 16 schools and colleges for over 10,000 students, as well as orphanages, clinics, workshops, homes for the aged and parish centers for young people, offering them an alternative to the violence they have experienced since childhood. In an effort to stem the constant flow of Christians away from the Holy Land, the friars also provide virtually free housing for hundreds of families, as well as educational grants to encourage young people to continue their studies in the Middle East.

In Italy the option for the poor pioneered by Francis and Clare has remained a characteristic of the friars' work throughout the centuries. In Tuscany, in central Italy, Franciscans were responsible for the setting up of the first money lending schemes to benefit the poor. These early pawnshops, known as *Mons Pietatis*, were begun by two friars in particular, BERNARDINO of Feltre and BARNABA of Terni, as early as 1462. Despite opposition from many sectors of society, including other religious Orders, the friars provided a secure means of lending money at low interest rates, thus enabling the poor to pay their debts without falling into the hands of usurers. In 1515 these self-supporting loan shops were granted official papal recognition by Leo X following the Fifth Lateran Council. Similar credit unions began to spring up, first in northern Italy and then throughout the country, precursors to our modern banks.

More recently, the Italian friars have been raising concerns about the problems of poverty at international level. In 1991 the Conference of Ministers Provincial of the Italian Friars Minor (COMPI) took the innovative step of publishing *Global Challenges of Economic Ethics*, a document calling for greater awareness of the international debt problem and the way it directly affects the lives of the poor.

Another method of exposing the problems of the poor in different areas of the world today is that of exchange visits, whereby Franciscans in one country can share firsthand in the efforts and experiences of communities in other nations. During one such exposure trip, a group of seven Korean friars visited some of the poorest areas around the Filipino capital of Manila. Reflecting later on their experience, the Korean friars said they were particularly impressed by their Filipino brothers and sisters living in poverty with the people in such urban areas. Hundreds of thousands of families struggling to survive in the shantytowns around Manila are faced with the daily threat of eviction and forced demolition of their makeshift homes under government plans to restructure the area. Similarly in the United States, the formation program of the province of California includes time in Guatemala, where friars can experience firsthand the life and the suffering of some of the poorest people in central America.

In Japan a radical option for the poor by PIO (Tetsuro) HONDA continues to cause controversy among many of his confreres. It was during his time as Minister Provincial that the Order held its Plenary Council in Bahia in 1985, an event which made a deep and lasting impression on Pio. With the fervor of a new convert, he dedicated his efforts to ensure that the friars of the province could live a prophetic life with the poor. His enthusiasm was contagious for some friars and a serious difficulty for others in the province. After a stormy term as minister provincial, Pio went to work in an area called Kamagasaki, in Osaka city, as a day laborer, one of the most deprived groups of people in this outwardly prosperous and successful nation. Kamagasaki is just one of Japan's

four biggest collecting points for such unemployed laborers, thousands of whom have migrated there as Japan has moved aggressively from an agricultural to an industrial- and a technology-based society. Those who are fit enough gather at about 4am each morning in the hope of earning a day's pay doing often dangerous and difficult jobs. For years these laborers were seen as the safety valve of Japan's booming economy, providing a constant source of manual labor with no obligations to employers. As the economy has suffered, so have the day laborers, with statistics showing a dramatic drop in the number of such jobs available. More and more men are forced out of their small rented rooms and onto the streets, depending on handouts for their survival. Even those who are able to afford the cost of a room have to face harassment from police and local authorities who "often treat the men like animals," according to local residents. Medical care for these workers is notoriously bad, despite the alarmingly high number of work-related casualties. Today Pio continues to live among the poor of Kamagasaki with other friars who have started a day center where unemployed men can come for a meal, a free haircut or simply to socialize in a welcoming environment.

In European countries too, friars are increasingly making the option to live alongside the poor they are trying to serve. For many friars this commitment has also been conditioned by the events of history. During the Second World War in France, the majority of priests and religious were forced to work in factories and industrial plants. Many of these so-called religious laborers found that daily contact with their co-workers--often disaffected Christians who had left the Church--to be very rewarding. A social gospel came alive and was reflected in a renaissance of faith among many of the workers. At the end of the war, many of these religious workers continued their ministry by living the gospel and evangelizing in the marketplace as "Worker Priests." Before his death in 1997, PIERRE ALLART spent four decades as an active worker priest living among the urban poor. He and two other friars lived on the outskirts of Paris where they were increasingly concerned with the problems of new immigrants from African nations. In Germany, KARL MÖHRING and JOACHIM STOBBE also live as worker priests. Like Pierre, they see their chosen lifestyle as a witness to the charism of Francis and believe that collaboration with other Franciscan communities and like-minded partner organizations is an essential component of their ministry. Pierre gives the example of his community's involvement with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines and says that in partnership with others, the voice of the poor is given greater credence.

In the United States many older parishes have redesigned existing structures to deal with the new problems of the urban poor. At the turn of the century these large parishes flourished with immigrant Catholic families, but they have gradually been deserted as families moved out to the wealthier suburbs. In cities from New York to San Francisco, from New Orleans to Detroit and Chicago, friars working in these parishes now offer a wide variety of services for alcoholics and drug addicts, the homeless and those living with HIV or AIDS.

When JOE NANGLE left New York for Peru in the 1970's, it was the beginning of a conversion experience that would change his heart and his way of life. During his years working in an upper middle-class parish, he came to see the glaring disparity between the rich - where most of the church's work was focused - and the poor living in the most inhuman conditions. A decisive moment for Joe came when the Latin American Bishops gathered in Medellín, Colombia and released their final statement on the church's radical

option for the poor. Today, Joe lives in Assisi House at the heart of an economically depressed area of Washington, DC. He helped to set up that small Franciscan community of men and women, religious and lay people actively pursuing justice and peace--a testament to poverty and shared living. Joe is the Director of the Franciscan Mission Service, (FMS) an organization which places special emphasis on the role of "reverse mission," which takes place once its volunteers return to the United States.

Friars in the Great Lakes region of Africa continue to provide vital support for those who have lost everything in the ethnic conflicts that have plagued Burundi, Rwanda and Zaire. Their presence among the refugees is an eloquent witness to their commitment to live among these poorest of the poor. VJEKO CURIC recounts a moving example of solidarity that took place in Rwanda during one Christmas holiday: "Over Christmas we had thousands of refugees who were returning from Tanzania. The diocese used all its vehicles to help transport the most exhausted to their homes. A medical team from our hospital was always on the move and a number of women gave birth in the trucks or on the side of the road. We saw extraordinary acts of solidarity as people gave what little food they had and the clothing off their own backs. Some of our workers gave money that they had received in advance for their Christmas pay. The bishop himself frequently went to talk to people in the street to assess their situations and offer whatever aid he could. The most important international organizations like the U.N., the Red Cross and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees were absent at this scene of abject misery. The entire road from Kigali to Kabgayi and Butare was choked with people on the move. But the Christians there had a sense that it was Jesus walking along that road; each gave food, clothing or money at the Christmas Mass. Afterwards representatives went out to distribute the offerings. The most beautiful gifts as always were those from the children: they had collected so many things (candy, avocados, sweet potatoes, beans, peas and firewood for cooking or heating) to offer to those children less fortunate than themselves." Vjeko was shot to death in Rwanda in 1998.

ANASTÁCIO RIBEIRO is one of the many friars who work with the landless peoples of Brazil. He has lived for the past two decades in rural areas and over the last seven years he has been working in several states in northeastern Brazil, assisting over two thousand families to occupy and eventually take legal possession of fallow land. The process is long, difficult and often dangerous but it has become one of the keys to the struggle for liberation by the poor in Brazil. Just as the Jews of the Old Testament were led to a new land where they would find salvation, the friars seek to lead the landless people to a new home where they can raise and educate a family and learn to take part in the democratic structures of society. Regularly these groups which "settle" on a piece of unused land are shot at, frequently chased away and sometimes killed. They move on to another piece of land and occupy that. Eventually they manage to start raising some crops and begin a long and fiercely contested legal battle to have the government confiscate the land and distribute it to the landless. Anastácio has regularly been harassed, arrested and threatened with long-term imprisonment by Brazilian authorities. International campaigns on his behalf have helped to keep Anastácio free.

JUSTUS WIRTH, who lives in Texas close to the Mexican border, exemplifies another way in which friars can support the poor in their struggle for a decent standard of living. He has written innumerable articles for a variety of publications aimed at highlighting the plight of people throughout Mexico and surrounding areas of North and South America. Recently, he has been hard at work raising awareness of the harmful effects of the North

American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) upon the people of northern Mexico. Justus also provided essential documentation for the inter-Franciscan delegation at the United Nation's World Food Summit held in Rome in November 1996. He focused on the plight of some fifteen million Mexicans displaced from their traditional farmlands (mirrored by parallel urbanization problems throughout Latin America) to encourage the U.N.'s Food and Agriculture Organization to continue its policy of supporting self-reliance of developing nations in the production of basic foods. To provide accurate documentation from the people with whom we are living is a key component of advocacy work at the international level, compiling well-documented information that governments are often unwilling to provide.

References to the General Constitutions

Other references: articles 8,1-3; 32,3; 34,2; 66,1-2; 72,1-3; 78,1-2; 87,1 and 3; 93,1; 132.

Discussion Questions

1. Who was the last poor person to affect your life significantly? What was the effect?
2. Have you ever felt marginalized? What did that teach you about yourself? the brotherhood? your society?
3. Does our local community have a direct relationship or involvement with poor people? If not, how could it?
4. How do we treat the poor who come to our door or call on the phone?
5. Is our community supporting provincial initiatives regarding our option for the poor? economically? moral support?
6. Has working with the poor shaped our provincial identity? In what way?
7. Have you ever protested the mistreatment of the poor in newspapers by expressing your views in magazines or other media? Through your voting?
8. Has your option for the poor ever put you into conflict with members of your own family? How did you handle this difficulty?
9. At what stage do we find ourselves, at both personal and community level, in our relation with the poor? What concrete measures would help us towards deepening and developing that relationship?
10. In our fraternal living (prayer, mission, conversation, lifestyle), what real weight does our option for the poor have?
11. In our local fraternity, what can we already do to assimilate the principle of insertion or preference for the poor and marginalized?
12. At a personal and fraternal level, what is our attitude towards consumerism?
13. Is it reasonable to ask that friars be aware of the political and social structures that cause situations of injustice in our world, or is it enough to be engaged in direct service to the poor?
14. Was it easier for Francis to make a radical option for the poor in the thirteenth century than it is for us today on the verge of the twenty-first century?
15. Do you know any contemporary friars who have made a preferential option for the poor? What sustains their work? What do you think of them and their ministry?

2. Peacemaking



OFM General Constitutions, Article 68:

- 1. The brothers should live in this world as builders of justice and heralds and craftsmen of peace overcoming evil by doing good.*
- 2. Though the brothers proclaim peace in word, they should cherish it even more deeply in their hearts so that no one is roused to anger or scandalized because of them. Rather, the brothers should call all people again to peace, gentleness and kindness.*

From the life of Francis ...

That Francis was a peacemaker is obvious from the greeting he said God revealed to him, “The Lord give you peace” (Test). Francis's sense of solidarity with everyone created by God undergirded all his peacemaking efforts. The humility of the Friars Minor caused them to promote peace within the brotherhood (1Cel 38) and to strive for peace and gentleness with everyone (1Cel 41). Francis urged the friars that in their travels they not be “quarrelsome or take part in disputes with words or criticize others; but they should be gentle, peaceful, and unassuming, courteous and humble, speaking respectfully to everyone, as is expected of them” (RegB c.3). His own preaching proclaimed peace and salvation, uniting “in the bond of true peace great numbers of people who had been at enmity with Christ and far from salvation” (LM 3:2). Francis said that true peacemakers “are able to preserve their peace of mind and heart for love of our Lord Jesus Christ, despite all that they suffer in the world” (Adm XV). Francis was a peacemaker because of his honesty, his belief that what you are before God, that you are and no more (Adm XX). According to Francis, where there is peace and contemplation, there is neither care nor restlessness (Adm XXVII). Francis sought for everyone true peace from heaven; he urged them to love their neighbor as themselves. If they could not do that, they should at least do their neighbors good and not harm

(EpFid).

Francis was a peacemaker in several Italian cities. In Arezzo he had Brother Sylvester pray that the demons causing civil strife would leave that city (LP 81). With Francis' help the citizens of Gubbio made a peace pact with the wolf which had terrorized them (Fior XXI). Certainly the Sultan treated Francis with respect because he recognized Francis as a man of peace (1Cel 57). In response to a feud between the bishop and podestà [mayor] of Assisi, Francis added two verses to the *Canticle of the Creatures*:

All praise be yours, my Lord, through those who grant pardon
For love of you; through those who endure
Sickness and trial.
Happy those who endure in peace,
By you, Most High, they will be crowned.

On another level the Pardon of Assisi obtained from the Pope for people praying at the Portiuncula and the most famous story of the wolf of Gubbio are two of the strongest examples of Francis' commitment to peacemaking. The story of the wolf at Gubbio contains many teachings for us - even though we should realize that it appears only in later sources whose historicity is doubtful (cf. *Fioretti*, Chapter 21).

From story of the wolf of Gubbio, let us examine the succession of the events:

- a fierce wolf terrifies the townspeople of Gubbio. He attacks animals and human beings. They do not dare to go outside the city gate,
- Francis is staying in the town and has compassion on the people,
- he goes out with a companion to encounter the wolf; some peasants join with them and quickly retreat,
- the wolf approaches fiercely,
- Francis makes the Sign of the Cross on the wolf who calms down,
- Francis calls the wolf "brother," scolds him because of his cruelty and makes a pact with him,
- they go together to the town,
- Francis exhorts people to conversion; the pact is renewed publicly and the townspeople promise to feed the wolf
- The pact is respected and everyone is happy.

In that story we can point out:

- the courage of Francis who recognizes that "Christ is the master of all creatures" and places all his confidence in Christ's power,
- the non-threatening approach of Francis, who comes with no weapons, but with the Sign of the Cross,
- his courage to confront the wolf clearly with his crimes, and at the same time he understands why the wolf commits these,
- his frankness too with townspeople pointing out their sins, yet showing comprehension of their need for security and the wolf's need for food.
- his insistence on having a clear pact publicly made.

Peacemaking

1. Francis as Peacemaker

For centuries, in some cultures when a visitor arrives and says: “**Peace** (Shalom, Salam),” that word means that he does not carry weapons and comes as a friend.

To Francis it was revealed to say: **God give you his peace**, and he started his preaching with these words. For eight centuries “**Peace and all Good**” has been used as a greeting by the Franciscan family. Any greeting can be an empty formula without a reality dwelling inside the wisher. For Francis the peace he wished sprang from his inner peace and his deep reverence for every creature that came from God's hand. The one who wishes peace and does not host seeds of that peace within **is a peace-wisher, not a peacemaker**. Such a person does not transmit a gift received from God. The secret of Francis as a peacemaker was that **he let God inside himself bring peace to those he met**. When the wolf of Gubbio ran ferociously toward him, Francis made the Sign of the Cross on the fierce animal and called him “brother.” These two actions reintroduce the wolf to his place inside the family circle of God's creatures, reconciled by Christ's love manifested on the Cross. By his cruel actions, the wolf had severed himself from this family of God. After receiving the benefit of redemption, the wolf calmed down and was ready to listen to Francis' reproaches and to his request of a pact with the inhabitants of Gubbio.

2. Francis Faces Conflicts

Erroneously some people call peacemakers “those who are nice people, soft-spoken, going along with everyone”. Psychologists tell us that some of those easygoing people agree with everyone because they are afraid of conflicts--not because of the overflowing of their peace with God. Francis invited his brothers not to get into arguments in their preaching and to be gentle, peaceful, unassuming, courteous and humble; these are fundamental characteristics and must be an integral part of the Friar Minor's being. However, this does not imply fear of truth, like Francis who did not refuse to be challenging. Respectfully but stubbornly, he resists the pope and his advisers who want to mitigate his Rule; he challenges the Crusaders and their sinful actions; he tells the Sultan that he does not know the true God; he resists his own brothers who want a less rough life; he throws away the tiles of the roof of the friary of which he disapproves; and to the wolf of Gubbio he points out his crimes without any ambiguity. Francis is not a sugarcoated man. He is firm and speaks the truth even if it is hard to listen to. His challenge, however, is not threatening. He is disarming by his lack of duplicity and by his courteous strength. Not only does he respect the sacredness of his opponent, but he tries to make opponents conscious of their own divine preciousness that they may have forgotten or disdained. Francis can be that way because he has no need to defend his property, his reputation or his ego. He has nothing to protect except the honor and love of God longing to transform the violent, and to reintegrate them into the communion of all the creatures, “his” creatures. Francis is not misled by the cloak of sinfulness and evil-doing; through the opacity of that cover, Francis sees the sacred presence of God in people. His spiritual eye allows him to see and reach the divine presence in the others, whereas many would like to kill them: “Let us kill this ferocious wolf! Let us kill this impious Sultan!” they shout convincingly.

3. Is the Example of Francis Relevant in Today's Complex World?

Is the example of Francis relevant for us? How can we bring peace in world conflicts and will our own peace have some influence upon anonymous forces? Many of our contemporary conflicts come from one culture imposing itself on persons of another culture; pride, ethnicism, nationalism and economic interests play a dramatic role in many of the present slaughters. But in a more subtle way, all over the planet most of the cultures are invaded and dominated by Western culture, and especially by its North American brand. The invasion is surreptitious. It starts with the publicity for some drinks or food, for movies bought for information or entertainment, but which promote a way of life. A new way of thinking and behaving gains a foothold. The basis of that new invading culture is a faith, an almost religious faith, in the need to characterize and estimate everything by numbers. Mathematical models reign. Even further, the new culture presents the mechanisms of the free market as laws of the universe and quasi-divine.

4. Violence Which Challenges Us

Disciples of Christ and brothers of Francis are especially challenged in this most pervasive violence: the change of the foundations of the cultures. It is violent and unjust to deprive people of what their own culture gives them: the references for the journey of their life. For staying human and for becoming a peacemaker in the midst of struggles against injustices and violence, it is indispensable to recognize our own sacredness and the sacredness of those we encounter. At the opposite, what we call the market culture estimates every reality under the sun, in terms of quantity, and especially quantity of wealth. The laws of the free market giving birth to a dynamic economy are imposed as the moral basis of a new culture: the market culture. Casualness permeates everything in such a culture and sacredness tends to vanish. When a culture becomes driven primarily by the quest for monetary gain, seeing human and creation's resources as objects to be used for amassing wealth, the result is a loss of the sense of the sacred. Life is devalued. The political structures may vary, but the core of the culture is where the evil dwells.

5. Respect for the Sacredness of Every Person and All Creation

It is an awesome challenge for us to revere the sacredness in every human: a bandit, a war criminal, a torturer, a dictator, a pitiless landowner or a speculator bringing famine to hundreds of millions of people through his profitable game. It is difficult because many opponents are the representatives of impersonal structures and anonymous interests. These interests are sometimes clearly despicable, but the humans involved are not. It is also an immense challenge to respect the sacredness of every creature in the midst of the ecological crisis leading the earth to destruction. The problem is not only to be respectful and brotherly toward a fierce wolf, the plants of our garden and the water of the torrent we encounter along our way. It is the sacredness of air and water and land and species on the planetary scale that is questioning us. Earth resources belong to humankind as a whole and most dramatically we ourselves are compromised in their pollution and destruction. It is a gigantic challenge to confront the nuclear threat and all those who accumulate wealth with a power whose incalculable consequences cannot be handled now and may never be. It is an incredible challenge to see greed destroying all the resources of the earth: plants, animals, minerals, the cultivable lands and even the earth's beauty so needed for human development. All these creatures have their role in the construction of the cosmic Christ, a community of free beings able to survive and together to witness the tenderness of God. How to awaken the boards of transnational corporations or of governments when they act in an irresponsible way toward

humankind, threatening its future and already in the present bringing sufferings to many? How can they open their hearts and respect each creature? Our hearts have been opened by God, and God will open theirs if we are not judging them and if we call them to conversion by our courteous and unshakable struggle. Or at least God will show them where is the wisdom and that their own interest lies in a deep change.

If we do not recognize our own dignity, if we are not in intimate contact with the Triune God dwelling within us, if we are contaminated by the way of making every reality an “object--objects that we can count--even love ceases to be a precious mystery and becomes a thing. The presence of the One who is Love, who establishes our sacred dignity, becomes hard to acknowledge.

6. The Trinity as Model and Source of Nonviolence

The nonviolence of the Trinity is shown by God's deep recognition of the mystery of the human beings with whom God himself has shared his own sacredness. Not only does God recognize his divine presence in us, but in respecting our journey God patiently attempts to awaken in us the recognition that we are unique, precious, hosting that divine nature inside us! In his life and his death, Jesus gave us the powerful witness of these nonviolent relationships with human beings.

Active nonviolence models its methodology after God's nonviolence. Its first foundation is the dialogue of two sacrednesses: someone or a group of people who have repudiated the slavery of violence and are in touch with the center of their existence (the true self) are calling their opponents to rediscover the divine in themselves, using that rediscovery to resolve the conflicts in which they are opposed. Not all the violent ones make that inner journey which requires freedom of the will. They need to be constrained by the nonviolent to recognize that the inner strength is a power able to oppose their power and that their own interest is to accept some of the conditions of their opponent. Otherwise, in continuing their violence they will lose more. They are confronted by a courage, a love, a steadfastness which receive their power from an immaterial source. The cleverness of the nonviolent methodology, if it is well followed, will often take them off guard and push them out of their secure logic.

Let us insist: the nonviolent power comes from God, but God will not work miracles if we are inactive. Many of us Franciscans still do not realize that most of the violence and injustices are part of a complex network of causes and are highly organized. Most of the open conflicts, military or economic, are of such a magnitude and sophistication that it would be naive and irresponsible to have confidence only in the love of a few pure-hearted individuals witnessing their sacredness and challenging those who for now are forgetting or burying the divine in a hidden part of themselves.

7. Becoming Familiar with the Methodology of Active Nonviolence

If we want to be peacemakers, we need to know how to use the methodology of active nonviolence, to know when some nonviolent actions failed because of an insufficient analysis of the situation or because some phases of the nonviolent process were shortcut. Where nonviolence succeeded, most of the time a long preparation preceded the results: technical preparation, and also spiritual. Only a superficial view makes believe that it was a pure intervention of God! God will not change the hearts of decision makers if we do not do our homework, giving God a clear sign that we really want such a change. We must act wisely. We have to prepare for God's actions--and

even God's surprises. By our courage in following the nonviolent methodology, we will be channels of God's sacredness, of God's stubborn patience, of God's longing for evildoers to stop their evildoing. Our loving God cares for the doer of good and the evildoer alike: both are his children. He knows that his sacredness dwells in both, and he wants both to bear fruits of communion and not bitter fruits of destruction for themselves and the new Creation, His body growing to its completion. In many struggles our allies demonize the other camp in order to mobilize the energies of their ranks. It is common practice to slander the opposition, to paint them as evil, perverse, incapable of changing, unworthy of any respect. That division into "good people" and "bad people" is unacceptable for a follower of Christ. Each of us is a divided person, partly good and partly bad; our opponents are likewise partly bad and partly good. If we want to share God's compassion, we need to have compassion both for the victims of violence and for those enslaved by their own violence and injustice. We need to pray that our present relative liberation from such violence or injustice does not stop tomorrow; then if God removes his help we might just be as bad as the worst of our opponents.

8. The Necessity of Being Poor to be Authentic Peacemakers

Earlier we pointed out that Francis challenged without being threatening because he was not afraid to lose anything. He had almost nothing he could call his own. Becoming peacemakers is in direct relationship with our overcoming of fears, the fear of a real death, loss of our physical life, or of a quasi-death (which can be called a partial death) in losing health, reputation, friends, material goods, privileges or even fear that the love that gives us strength might vanish and lead us to fall... and to hate. We know that if we have few belongings and few privileges, we will not fear losing them. If we are not attached to a self-image, we are freer to take up the defense of those whose dignity or life is endangered. Some of our brothers and sisters have shown us through the ages that their fearlessness grew with their poverty, their life with the poor. Their true richness is the power of love, which flows from the wounded side of Jesus on the Cross.

The nonviolent struggle is the weapon of the poor and loving people. It is the weapon of those who refuse to be lone rangers; they have confidence in a collective and communitarian struggle. This does not exclude being "clever as the serpent."

Every creature, human or non-human, is our brother and sister. This is not metaphoric. It is not sentimental. God invites us and the whole of Creation to be part of this *pleroma* (fullness) headed by Christ, in which respect for the divine presence transforms every relationship. Our reverence for God's presence inside others is what will spread a true peace and respect for the integrity of Creation.

Then we will be contagious peacemakers.

Alain Richard OFM

Examples from the lives of the friars...

Nowhere is the need for genuine peacemaking more necessary today than in the many war-torn African nations. Significantly it was in the small East African nation of Rwanda that GIACOMO BINI, present Minister General, and two other friars first settled as they began a new Franciscan presence on the continent in the early 1980's.

There they constructed their own simple house in the local style and began a ministry that slowly spread to eight countries of the region (Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Madagascar.) Today the goals of that first community, based in Nairobi, Kenya, are to support the many vocations among Africans from different countries and ethnic backgrounds and to create a truly international, multicultural community - a daily witness to the values of reconciliation and bridge-building that are so urgently needed throughout the region. Some of the friars have paid dearly for that continuing commitment to peace: in 1986 a 33-year-old friar, KEVIN LAWLOR, was killed in Uganda. As the tribal genocide began Rwanda in 1994, a minister of a new Secular Franciscan fraternity was murdered. In April of that same year, GEORGE GASHUGI, a 32-year-old Tutsi, was brutally beaten to death just months before his final profession of vows. In April 1996, VJEKO CURIC narrowly escaped death as he returned alone to the Franciscan house at Kivumu, 20 kilometers outside Kigali. Three men armed with a gun and long knives asked him for money and then ordered him to face the wall. Curic kept his wits about him and managed to flee through an open dining room door. It was not the first time he had been threatened by both Hutu and Tutsi extremists because of his commitment to helping both ethnic groups without prejudice. He has vowed to continue his mission even though it means "risking one's life, just like the other people here." On the 31st of January 1998, Vjeko was gunned down in front of the church of the Holy Family in Kigali, Rwanda. Pope John Paul II paid tribute to him saying "So another victim is added to the long list of missionaries who have with the sacrifice of their lives sealed their love for Christ and for the people of Africa".

Elsewhere on the continent friars are at the center of the complex process of healing and reconciliation that is going on in the new, democratic nation of South Africa. As members of the many Truth and Reconciliation Commissions across the country listen to victims and perpetrators telling the truth about the apartheid regime, friars are slowly helping individuals and communities to recover from more than four decades of oppression and brutality.

"It's a traumatized nation looking into its soul and being slowly and painfully reborn." Those are the words of Irish friar PADDY NOONAN, who has spent the past two and a half decades working in some of the most deprived townships south of Johannesburg where violence and injustice were a way of life. He and other Franciscans live in an area near Boipatong, famous for a massacre where he was the first person to arrive on the scene and witness the terrible carnage that had taken place during the night. "Peacemaking wasn't exactly uppermost in your mind when there were massacres like that going on around you," he explains with his gently lilting Irish accent. (Most of his work is conducted in the local township dialect since he believes that is the only way to really communicate with the people.) "The first thought that comes to mind is 'Who's behind all this?' There were so many invisible forces making it harder to bring down the apartheid regime and talk peace in the country." Didn't he find it hard to remain hopeful amidst such violence and repression? He returns to the time he spent visiting the shacks following the 1992 Boipatong massacre: "After I'd spent hours seeing all those broken and battered bodies and just listening to their families, one man came up to me in the street and whispered 'Father, we know the Lord is here.' Well, what right have we church people to doubt if the ordinary people could keep such hope alive?" Noonan was also close friends with some of the leaders of the anti-apartheid struggle, people who now hold positions of responsibility in the new government. "That was part of our

ministry, talking to some of those political street fighters, but we knew they were decent people and not the communist rebels they were made out to be.”

Such an inside view of the situation in South Africa led the churches to play an increasingly active role in support of the anti-apartheid movement. “We always worked as a united Christian front,” stresses Noonan. “When the political and civic groups were banished or exiled, it was the churches which stepped in to fill the vacuum.” He cites the example of a rents and services boycott that lasted for some seven years. “All the Franciscan parishes participated and refused to pay any municipal fees because it was one of the most effective means of nonviolent protest.” When local officials threatened to switch off the city lights, he and a group of other ministers went to try and negotiate a way out of the deadlock. Their efforts failed and riot police were called in to arrest the group. Such a personal experience of the struggle for peace made the final liberation of South Africa an event of almost indescribable joy for Noonan. He was on hand in the same townships to monitor the first democratic elections that took place in April 1994. Paddy and ULRICH ZANKANELLA from Austria held official positions as Election Observers--Paddy as a local observer and Ulrich at the invitation of the South African Bishops' Conference to serve as an International Election Observer. “In terms of my Franciscan mission I felt that monitoring these elections was like walking the last mile alongside of the people. It was a gesture of being with them as they ushered in a new era of peace and democracy after the hell and sinfulness of the apartheid years.”

DAVID BARNARD of the Province of Our Lady Queen of Peace (South Africa) underwent a powerful experience during his sabbatical year in England. There he had the chance to reflect on the racial and tribal prejudices that continue to plague South Africa. For the first time in his life he was able to discuss over a sustained period of time how he felt as a black African friar within a predominately white community. Through this important international experience, he was able to share his anger and discover the power of forgiveness within the larger Franciscan family on his return to his homeland.

The experience of reconciliation in South Africa has been quite different for rural pastor PETER WILSON. It was in jail that Peter first came “to accept white people, to forgive them” and to feel free of his bitterness: “It was a wonderful feeling. After all, it is part of the African culture to accept everyone. I don't want to talk in terms of Black and White. Afrikaners have long been a part of Africa. My own people never wanted revenge. We wanted justice. We were fighting their policies, not their people.”

In Latin America and Asia too, friars have remained committed to peace in their communities and watched as repressive regimes have been overthrown and fragile democracies set in motion. In the Philippines, for example, they stayed in the front line in the fight for justice and peace under longtime dictator Ferdinand Marcos, who was finally toppled by the People's Power revolution in 1986. During that popular uprising the friars played a key role in keeping the protests at a nonviolent level, despite the extraordinary oppression suffered by the majority of the people for so long. Even in the decade since Marcos was removed from power, the friars continued to call for greater social justice among the people. Though the economy of the populous island nation is slowly beginning to recover from the devastation of the Marcos years, the legacy of the dictatorship, combined with continuing corruption and a string of natural disasters, means that poverty and violence continue to plague many parts of the country today. On the island of Mindanao in the south, the government has so far proved unable to

resolve the problems of the large Muslim community, whose leaders are demanding some form of autonomy for the region. Sometimes friars are caught in the whirlwinds of violence around them. For example, in October 1992, AUGUSTINE FRASZCZAK was kidnapped at gunpoint and held captive for more than two months by Muslim extremists. In a statement announcing the release of their brother, the friars said, "The most important step toward eliminating the crime of kidnapping is to improve the social and economic conditions of Basilan."

In Japan friars PHILIP HAMADA and JOB TODA took the initiative to promote deeper reconciliation and understanding between people in the Asia-Pacific region. In August 1995, as Japan marked the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War, they drew up a statement asking for forgiveness from the Korean people for the many acts of aggression which cost the lives of more than twenty million people in the region. In the statement the friars recognize the many difficulties faced by the Catholic Church in Japan in the prewar period. But they also apologize for the Church's failure to stand up to the government and protect those who were being so brutally oppressed, especially in China and Korea.

In other post-conflict situations, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Croatia, the friars are working to promote reconciliation as a precondition for lasting peace. There has been a Franciscan presence in the region for over seven hundred years; three friars were killed during the recent conflict while others were injured or forced to flee from their homeland as convents, churches and other Franciscan centers were destroyed in the fighting.

As part of the efforts to heal these scars, BOZE VULETA and members of the Franciscan family have set up The Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace. The Institute, which opened in April 1996, is based in Split with centers for interethnic and interreligious dialogue in the Bosnian capital, Sarajevo. Its aim is to make a detailed study of all the issues relating to peace in the region, promoting dialogue between former enemies and above all providing peace education programs for young people. Boze is optimistic about the institute's chances for success. "If the people of Bosnia and Croatia are willing to listen to anybody today, it is the Franciscans," he says with a wry smile. "They trust us, so we must put their confidence to good use in the search for peace and reconciliation. Our aim is also to prevent further conflicts by building up mutual understanding and respect for different cultures and religions - something which was completely destroyed under communist rule." The friars also held a widely publicized conference on forgiveness, bringing together scientists, psychologists, social workers, catechists and experts in interreligious dialogue. The conference was so successful that the friars have now published a book on the subject, which is being widely used as an aid for those dealing with the problems of postwar trauma.

In another effort to promote peace, the friars from Herzegovina who cared for the wounded throughout the war have developed a project to assist those who have lost limbs as a result of landmines. The friars liaise with an orthopedic factory in Germany and in 1996 alone, were able to provide 204 people with prostheses. Over the same year a similarly structured dental practice provided much needed dental care to another 1,286 people.

Franciscan missionaries from Ireland have regularly been in the forefront of peacemaking efforts throughout Asia, Africa or Latin America. Yet rather ironically, our friars only

recently returned to Northern Ireland after centuries of absence dating back to the Protestant Reformation. In 1984, LIAM MCCARTHY joined three other Irish Franciscans who responded to a request for assistance by a group of Poor Clares and founded the first “new” community at St. Joseph's Church in the industrial Docklands area of Belfast. For Liam it marked a long overdue event in Irish Franciscan history and a wonderful opportunity to solidify the process of reconciliation and forgiveness among the sectarian communities of Northern Ireland. Peace and Reconciliation groups began to spring up throughout the North, including the interreligious Shalom Prayer Group. In 1993 the friars opened a second house, a so-called inserted community in Ballymurphy, which offers an outreach program among the people of West Belfast--a heavily Republican and Catholic community. Their openness encourages dialogue among Secular Franciscan fraternities from both the Protestant and Roman Catholic traditions, and their presence has helped to strengthen ecumenical initiatives for peace throughout the North.

At an empty friary in Cori, the OFM Province of Rome has established a residential formation program for young people entitled “Young Educators for Peace.” According to PAOLO MAIELLO, many young people who have been touched by the lives of Francis and Clare and the ongoing witness of today's Franciscans seek new ways to become active peacemakers in their own society.

Franciscan collaboration for peace often includes efforts undertaken on an inter-provincial or inter-conference level. During the summer of 1995, two friars from Toledo, Spain, EMILIO ROCHA and JULIAN MARTIN ARAGON, collected truckloads of medical supplies from Spanish chemists which they delivered to refugees in Bosnia. In solidarity and support for friars in the region, Emilio and Julián lived for several weeks in the Fojnica friary in Bosnia where friars LEON MATE MIGIC and NIKOLA (NIKICA) MILICEVIC were killed on November 13, 1993 by members of a Muslim militia.

In North America the antinuclear movement, and in particular the Nevada Desert Experience, is one example of the way in which friars work together with other religious and lay people of all different backgrounds who are committed to peace. Training in the U.S. Airforce is not the typical background of an antinuclear activist, but for LOUIS VITALE his experience of the American military establishment and his exposure to the changes of the Second Vatican Council formed the background to his commitment to the Franciscans and the peace movement as a whole. After completing a graduate degree in sociology, Louis was asked to go to Las Vegas to set up a social justice office for the diocese. Gradually he became aware of the Nevada nuclear test site where the U.S. and British governments were conducting underground nuclear explosions. He began to ask why there was so little interest in what he would later describe as “perhaps the greatest environmental disaster of all time”.

“It was clear to us” says Louis, “that as long as governments continued to test and develop new weapons' systems, the arms race would go on. We committed ourselves to raise awareness of testing in Nevada and to organize protests and other events to achieve the limited goal of a comprehensive test ban.”

Gradually, through a series of annual prayer events and growing cooperation with other Christian and Native American groups, participants began to realize how every test was damaging the local environment and the livelihood of the indigenous Shoshone people.

Despite growing scientific evidence of the harm being caused by the testing, the annual vigils met with harsh resistance from both local and national authorities. The number of people who attended and were arrested at the site grew steadily during the 1980's, but the movement was strengthened by the support it received from people all over the world. After his election as Minister General in 1991, HERMANN SCHALÜCK went into the desert at the Nevada test site to pray on his first pilgrimage as Minister General. Visits from government leaders, bishops and representatives of different religious traditions highlight the steady impact that witness had on public consciousness. Gradually workers at the test site began to know some of the peace activists on a more personal level and the tensions of the early years began to subside. Following the demise of the Soviet Union, a comprehensive test ban treaty became possible, yet the peace movement keeps up its commitment to ban the testing of all weapons' systems.

ALOYSIUS FLORIO of the Holy Land Custody remembers the practical commitment of the friars during the Gulf War in 1991, when the Franciscan community stayed with the local population as many others fled. "Our peaceful presence among people of all faiths, feeding them, listening to their stories and burying the dead, was a tangible sign of our 800-year commitment to the inhabitants of the Holy Land." This commitment was demonstrated once again when the massacre of over twenty Palestinians at prayer took place in the Mosque of Hebron in 1994. The Custody responded by publicly condemning what it called "the criminal act" committed by a Jewish settler. CLAUDIO BARATTO, representative of the Custos, ALBERT ROCK, PAOLO MASTRANGELI, HALIM NOUJAIM, GEORGE ABU KHAZEN immediately visited the Hebron City Council and the hundreds of wounded as part of their ongoing peace mission among the Palestinian people who feel they are often "forgotten and ignored" by Christians in the West.

General Constitutions

Article 1:2. They are to give witness to a life of penance and lowliness and, with love for all, they are to bring the Gospel message to the whole world, proclaiming reconciliation, peace and justice by their works.

Other references: articles 33,1; 39; 69,1-2; 70; 95,1-3; 96,2; 98,1-2.

Discussion Questions

1. How have you experienced being a peacemaker? In your apostolic work? your community? your family? your provincial fraternity?
2. What are the biggest obstacles to peace in the city where you live? in your country?
3. What contribution to peace could you make in the city where you live? could your local fraternity make?
4. Have the bishops of your country or region identified priorities for peacemaking? How could you personally assist those efforts? How could your local community become involved? Your provincial fraternity?
5. What are the most important personal characteristics of a peacemaker? Are those characteristics growing in your life?
6. Do you have a favorite story about St. Francis as a peacemaker? Has that story helped you in your peacemaking efforts?
7. Do we have compassion not only for the victims of violence and injustice, but for

those who, because of their passions or blindness, impose upon others suffering of violence or injustice? Do we pray for them? Do we want without pretentiousness to liberate them in accepting the risks in confronting them? and to have to change ourselves?

8. Did we discover “the wolf” inside us, ready to devour? Is the wolf about to be tamed?
9. Is it possible that the fear of being poor with the poor is our greatest obstacle in participating in a nonviolent combat?
10. In our personal and community life style, is there a feeling of concern for justice, human promotion, liberation, peace?
11. Do you think that your fraternity could prompt any action(s) for justice and peace or take part in those initiated by others? Do you think that this could “complicate” the life of our fraternity or that of our groups or Christian communities and that therefore it would be better for us to stay on the sideline?
12. What place do the dimensions of human promotion/justice and peace occupy in the Evangelization Project of your fraternity/of your province? What should be done by way of planning or further promoting an existing structure?
13. What do you know about nonviolence? Do you think it could be a valid instrument for us in the commitment to justice and peace which the GG.CC. propose to us?
14. Evaluate the perception and the reply that you have been giving in conflict situations. How has your vocation and your type of education influenced you in this area?
15. Observe your environs as a fraternity and point out the seeds of violence which you perceive. Analyze the different kinds of replies that are surfacing.

3. Integrity of Creation / Environmental Justice



OFM General Constitutions, Article 71

Following closely in St. Francis' footsteps, the brothers should show a sense of reverence towards nature, which is today threatened on all sides. They thus restore nature in its entirety to its status of brother and sister, useful to all people for the glory of God the Creator.

From the life of Francis...

Francis' profound love for God and for all God's creation is powerfully expressed in the *Canticle of the Creatures*. Celano says: "In every work of the artist he praised the Artist; whatever he found in the things made he referred to the Maker. He rejoiced in all the works of the hands of the Lord and saw behind things pleasant to behold their life-giving reason and cause. In beautiful things he saw Beauty itself; all things were to him good" (2Cel 165). Bonaventure adds: "Of all creation he made a ladder by which he might mount up and embrace Him who is all desirable" (LM 9:1).

Francis commanded his friars not to cut down a tree entirely; he told gardeners to leave a grass border around gardens; he said that honey and wine should be set out for bees in winter and he called animals brother. "For that original goodness that will be one day *all things in all* already shown forth in this saint *all things in all* (2Cel 165; italicized phrases are from 1 Cor 12:6). A bird once rested in Francis' hands (2Cel 167), a falcon announced the times to pray (2Cel 168), a pheasant grew fond of Francis (2Cel 170), and cricket sang its Creator's praises (2Cel 171). On Christmas he wanted extra grain and hay given to oxen and asses while corn and grain were being scattered on the roads to feed birds, especially larks (2Cel 199). Francis' companions "saw him find great cause for interior and external joy in all creatures; he caressed and contemplated them with delight, so much so that his spirit seemed to live in heaven and not on earth" (LP 51).

Ecological Justice

Reflection on ecology has entered a new phase, definitively leaving behind the stages of simple conservation and preservation of nature. Now the environment is considered in its multiple relationships, embracing both the natural environment and human culture and society. In its integral perspective, social ecology highlights the possible interactions between all beings whether living or nonliving, natural or cultural. It offers us the basic elements necessary for reestablishing a dynamic balance in the whole ecosystem. It is within this search for a balance in the whole ecosystem that the question of ecological justice must be situated. Furthermore, the question of whether respect for human rights also includes the rights of the earth, and vice versa, needs to be asked. In other words, how is social justice linked to ecological justice? And in a Franciscan perspective, how does our commitment to justice and peace include safeguarding creation?

A. Some principles of a Franciscan “eco-justice”

The Franciscan vision of life is both theocentric and at the same time global. Each living or nonliving being is part of a subjectivity (and not simply an object) and has an internal value, a mission. On the other hand it is a relative being: it is in permanent relation with its Creator and with other beings.

1. The sacrament of the world

One of the most significant marks of Saint Francis’ spirituality is his acute sense of the presence of God in creation and in human history. Every being, every thing is a gift from God. He exhorted his brothers to attribute nothing to themselves, to keep nothing for themselves, at all times and in every place to give glory to God for “the marvels that God does” in them and in the universe. “Let us return all goods to the most high and sovereign Lord God; let us recognize that all goods belong to him; let us give him thanks for everything, for all goods come from him” (*RegNB* 17:17-18; *Praises of God for Brother Leo*).

Everything speaks to us of God and sends us back to God. The universe in its unity as well as in its diversity is a sacrament of God, a “ladder” that leads us to the Creator (cf. *2Cel* 165; *LM* 9:1). “The whole world is shadow, way, vestige, it is the book written outside,” writes Bonaventure (*Hexaem.* 12, n.14). For Francis, as for Bonaventure, God is everywhere and at the same time he is nowhere. God is at the end of the road of conformity to Christ and of ecstatic contemplation. But he is also there, on the road, close to the one who searches for him, even in the depths of each creature and especially in our own depths. In every thing and in every event God is present. “God is intimately present to his creatures” (Bonaventure, *De scientia Christi*, q. 2, ad 11). The earth is sacred.

That extraordinary love that Francis brought to beings and things flows from this. He entered into a fraternal and respectful communion with all that lives and all that is. For this supremely Christian soul, loving the works of God and loving God was the same thing.

From this also flows that wonder, expressed often in canticles of praise and

thanksgiving, before the diversity and the gratuity of the creation that finds its origins in the superabundance of Trinitarian love. “For,” wrote Thomas of Celano “the Good that is the source of all things and that will one day be everything in all things, appeared already in this life, in the eyes of the saint, to be everything in all things” (2Cel 165). This aesthetic and religious vision is opposed to purely scientific and materialist conceptions of the world, in all their diverse forms.

2. The universe is a whole.

Francis has an integral vision of life. The universe, created in harmony and for harmony is like a great family whose elements in their variety are interdependent and form a single universal fraternity. This conception of the unity of the world is profoundly rooted in the biblical vision of creation.

On the one hand, salvation history involves human history but also the entire cosmos in its openness to the divine promises: “From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth” (Rom. 8:22). On the other hand human beings themselves were created from the earth and the name "Adam" (*Adamah*) reminds them of their terrestrial origins. And through “our sister bodily Death from whom no human being alive can escape,” they will return one day to the mother Earth who saw them come into the light, according to the eternal law of life of all creatures. Humanity is in communion with nature in life as well as in death. (cf. Gen 1-3; *Canticle of Brother Sun*).

This conception is opposed to the different philosophical metaphysics and religious fundamentalisms that put too much stress on the supernatural to the detriment of the natural.

In consequence, humanity should extend ethics and justice to nature, to all peoples who live on the earth, for in destroying the environment they destroy their own habitat. The goods of creation are not reduced to the economic interests of humanity alone; they are destined for the universal harmony of all beings. “God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good” (Gen 1:31). The adjective “good” must be understood here in its global sense, all-encompassing, that is to say ontological, moral, vital, aesthetic, and not simply in the exclusive sense of an economic good.

3. Respect for otherness

For Francis every thing and every human being had its intrinsic value, an “individuality” to be respected and loved. Stones, plants, birds of the sky, worms of the earth, lepers or beggars of the road... all God’s creatures had a right to existence and none of them belonged completely to us: they were “different,” “other,” distant and in consequence not subject to our domination. Bonaventure and Duns Scotus would develop this concept of the singularity of each thing in their doctrine of individuation. Following the example of their Father, they would consider every being in this world in its fertile and interior subjectivity, in its *haecceitas*, that is in what makes a being what it is and not something else. The ultimate reason for this singularity written in each thing is situated, as Duns Scotus said, “in the very will of God.” The otherness of creatures sends us back to the infinitely other that is God.

A Franciscan ecological spirituality brings us before the challenge of transcending ourselves to enter into the universal community of all beings. Taken in all its complex

relationships with the universe, our life enlarges our sense of responsibility towards ourselves and others. This requires an inclusive attitude towards all the beings that we meet on our way, including those of the natural world, and at the same time a contemplative look of wonder when faced with the diversity and the mysterious singularity of each one of them. An inclusivity without any appropriation, a solidarity that includes a profound respect for otherness.

Franciscan spirituality centered on an integral vision of life, on the dignity of the earth and the intrinsic value of each being in the universe, refuses to see the natural world and the human being purely and simply as capital to be exploited. We must distance ourselves both from an irresponsible sacramentalism that is disincarnate and deprived of all social impact, and from an idea of unlimited progress that the earth and its life systems cannot support.

B. Ecological justice on a practical level.

Three practical options roughly correspond to the three principles:

1. Option for life and the interdependence of life

a) “Be blessed, my Lord, you who created me” (Thomas of Celano, *Life of St. Clare*, 46). Before death Clare continued to give thanks to her God for the gift of life. Francis’ *Canticle of the Sun* was also a concert of praises and thanksgivings of the entire universe for the vocation to life: “Praised be you my Lord in all your creatures.”

Every being has a right to life. A wild turtledove, a small insignificant flower, a poor suffering woman, an old blind man, etc.--all have been called into being and participate in the same adventure of love. Francis had a predilection for the smallest and the humblest among creatures. “He picked up the worms on the path, for fear of seeing them crushed by passersby” (2Cel 165). On the paths created by humanity there is no lack of life-destroying passersby.

The Earth, as well as the human beings and animals who live on it, has a right to regeneration; it is subject to the law of the Sabbath, a time of rest necessary for renewal of life (cf. Lev 25:1-7; 19:9-10). God’s creation did not stop on the sixth day when humanity appeared. Humanity is not the end of creation; it is rather crowned by the seventh day, the Sabbath, where God rests and contemplates (cf. Gen 1-2). It is the Creator that is the principle and the end of all things. Every Franciscan is a prophet of life. In the name of the living God, they denounce the culture of death and seek to safeguard quality of life - of all life - and, in the desert of the world, become everywhere and always signs of regeneration and of hope.

b) They are just as attentive to the interdependence of beings. No being lives of and for itself. The survival of human beings, and especially of the poor, depends on the survival of the earth and of the quality of life of all the universe, and vice versa. Francis was conscious of the gifts of the earth through which human beings are fed. “Be praised my Lord, for our sister mother Earth who carries us and feeds us, who produces her variety of fruits, with variegated flowers and herbs” (*Canticle of Brother Sun*). For their part, human beings should take care of the earth and safeguard the variety of fruits, flowers and herbs. Monoculture to provide for the needs of the industrialized world, and thus the unlimited exploitation of the earth, brings death to the earth herself and also to the poor who see themselves systematically despoiled of their resources for life. Thousands

and thousands of “landless” dying of hunger and thousands and thousands of hectares of forests destroyed in Brazil and elsewhere on our planet are the disastrous consequences of this unilateral economic policy.

2) The option of living *sine proprio* (RegNB 1:1)

In his concise way Francis exhorted his brothers to lead a simple, poor life in a spirit of self-giving: “Keep nothing of yourselves for yourselves.” (EpOrd 29) and to practice in daily life the renunciation of all superfluity and to be happy with the bare necessities: “In case of necessity, all the brothers, wherever they may be, may make use of all that may be eaten...In the same way, in case of necessity, all the brothers are to use, as the Lord gives them grace, everything of which they have need” (RegNB 9:2,16-20; cf. RegNB 15).

This Franciscan poverty is not just individual. It is also social and brings with it a prophetic dimension. In renouncing property and taking the option of living poorly among the poor, Francis rejected the economic and political system of his time. His option of living in poverty translates on the practical level into an option for the poor. It is in contrast, on the one hand with the feudal mentality centered on the possession of lands and the exploitation of peasants, and on the other hand with the consumer society introduced by the new social class, the bourgeoisie.

Returning one day from Siena, Francis met a poor man. Because of his illness, Francis was wearing a small cloak as well as his habit. He saw the destitution of the poor man and could not hold himself back: “We must” he said to his companion, “give his cloak back to this poor man, for it belongs to him” (LM 8:5). The option of living *sine proprio* must be linked to charity, without which poverty makes no sense. For Francis appropriation is a real obstacle to fraternal love. It arouses in us the will for domination over others. The story of a novice who, driven by the desire to possess, lacked respect for others is an example of this intrinsic link between poverty and fraternity (cf. LP 70, 72-73). The temptation to dominate the earth leads us to dominate others, especially the poor and helpless. The accumulation of riches by some people brings with it as a consequence the impoverishment and even the destruction of others. Francis warns his brothers to be on their guard against this danger: “The brothers, wherever they may be, in a hermitage or in some other residence, are to take care not to appropriate for themselves any place or enter into dispute with anyone whatever in order to claim it.” (RegNB 7:12).

Marx brought out the link between the exploitation of workers and that of the earth in the system of capitalist production when he wrote in *Das Kapital*: “All progress in capitalist agriculture is progress not only in the art of exploiting the worker, but also in the art of despoiling the soil; all progress in the art of increasing its fertility for a while, is progress in ruining the durable sources of fertility [...] Capitalist production only develops the technique and the combination of the process of social production while at the same time exhausting the two sources from which all wealth comes: the earth and the worker” (K. Marx, *Das Kapital*, vol. 1, book 1, section 4, c. 13, §10 [Marx-Engels, *Werke*, vol. 23, Dietz Verlag, Berlin 1962, 529-530]). Ecological justice and social justice are inseparable.

3) Being artisans of peace

Respect for life and the otherness of every being means also a responsibility for peace. Not only to be peaceful--that is to say living at peace in one's own house--but also building peace in the midst of a society characterized by violence and injustice. Leaving the walls of the town of Assisi, a symbol of power and glory, Francis and Clare wanted to break the chains that imprisoned the hearts of people within their society in the vicious circle of selfishness and distrust. They came down from the heights in order to be with the most humble and little ones, with lepers and the beggars in the street. They wanted to make peace with the world and with the whole of the universe. The cloister of the brothers is the whole world where each of God's creatures has its dwelling place (cf. SC 63); there are no high walls, for the brothers have nothing to defend apart from the dignity and fraternity of all beings. "Whoever comes to them, friend or enemy, thief or brigand, must be well received" (RegNB 7:13).

Francis did not forget that peace between people is only an aspect of universal reconciliation between human beings and the earth, and between these and their Creator. He added a paragraph on forgiveness between people in his song of creation: "Praised be you, my Lord, for those who pardon for love of you." Love is still possible despite all the shadows of death that oppress us. When all the arguments of reason do not suffice to bring peace, there are no other paths to follow apart from that of forgiveness. It is forgiveness that gives back to love its clarity and recovers the dignity of the person. Conscious that arms do not reestablish peace and that they cause not only death to human beings but also the radical destruction of the environment, the brothers go about the world denouncing every attack on the integrity of creation and through nonviolence witnessing to the mercy of God and working for universal reconciliation.

Ambrose Van Si OFM

Examples from the lives of the friars...

Protecting the integrity of creation has always been at the heart of the Franciscan spirituality, but in recent years issues of environmental justice have moved away from a romantic notion of care for plants and animals to a more urgent concern for the promotion of human rights and social justice. In Latin America in particular, the right to settle and take care of the land is increasingly seen as a vital first step to empowering the poor and overcoming the oppressive structures of society. Across the continent and beyond, friars are living alongside the poor, developing creative ways of protecting the environment and promoting the self-sufficiency of indigenous communities.

Sadly it is still rare to find friars who are able to dedicate themselves entirely to this kind of work. One exception is JIM LOCKMANN (U.S.A.) who has a doctorate in ecology and worked to promote methods of sustainable development near the city of Belem in the Amazon basin. His speciality is the biological study of local tree species, trying to learn more about the trees which will contribute most to a long-term preservation of the environment. The area in the northeast of Brazil is extremely poor, inhabited by displaced families who were forcibly moved into the region by the military. Consequently they know nothing about their new habitat and have no financial or educational support from the government to help them take care of their new environment. It usually takes only about five years for a small community to cut down all the trees and take everything out of an area of land, thus being obliged to move on to another site. Lockmann lives with a community of workers, helping them to develop a

longer term view of their environment. “Life is very hard for these people, “he says”, and it takes time to gain their trust. But after a while they come to see that they can build a better future for their children.”

Lockmann is carrying on a tradition begun by JOSI MARIANO DA CONCEIÇÃO VELOSO --the 18th century friar now widely revered as “the father of Brazilian botany.” He was born in Vila Sao José, in 1741, the son of Portuguese and Brazilian parents and entered the Order on 11 April 1761. Working closely together with members of local indigenous tribes, he spent almost a decade researching and cataloguing more than 2000 plant species. His research also focused on the study of farming and the rural economy, forest conservation, zoology, mineralogy and local dialects; his legacy serves as an inspiration for countless Brazilian friars who have worked for environmental justice in the region since then.

Today, RODRIGO DE CASTRO AMÉDÉE PÉRET is developing new and creative ways of carrying on this work, empowering poor farmers to defend their rights and protect local species of plants and crops. One particular initiative which he has pioneered in Minas Gerais state, **Brazil**, is the setting up of seed banks. Volunteers collect, cultivate and distribute seeds from many different local trees and plants, thus lessening the farmers' dependency on foreign, hybrid seeds and trying to reverse the trend of turning over vast tracts of land to monoculture production of coffee, wheat, soybeans and other cash crops for export. Through his work in the St. Francis of Assisi Agro-Ecological Nursery, Rodrigo and his team enable small farmers to provide for their families while at the same time preserving the long-term stability of the environment. High priorities at the nursery are research into the management of soil and water resources and the reversal of soil erosion. Volunteers also carefully catalogue the pharmaceutical properties of local trees, fruits and natural herbs that were once used effectively for the treatment of many types of illness, thus ensuring their reintroduction into the regional ecosystem.

Similarly while in **El Salvador** GEARÓID FRANCISCO Ó CONAIRE dedicated much of his time and energy to encouraging local people in the use of ancient bio-energy techniques and herbal remedies for illness and disease. Why? Because teaching them to make better use of the natural resources at their disposal means empowering them to understand more about the illnesses that affect them and therefore lessening their dependence on doctors and large pharmaceutical companies. It also means protecting a part of the local culture, providing people with cheap and easily obtainable remedies which they can produce and administer at home. But Francisco's work for environmental justice does not end there. He's taken his campaign for a clean water supply for his parish of San Bartolo right up to El Salvador's National Assembly. A joint committee of friars and community leaders petitioned legislators and campaigned on local radio stations as well until action was taken to improve the water supply to the shantytown on the outskirts of San Salvador. Francisco has also joined with the United Ecology Groups of El Salvador (UNES) to stop the destruction of the El Espino natural forest and ecological reserve-- the “last lung of El Salvador” as it has been called. The preservation of El Espino is an opportunity not only to save more than a million trees but to stop a clear violation of the human rights of all, particularly the five hundred families who are threatened with eviction if the urbanization project goes forward. The friars have frequently been criticized for interfering in political life. They have even received death threats from former military death squads that have now reorganized into

vigilante groups at the behest of wealthy landowners in the region. Some of the Central American friars are determined to continue with their advocacy work; they believe that environmental justice is one of the keys to empowering poor people all over the world.

As a cofounder of the coalition SAVE M.E. (Samar Alliance of Vigilant Endeavors for Mother Earth), JOSI CALVIN BUGHO put his life on the line by joining friars PASTOR ALTA and ALBERTO BALDO alongside the parishioners of Tinambacan, Northern Samar, **Philippines**. Their struggle has focused on the fight to block the quarrying of a tree clad limestone formation essential to sustainable ecological diversity for the parish community. A recent inter-Franciscan campaign against the 1996 APEC Summit in the Philippines highlighted the ongoing need to look at environmental degradation from a more inclusive social justice perspective. In a heavily industrialized area of **Poland**, the Franciscan community has established ECOSONG, a music festival that helps to bring hope to an area filled with vestiges of fifty years of inefficient state rule.

In Makarska, **Croatia**, JURE RADIC (1920-1990) of the Franciscan Province of Split founded a sea museum in 1963 after years of scientific research into the flora and fauna of southern Croatia and the Adriatic Sea. He also collected numerous seashells from the around the world and began an impressive herbarium and paleontological collection. As a liturgical professor, scientist and Franciscan friar, he believed deeply in the need to safeguard God's creation. To help raise awareness of such issues he also founded the so-called Mountain and Sea Institute which organizes many scientific conferences and works together with other international scientific institutes.

On the border separating **Mexico** and the **U.S.A.**, JOE BAUR, LUIS BALDONADO, LIZ CUMMINS have worked together with other lay leaders on the project, known as SWEEP or Southwest Environmental Equity Project, to try and block legislation allowing companies to dump toxic wastes without cleaning up the sites. Many of these toxic waste sites are located in African-American and Hispanic neighborhoods along the U.S.-Mexican border. The residents are not told of these dangers involved and most lack the political power to influence the location of the sites. The rates of cancer and other diseases are often much higher in these areas than in the general population. SWEEP continues to bring church leaders from Phoenix to visit families in Nogales, Arizona, where the spread of cancer and other diseases has been firmly documented. Incorporating issues of social justice into the more traditional "green movement" is a noteworthy example of SWEEP's Franciscan essence.

In Appalachia, Kentucky, **U.S.A.**, MAYNARD TETREAULT has been a leading advocate for the local population in their struggle for environmental justice. Set off from the rest of the United States by the Appalachian Mountain chain, the people of Appalachia have often been left to fend for themselves against large mining interests. Strip mining has led to the degradation of much of Appalachia's once pristine ecosystem and the dependence of such a large percentage of the local population on the coal industry has led to social and economic problems as well. Maynard and others are working to provide the region with more sustainable industry and to protect the natural resources so abundant in the area.

In an impoverished Hispanic community in Oakland, California, **U.S.A.**, KEITH WARNER has worked to raise awareness of the interdependence of environmental

degradation and poverty throughout the world. “People won't care about tropical rainforests in Brazil or Micronesia,” according to Keith “unless they have a sense of the connection with their local situation.” Rural people, he says had a greater understanding of stewardship of the land. Today, with the tremendous dislocation of people from rural to urban areas, people have lost that connection to nature. Keith believes that by giving urban people a sense of nature's gifts through small steps such as community gardens, recycling and the planting of trees, a more practical and holistic environmental ethic can be attained. Recently, the city of Oakland initiated a campaign to combat the disposal of used motor oil into the city's sewer system--a very common practice in the neighborhood of St. Elizabeth Friary. In an effort to promote motor oil recycling, Keith built a model street in the back of St. Elizabeth Church where local children could witness the impact the disposal of motor oil was having upon the entire San Francisco Bay area. “In a poor community such as this composed of El Salvadorans, Mexicans and many undocumented aliens, the city government simply does not have the respect, structures and language capacity to confront the problem,” Keith says. “The people of the neighborhood fear the government, particularly the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and have little time for the environmental concerns which preoccupy wealthy northern Californians.”

All too often political and economic concerns take precedence over environmental issues and the rights of the local populations. Amidst the political turmoil in Israel, former Custos of the **Holy Land**, GIUSEPPE NAZZARO, tried to combat plans to confiscate huge amounts of land near Bethlehem for the construction of a vast luxury tourist complex. Since 1967, more than 60% of all land in the region has been confiscated and declared a military zone by the Israeli government. Bethlehem is now almost totally surrounded by Jewish settlements and bypass roads. Tour buses move swiftly in and out of the town, discouraging contact with the local Christian community. In an already explosive political context, the further confiscation of land will mean the loss of livelihood for several thousand families, the destruction of much ancestral land of the Palestinian people and greater opposition to the fragile peace process.

In other countries where political transformation has taken place, there is a growing sense of environmental justice. In **South Africa**, for example, the apartheid system of past governments meant that huge swathes of land were put aside for profitable nature reserves and Afrikaner settlements while tribal homelands and shantytowns for the black majority were left in a state of total neglect. One project aimed at helping the black communities to combat deforestation by planting quick-growing groves of eucalyptus trees is now seen to have badly backfired on the local environment. In a country known for its shortage of water, a grove of 100 eucalyptus trees can absorb over 50,000 liters of water daily, thus transforming the surrounding areas into a virtual desert. Until his recent death, CRISPIN CLOSE was pioneering efforts to cut down the groves of these trees and replace them with indigenous local varieties of trees that are grown from seed.

In other countries across the globe, friars are promoting the preservation of indigenous plants and ancient farming techniques as the best way of supporting small farmers in the struggle against governments eager to turn over vast areas of land to profitable monoculture farming. In **Papua New Guinea** friars have protected the increasing monoculture farming of the oil palm plantations. The trees are cultivated for their clustered fruit whose flesh and seeds yield the oil to be sold on foreign markets. Once again the ecological diversity of the region and the livelihood of the local people are

threatened by this type of non-sustainable development.

The Atrisco Environmental Learning Project (AELP) is a nonprofit, after-school and summer program located at Holy Family Parish in Albuquerque, New Mexico, U.S.A., JACK CLARK ROBINSON, pastor of Holy Family Parish, helped established AELP as a practical way of addressing the rapidly transforming family life and structures in the surrounding Hispanic community. Children, teenagers and grandparents come together for the construction and maintenance of a shade garden and greenhouse. As Project Director BERNADETTE ORTEGA points out: “By sharing in the care and nurturing of our garden, young and old alike come to learn more about the bounty nature can provide and the need to nourish the indigenous traditions that made the South Valley of Albuquerque such a fertile place prior to industrialization. AELP allows economically and socially disadvantaged youth to become intimately involved in a positive, self-esteem building, educational program while addressing some of the neighborhood's social and cultural concerns. The ultimate goal of our program,” says Bernadette, “is to expose children to the basic philosophies of respect, caring and compassion. In developing these basic human values, we believe the children will learn to have respect for themselves, for their environment and for each other.”

General Constitutions

Article 9: 1 & 4. The brothers' chastity involves an “undivided heart,” through which they “ponder the things of God” (1). The brothers “should look upon all creatures humbly and devoutly, aware that they all were created for the glory of God” (4).

Other references: articles 20,1-2, 127, 3 and 131,1.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the biggest threats to the environment that your city faces? your country? the world?
2. What have you personally done in response to #1 above? What has your local community or provincial fraternity done?
3. Does your local community recycle whenever possible?
4. Are questions of environmental justice reflected in your apostolic work (daily tasks, conversations, preaching, etc.)?
5. Many people regard St. Francis as an outstanding ally in their efforts for environmental justice. Do you encourage this? In what way?
6. In your apostolic work, do you ever use ecological examples to reinforce the fact that all peoples on this planet are interconnected? Have you ever used the *Canticle of the Creatures* in public prayer to reinforce this fact?
7. Do you feel that you personally and your community have sufficient sensitivity to, and knowledge of, ecological problems? Do you regard the participation of franciscans in actions and movements in the area of ecology as being adequate?
8. What would you criticize in your life and that of your fraternity regarding sensitivity and responsibility for ecology: excessive use of energy, destruction of materials which could be recycled? Do you not think that each one of us likewise is guilty of consumerism and of so-called “development”?
9. From the point of view of an option for the poor, what steps could we take towards a more effective responsibility in the area of ecology?
10. Do you believe that today's consciousness regarding ecology demands a new reading of *The Canticle of The Creatures*? Your fraternity could hold a reading of this prayer

in common, with a commentary from the point of view of the theme of this chapter.

4. Life



OFM General Constitutions, Art. 96,2

Since many human beings are still victims of dehumanizing poverty, injustice and oppression, the brothers should devote themselves, with all people of good will, to restoring the social order, so that it can be based on justice, liberation and peace in the risen Christ. After weighing the causes of the injustice in each situation, the brothers should participate in activities that build up charity, justice and international solidarity.

From the life of Francis ...

Because Francis referred all creation back to the Creator (2Cel 165), the Poor Man of Assisi was fundamentally joyful. Only sin should cause sadness but even then the friars were not to become angry at another's sin (RegB c.7). Contrary to Albigensians who considered spirit as good and matter as evil, Francis saw all creation as blessed by God. Thus Francis urged people to frequent the sacraments, visible signs of God's love and grace (EpFid). The Poverello sometimes sang in French and once used two sticks to represent a violin and its bow (2Cel 127).

Since Francis first lived what he preached, he could preach confidently, moving hearts previously hardened to repentance and restoring health to souls and bodies (LM 12:8). Celano's *Treatise on the Miracles of St. Francis* (3Cel) records only a few of the many miracles worked by Francis or attributed to his intercession. Francis always treated sick people compassionately.

He urged the friars “to let it be seen that they are happy in God, cheerful and courteous, as is expected of the, and be careful not to appear gloomy or depressed like hypocrites”

(RegNB c.7). Toward the end of his life Francis said, "Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord God, for up to now we have made little or no progress" (1Cel 103). Francis wrote to the minister having difficulty with certain friars: "There should be no friar in the whole world who has fallen into sin, no matter how far he has fallen, who will ever fail to find your forgiveness for the asking, if he will only look into your eyes. And if he does not ask forgiveness, you should ask him if he wants it" (EpMin). Forgiveness, penitence and works of compassion kept Francis' love for life very fresh.

Franciscan Perspectives

The British author G. K. Chesterton has observed that part of the genius of Francis of Assisi was the way he focused on the particular person in front of him. It was a mark of his courtesy that Francis never ignored one person for another but gave to each - from the leper to the Sultan, from the Lady Jacoba to the beggar - his attention and concern. In his famous *Canticle of the Creatures*, Francis showed that his attention and respect was directed not only to humans but to all aspects of creation. And the reason for Francis's attitude towards others was precisely that God had created them and through them God could be glorified.

Francis's poetic intuition and creative insight were picked up by other man of genius in the Franciscan tradition. Bonaventure relies upon Francis's spiritual experience in the formulation of the philosophical and theological foundations of his thought. An image of creation which remained throughout Bonaventure's life was taken from the Book of Ecclesiastes 1:7, where a small spring gives rise to a river which flows through the land and then returns to its point of origin. For Bonaventure, all of life comes from one divine source, goes out from God to bear fruit and then returns to God. In Bonaventure's framework the created many are given existence by the Uncreated One (emanation); creatures give witness to their Creator (exemplarity); and are led back to the Creator (consummation). As such all of creation--especially animate creation--is to be understood as being of value since all of creation is of God, the highest value, or as Francis would pray, the "most High" and "supreme Good."

Duns Scotus, so different in method and content from Bonaventure, nonetheless has the inspiration of Francis in common with the Seraphic Doctor. As is known well, it is not sin but goodness which dominates the vision of creation in Scotus. Because God is free, creation has no reason to be except for the divine favor of God. God's love is manifested in creation and this most clearly in the Incarnation. All that is need not be, but that something exists is due solely to God's loving it into existence. There is an importance and dignity to what exists, therefore, and salvation history is the story of how God freely enters into conversation with particular persons in concrete times and places. The individual creature in the uniqueness of its historical situation is part of the story of God's active presence. While the incarnation is, of course, the highpoint of creation, it also serves to affirm the value of the created world. Flesh, bodiliness, materiality the historically contingent - this is not to be shunned but accepted as God accepts it. Scotus's emphasis here is given expression by the term *haecceitas*, the thisness of a thing. *Haecceitas*, what makes something singular and different from others who share its nature, underlines the value of contingent, particular reality since each being possesses something it alone can reveal.

Threats to and Denials of the Value of Created Life

With its stress on the inherent dignity and value of each creature, the Franciscan vision of life stands in sharp contrast with many other visions evident in our modern world. Some of these alternative visions are in direct contrast to the Franciscan vision; others are distortions or exaggerations of visions which properly understood can serve life. Every vision proposes, either implicitly or explicitly, a hierarchy of values. Human actions will ordinarily reflect the operative values a person or culture adopts. Important to grasp is that one must look at the operative (not professed) values since many people will in theory endorse a Christian, even specifically Franciscan set of values. But the moral practice of a person or the actual value enshrined in a culture may differ considerably from those professed. This is not just a matter of hypocrisy (saying one thing and doing another) or moral weakness (not living up to one's commitments) but moral blindness (not being self-critical enough to realize there is a discrepancy between beliefs and actions). The remedy is not to scold or condemn but to assist people in uncovering in their own lives and in their society the forces which truly direct and motivate behavior. A comment on some of the more problematic visions at work in our world follows.

Perfectionism

This vision of life places great weight on the value of life insofar as it lacks obstacles or setbacks to success, popularity, or autonomy. Faced with the imperfections of the human condition, this worldview cannot continue to accept the essential goodness and dignity of the created order. Thus, infirmity or illness is seen as robbing people of their dignity, marginalizing their role in social life, making them unworthy of our attention or concern. Treatment of the sick, especially the dying, often reflects an unease that people experience when confronted with the diminishment of strength and health. Movements in many societies for physician-assisted suicide or right-to-die legislation can be a reflection of an inability to countenance a life that is worth living despite pain and suffering. In the minds of some people, life is only worth living if a person can be in control of their body and not experience physical limitations.

So often in modern cultures the importance of image leads to exorbitant expenses and efforts at achieving or maintaining physical beauty. We may relegate those who are disfigured or unappealing to the periphery of our lives; it can be far easier to minister to the people who meet the culture's standards of beauty or attractiveness. So often the young are captivated by a dream of attaining ageless beauty and tend to evaluate others (especially peers) on the basis of physical appearance alone. With regard to nature there is the temptation to the "Disney-fication" of the environment. That is, a persistent drive to make nature "pretty" by ridding it of all that is not harmonious, pleasing and convenient to the urban tourist. Many poor nations are trying to appeal to foreign visitors by eliminating or remaking elements of their natural environments which are not appealing to outsiders. Insects, wild animals, steep hills and mountains, changing shorelines, indigenous folkways and diets can all be sacrificed for the goal of a humanly-imposed homogeneity, which is familial and comforting to recreational travelers.

A moral perfectionism can prevent us from respecting and loving those who have succumbed to addictions, embraced a problematic lifestyle or committed evil deeds. It is easy to transform judgments on behavior into condemnations of persons. Such condemnations may then be extended to denying the rights of the condemned, i.e., unjust imprisonment, repression and stigmatizing, torture and capital punishment. In all our

dealings with persons, even those not ready to seek conversion, we must remember the maxim to hate the sin but never the sinner.

Franciscans, who are aware of their own fragility and weakness and yet know they are loved by God, must be ready to extend love toward all the rest of life even when it is encountered in those forms which exhibit the unfulfilled promise and hope which God promises to bring to completion in the future.

Instrumental Rationality

In an age of wondrous scientific achievement and when marvels of engineering have been accomplished in a variety of fields, there is the risk that a mode of thinking apposite to one dimension of life will be extended into areas where it is less appropriate. There is a legitimate sense in which elements of the created order can be used as means to attaining a higher good. But if we only see others from the perspective of how they serve our purposes, then we can miss the richness and beauty of people and things in themselves.

A constant risk in the moral life is that we shall place ourselves at the center of existence. The human ego may surprise us by its ingenuity in asserting itself in various guises throughout our life. Precisely because Franciscans embrace a Christocentric view of the world, we should be able to resist more effectively the persistent drive of the ego to place ourselves at the center of things. This means that an instrumental rationality which judges all things from the vantage of how it is useful to me ought not be the dominant mode of thought. Yet instrumental rationality is prevalent in both individual and corporate expressions.

Genuine friendship is one of the relationships which can be at risk in a life dominated by instrumental reasoning. In many societies today successful individuals are those who are able to “network” well with others. Whether it be in business, civil service, the arts or the professions, there is great weight given to the creation of a range of contacts or associates who can be called upon for assistance. Friendship takes delight and rejoices in the existence of the other as a presence in one’s life. But instrumental thinking sees the other as a means for achieving some purpose; once the purpose has been achieved the relationship is altered since the basis of the relationship was never the mutual care and joy that accompanies friendship. It is not that instrumental reasoning is simply wrong. When it becomes the dominant mode of thinking, it can distort fundamental relationships which ought to operate on another foundation.

Expressed corporately, instrumental rationality is evident in an anthropocentric attitude which sees the human as the only measure of value in creation. All else is to serve the human without regard for matters of the intrinsic worth of creation apart from human use. An ecology of stewardship can be corrupted by anthropocentrism when the environment is not cared for because it is God’s but simply because it serves human well-being to preserve some natural resource. Too often the language of stewardship simply calls upon us to act with an eye towards our long-term self-interest, to use the goods of the earth prudently so as not to run into problems in the future, e.g. pollution, depletion of oil deposits or timber reserves. Looked at this way, it is still possible to think of the environment only as it is of use to humans. But a Christocentric vision calls us beyond instrumental rationality to see the created order as having an intrinsic worth because it is God’s creation, part of the larger plan of the Creator and not just the raw materials for stewards to use as they wish.

Market Logic

Perhaps no ideology has become so over-generalized, i.e., extended into realms for which it was not meant, than that of the free market. As John Paul II has suggested, a properly regulated but free market can be an effective means of producing and distributing goods and services that promote well-being. Markets can encourage creativity, entrepreneurship, diversity and prosperity. Without proper constraints markets can also lead to harmful inequalities, ecological damage, ruinous competition and exploitation of the weak.

While not denying the benefits and risks of the market for economic life, there is another aspect of market thinking which Franciscans must recognize: the extension of the market's logic into realms other than economic. The result is a reductionism that sees the human as simply *Homo economicus* and the rest of life as having value only as a commodity. As one critic has said, "The market knows the price of everything but the value of nothing." There is a danger with market thinking that society will put a financial value on things that ought not to be bought and sold. The political and civil liberties of citizens, the fundamental social and economic goods necessary for human dignity, bonds of affection in families and friendships, honor, truthfulness and respect among people--these should not be for sale.

Market logic can erase an aesthetic sensibility, which delights in beauty for its own sake. Reducing the value of a painting, the pleasure of music, the sight of a sunset over the water, the rhythm of a poem, to what it will sell for in the market hinders an appreciation of things for their own intrinsic worth. One of the gifts of contemplation is that it fosters within the subject an ability to take aspects of creation on terms other than market utility. Prayer has a value in itself irrespective of what the market says. There is much else within the Franciscan vision that is cherished and respected not because it is worth money but because it gives glory to God and enhances our appreciation of what God has done by giving life to all creatures in their diverse splendor.

Ken Himes OFM

Examples from the lives of the friars...

Celebrating the life and the dignity of each individual has been an integral part of the Franciscan vision since the time of St. Francis. In one sense today there is a greater awareness of the human rights of the individual, as seen through the many pressure groups, non-governmental organizations and pro-life movements. On the other hand, our consumer society is increasingly dominated by an alternative value system, which emphasizes money, beauty, success and self-gratification above all else. It is easy to find examples of friars working in different countries to promote a "culture of life" among the most deprived sectors of society. It is harder to identify the patient efforts by friars to encourage a new enthusiasm for life amongst the more mundane events of everyday lives. Writers, artists or musicians communicate this zest for life through their work, gifted preachers pass it on to members of their congregations, teachers help young people to develop a healthy and positive outlook on life.

At Merchants Quay in a depressed area of Dublin, **Ireland**, SEAN CASSIN is working to promote this “culture of life” among those suffering from HIV and AIDS. Sean was first struck by the impact of drug addiction when he was a young student in Rome. The daily encounters with the many drug addicts who sleep on Rome's streets at night worried him so much that he had difficulty keeping up with his study programs. Inspired by the words of Matthew's Gospel 25:35-6, Sean began to reach out to the “street people” of Rome. Upon returning to Ireland, he focused his efforts on the heroin addicts who often congregated in the neighborhood surrounding Merchants Quay. Sean became increasingly convinced that traditional drug treatment programs could only have limited success because they do not deal with the broader social challenges facing so many of Ireland's young people today. The staff at Merchants Quay started to examine new ways of responding to these needs; for example, it was useless to discuss “the pain of joblessness” without vocational programs to provide addicts with new marketable skills; the diminished self-esteem of drug users needed to be countered by group therapy and counseling; HIV transmission could be stemmed by providing clean needles - a solution which often meet with the disapproval of outside observers. Many longtime friends of Merchants Quay are still dismayed by the center's expanded commitment to social justice work among the destitute. For Sean, there is no more important ministry since he sees the changes the center has been able to make in so many peoples' lives.

In **The Netherlands** too, many young people who come to Amsterdam to study are drawn into drug addiction; prostitution is often seen as the only way they can support that habit. The combination of unclean needles and unsafe sex leads inevitably to HIV infection and AIDS. By working among Amsterdam's “forgotten youth,” LOUIS BOTHE has been able to offer support and provide practical opportunities for some of those people who manage to conquer their addiction and move on to a new life.

Working in one of the poorest slum areas around Karachi in **Pakistan**, KEN VIEGAS meets many people who have lost all hope of a better life. Some three-quarters of the people in his parish have no running water, very few have a regular income, many have little or no sense of their own worth. Sickness, unemployment, usury and drug abuse are the harsh facts of life for most families there. That is why justice and peace work is so important for Viegas. “It's not just a hobby,” he says, “this is a real passion that I feel so strongly about. And when you suffer and hunger for justice, you begin to see Jesus' passion more clearly.” As he visits the most needy and deprived homes, he tries to encourage people to rediscover a sense of their own unique worth and talents. “I try to visit five houses a day and I tell people I do not come just to eat or drink with them, so they must not go running around to buy food and prepare it for me. When they realize that you come just to listen to them and not to see what they have to offer, then you can get very close to them.”

Another friar, YOUNIS WALTER, works with mentally handicapped children in Karachi trying to combat the deep-seated prejudices and superstitions that compound the problem in this part of the world. Many families believe that a handicapped child is a sign of punishment from God. In the center he has helped to establish, the focus is not only on quality care for the children but also on education and prevention - teaching parents about the connections between handicap and poverty, poor health and the frequent custom of marriage within the same family. The center is open to Christians and Muslims alike, in a country where converting to Christianity is seen as a capital crime. Many families from the two faiths come to share a new understanding by

cooking, eating and caring for their children together.

In **India** JESU IRUDAYAM is also helping children to enjoy a better life. He works especially with street children in Madras through various projects which he has been developing since 1991. In January of that year he founded an NGO known as SEEDS - Street Elfin Education and Development Society - although locally the organization is better known as *Nesakkaram*, a Tamil term which means "Friendly Hands." Some children are helped through home placement programs, other are referred to institutions, others still receive food, medical advice and other services through reach-out posts located at a local railway station in Madras.

In **Brazil** bullets and death threats have failed to frighten MARIANO GIJSEN away from his work with the street children of Belo Horizonte. In 1989 while working in the streets of Rio de Janeiro, Mariano was shot and very seriously wounded by one of the boys, acting on orders by his "owner" to kill the friar or he would be killed himself. Mariano's work is seen as a serious threat to the pimps and other crime bosses who use street children for the sex trade and for drug running. After recovering from his injuries, Mariano moved from Rio to Belo Horizonte in 1990 to continue his work with street children there. In Brazil there are tens of thousands of abandoned or runaway youngsters - some of them with children of their own - who survive on the streets by stealing and sniffing glue to keep their hunger at bay. Working patiently over the years, Mariano has befriended hundreds of these street children and helped many to make the difficult transition into homes where they have a better chance of survival. No child is pressured into leaving the streets and each one is respected as an individual.

In many countries of the world from Korea to **Vietnam** to Guinea Bissau, friars are caring for those suffering from leprosy - following as closely as they can in the footsteps of Francis himself. In the United States, friars work in the leprosarium in Louisiana - the only hospital in the country specializing in Hansen's Disease, as it is also known. In Vietnam it is the children of parents with leprosy who are benefiting from the dedicated work of FIDELIS LE TRONG NHUNG on the outskirts of Saigon, or Ho Chi Minh City as it's now called. Though the activities of the friars in Vietnam are restricted by the government, the Order is highly respected by the people because of its decision not to flee the country during the civil war and the takeover of South Vietnam by the communists in 1975. Prior to the war the friars were running two leprosariums, one in Nha Trang and the other in the Mekong Delta. Because those centers were confiscated by the new government, in 1983 Fidelis had to start again with a small medicine dispensary. Gradually his work has grown to include catechism classes and reading, writing and sewing lessons for up to 120 children. Since the friars are not officially allowed to run schools, these lessons are referred to as "compassion classes" for lepers and their children, who are not allowed to attend the public schools or have any contact with people who still live in fear of the disease.

A licensed acupuncturist and advocate of traditional medicines, DIEGO KIM first began to discern his vocation on behalf of the marginalized while providing support to patients at the Sacred Heart Lepers' Village run by the Korean friars. Like Francis, Diego's contact with the lepers led to a conversion of heart and a deeper understanding of the need for justice. When the Order called for volunteers to serve in the former soviet republics of central Asia, Diego joined up with a Franciscan sister from Slovakia to establish a much-needed health clinic in rural **Kazakhstan**. There he uses his

acupuncture skills to offer an alternative medical approach, which is especially appealing to Kazakhstan's large Korean community. The clinic treats everyone who seeks assistance regardless of race, creed, ethnic or national origin. A small Secular Franciscan community has grown up there too, sharing the same commitment to justice and human dignity which Diego sees as the very essence of what it means to be a Franciscan.

In the Navajo settlement of Tohatchi in New Mexico, **U.S.A.**, JOHN MITTLESTADT and MIKE HAAG have joined with Franciscan women religious, a Navajo Deacon and other lay people in developing a creative and wide-ranging ministry among these indigenous people. The Mission at St. Michael's covers an area of 3,000 square miles and is home to 8,000 Navajo. The emphasis at the center is on life amongst the poverty and despair of so many people with chronic alcohol abuse problems. At the central "Powerhouse," hundreds of people being treated for alcoholism and other addiction problems meet weekly to try and confront their sense of isolation and despair. Nearby Franciscan sisters from Oldenburg, Indiana, coordinate special programs for Navajos suffering from Fetal Alcohol Syndrome.

With the help of ANDRIJA BILOKAPIC, the Diocese of Zadar in **Croatia** has set up a "pro-vita" office to counsel women who are considering abortion. The women are not only given confidential advice and support as they face this difficult decision. They are also offered practical and financial help through Caritas or through an association of women and young people in the local parishes if they decide to keep the child. Since the office has reported a significant success rate, the initiative has begun to spread to other cities in Croatia.

Throughout the war in **Bosnia & Herzegovina** and Croatia, FRANJO GREBENAR and ZORAN LIVANEIC worked together to start a hospital within the Church building of the Holy Spirit in Nova Bila. The remarkable transformation took place overnight, at the beginning of 1993, when Muslim militias attacked the local Croatian population. The injured pleaded with Zoran for assistance since the conflict prevented them from travelling across enemy lines to the nearest hospital. Within hours, medical personnel joined the friars to set up an emergency surgery ward. During the course of the war, many hundreds of lives were saved by the team, but despite their vital assistance Zoran sadly recalls, "We had so many funerals that no one even had time to cry."

For DAVID SCHLATTER in the **U.S.A.** making an option for life means coming into daily contact with those facing certain death. He is a spiritual advisor to prisoners in the state of Delaware, several of whom are facing the death penalty. State officials were in the process of reactivating the use of capital punishment when he moved there some six years ago - now there are at least one or two executions each year. Schlatter has spent many years ministering to those contemplating death or facing bereavement following the suicide of a loved relative or friend. "Most of us who work with people in pain of this kind find that we minister best through our own wounds. It's when wound touches wound that we allow God to work most fully," Schlatter explains. "There is a healthy self-consciousness of our own sinful nature which allows a Franciscan to sit down with men and women in prison and see that there's not much of a distance between them. The fact that Francis himself was imprisoned and struck up a rapport with his fellow inmates helps us to identify with them and to experience Christ there." Schlatter currently works with two other friars at a center in Wilmington, Delaware, where they

offer hospitality, counseling, various 12-step recovery programs for those with addictions--in fact anything that can help people looking for a sense of purpose in their lives.

A common problem for children throughout **Brazil** and elsewhere in the developing world is diarrhea, which regularly leads to dehydration and death. KLAUS FINKAM has worked with the Brazilian Bishops' Conference and the United Nations Children's Fund, UNICEF, to design a successful rehydration program for the children of Brazil. Thousands of young lives have been saved through a very simple salt, sugar and water solution. The rehydration program trains mothers to work as "medical teams" in villages throughout the country, educating others to successfully diagnose and treat the symptoms before it is too late.

In Gallup, New Mexico, **U.S.A.**, MAYNARD SHURLEY strives to raise awareness about HIV and AIDS among the largely African-American, Hispanic and Native American people who struggle with life on the streets. Maynard is the grandson of a Navajo medicine man and the only active Franciscan from among the Navajo people. He explains, "For us [the Navajo] all life is sacred, the sun, the earth, the water and the sky--just as with Saint Francis, each is a member of our extended family." As a health educator and outreach worker with the Navajo AIDS Network based in Chinle, Arizona, Maynard has found that "spirituality is the key to healing yourself." His fellow Franciscans at St. Michael's Mission supported Maynard's decision to enter a line of work which was unconventional and often dangerous as well. His continued presence on the streets and his willingness to listen to the emotional and physical needs of the people there has enabled Maynard to broaden the appeal and impact of Franciscans among Native Peoples.

Developing a successful AIDS education program is a special challenge for the friars in **Pakistan** where Islamic laws reinforce taboos about the discussion of sexuality. KUSHI LAI, of St. John Baptist Province in Pakistan, runs a series of popular AIDS Awareness Workshops in different parts of the country and has come up with some creative ways of coping with government restrictions. In Pakistan most barbers work not in shops but in the street, cutting hair and shaving men with a common razor that is seldom sterilized. Supported by Christian and Muslim volunteers, Kushi's HIV awareness program begins by drawing attention to the risks of infection through razors and dentists' equipment, before moving more carefully onto the topic of sexually transmitted diseases.

Many friars all over the world have made a special commitment to life through their work with young people of all races, religions and social backgrounds. From Sicily to Colombia, friars are working in schools, youth groups or simply the parish setting to encourage young people to take a courageous stand against drugs the culture of death. Working with young runaways on the streets of New York, **U.S.A.**, has become the personal mission of PLACID STROIK. At Covenant House, where Placid serves as the Director of Pastoral Ministry, teenagers are given the shelter and care they require to move away from life on the streets. Counseling and support are just two aspects of Placid's pastoral work among the young who have found their way to New York and have often been forced into prostitution and drug addiction. Their impoverished state is often only the outward sign of a life of abuse and neglect. Many of them find in Placid and his colleagues the first adults they have ever been able to truly trust. Placid's position also enables him to provide counseling for the staff of Covenant House -- often

“veterans” of the streets themselves. Working alongside other social and health professionals, Placid engages in advocacy on behalf of America's children and youth, who he says are “culturally exploited by drugs, poverty, pornography and the cultural models perpetuated by advertising and TV.”

General Constitutions

Article 7:3. “Through the charity of Spirit' the brothers should 'voluntarily serve and obey one another' and together search for the signs of the Lord God's will.”

Article 89:1. “Living in lowliness and in fraternity,” the brothers “acknowledge that they are Christians,” and, in doing so, begin their common proclamation of the Gospel.

Other references: articles 66,1-2; 67; 69,2; 71; 96,1-3; 97,1-2; 98,2; 132.

Discussion Questions

1. In your city, what are the biggest obstacles to promoting respect for life at all stages (conception to natural death)?
2. Do people experience you as a defender of human life, especially the life of the most vulnerable members in your society?
3. Do you visit friars who are sick in the hospital? who are chronically ill?
4. Do you see rampant consumerism as threatening respect for life at all its stages? If so, do you ever refer to that in your apostolic work?
5. How does your local community or provincial fraternity show its respect for and enthusiasm about life?
6. Are questions about assisted suicide growing in your society? How do you respond to them as an individual? as a local fraternity? as a province?
7. Do we support the defense of life, from the moment of conception in the womb until its natural conclusion?
8. Do we undertake to improve the quality of life so that it may improve and reach levels appropriate to the dignity of the human person?
9. What are the attempts against life which occur most frequently in the area in which you live?

5. Rights: Individual and Collective



OFM General Constitutions, Article 69,1

In protecting the rights of oppressed people, the brothers should reject violence and have recourse instead to means that are otherwise available even to more powerless people.

Article 96,3

The brothers should work humbly and courageously that human dignity and the rights of all are respected and cultivated in the bosom of the Church and of the Order.

From the life of Francis ...

The examples already given in this section of chapter one (Option for the Poor) also apply here since the most marginalized members of any society are at greatest risk of having their individual and collective human rights pushed aside. Before his conversion, Francis did exactly that to those suffering from leprosy. All that changed one day when Francis met a leper on the road, dismounted, give him some money and then kissed him. Some days later Francis visited the dwelling places of lepers and did the same. “Thus he exchanged the bitter for the sweet” (2Cel 9).

Francis directed that friar ministers must not command anything that is against the friars' conscience or the Rule. Friars should be able to speak with their ministers as employers speak with servants (RegB c.10). Friars may work at any honest labor except jobs which put them in authority in someone's house (RegNB c.7). Without hesitation the friars should make their needs known to one another (RegB c.6). Superiors among the friars must not cling to office (Adm IV). When one friars cried out at night that he was

dying of hunger, Francis arose and summoned the others friars to eat with him and with the friar who cried out. Francis then spoke to them about the virtue of discretion, telling them not to deprive the body of what it needs (2Cel 22).

Rulers should remember that they will be judged by God one day and should, therefore, not swerve from God's commandments, helping their subjects to hold God in reverence (EpRect). Brother Leo was encouraged to take the way which would best please God, following in his footsteps and in poverty (EpLeo). If a novice of a single hour were made Francis' guardian, the Poverello would obey that novice gladly (LM 6:4). Francis' respect for each person extended even to unbelievers and to the apparent enemies of Christ's gospel.

Reflection

1. Past and Current Developments in Human Rights

Human Rights, a popular term in recent times, is an expression of collective consciousness and a symbol of the struggle of many social movements and of entire peoples. Although its juridical, political formulation is of recent origin, its roots are found in the history of human civilization. Even primitive people organize their life together around values of life, the family, honor, work and property, creating their customs, norms and religious rites. Officially recognized in worldwide declarations, conventions, and in national constitutions, Human Rights are actually like a confluence of many waters from which continue to emerge new liberties, rights and responsibilities for individual persons and peoples in the entire world.

While juridically confirmed and in spite of diversity in interpretations, Human Rights protect and promote the well-being of all citizens, their liberty, lives, security, conditions of education, health and work. They organize and regulate mutual relations between individuals and society and relations between nations. As a prototype, the framework of Human Rights actually was used in the Declaration of Independence of North America in 1776 and the Declaration of Men and Citizens of the French Revolution promulgated in 1789. Principles of freedom, equality, fraternity are engraved for time immemorial in these declarations. Only after the horrors, destruction and sacrifice of millions of people in World War II did human rights become globalized and ratified by the United Nations and signed by almost all governments.

In a liberal spirit, the famous “Universal Declaration of Human Rights” assumes the defense and protection of all people, protecting their freedom and rights against any discrimination, with equality under the law applied in all fairness. The Declaration includes the rights to privacy, property and democratic participation (1948). Under the strong influence of socialism and after many discussions regarding primary collective rights, the political, economic, social and cultural order among nations was formulated and confirmed (1966). Along with the recognition of sovereignty and the internal self-determination of each country, the participating countries obliged themselves to guarantee equality between men and women, the right to work, economic development, secure and hygienic conditions for workers, freedom to form associations, the right to social security, especially for working mothers and women, improvement of well-being and education at every level. Other international conventions deepened and spelled out these rights and consistently included urgency with regard to the importance of better stewardship of creation.

2. Human Rights in Southern Countries

Looking at the world from the side of Latin America, the primary reaction to conversation about Human Rights is shock at the abysmal contrast between “theory and practice”-- the luminous ideal and the life of suffering millions. This contrast continues to challenge the responsibility of human participation in bridging the gap. The real world is not like a neatly arranged bird’s nest well taken care of by zealous birds, with housing, food and liberty to fly for all. On the contrary, it is a society of cruel contrasts and injustice, solidarity and blind egoism, riches and luxury alongside of masses of poor and miserable people; the awakening and hunger among millions of people for liberty and life together with slavery and unnatural death. Millions of children are sacrificed in the current dominant system of work and consumption. In order to enrich the few groups, nature is exploited without pity, harming the poor and polluting the world’s land, water and air--all necessary for human survival.

Human Rights are for all human beings or they lose their validity. The ancient Romans recognized the distinction between *ius in re* and *ius in spe*, the actual rights that people truly have and possess and the rights that are just a hope, an ideal not yet realized. In reality, millions in our world today have little hope that they will achieve these rights. The more that globalization takes place in society and is extended throughout the entire world, how much more obvious are the screaming inequalities and the obvious distances between the social classes in power, ownership, freedom, conditions of well-being and survival, education, security, social services of health, etc. Peace without justice functions mainly as a camouflage of an unjust human reality in which millions of persons -- men, women, children and the elderly -- are victims.

3. Francis, Franciscan Tradition and Human Rights

Within the vast sphere of modern human rights, the inspiration that Francis of Assisi communicated to his brothers appears to be something strange, distant, a useless, not to say antiquated instrument. To bridge seven centuries and two worlds, as different as medieval, modern and post-modern, is a complicated process. “Human Rights” are not a theory but a program of personal and collective life that, on the one hand, motivate and bring about action and on the other, suffer more and more violations that are difficult to accept.

The early Christians never heard of such Human Rights. The term is not part of the vocabulary of Francis, this poor man of Jesus. However, he was not a person who lived in a tomb or a reliquary. The practical movement that he began continues strong and alive in today’s world. The vitality of this Christian man, faithful to the Church, continues to inspire many modern people, even those outside of Christianity.

With the stigmata, as though it was a signature of Christ, the Poor Man of Assisi irradiates even now the spirit of the Word that became flesh and dwelt among us, full of love and truth.

Certainly, Francis was conditioned by the historical, political and ecclesiastical context of his time, but he overcame these limitations by his reading of the Gospel and his courage to take it on as a personal way of life and lifestyle in the world. His open communication with lepers and princes, leaders and beggars, elites and the poor plus the profound respect with which he treated all creatures was an uncommon human

experience. This man is capable of motivating new generations to confront the unreal suffering of those without fundamental Human Rights: beautiful rights accepted and formulated on paper, adorned with many important signatures, yet not practiced in reality.

Called the fool, Francis of Assisi did not know any of the social and economic indicators, tables and statistics that circulate in the modern world. But he penetrated deeply the reality of his time and reformed it. The expression “Love is not loved” communicates well and without sentimentalism the clarity of faith with which he analyzed and evaluated his society of great and small, rich and poor, powerful and powerless, free citizens and those excluded, and by which he interpreted the many conflicts, acts of violence and wars of his time.

Even more, the Gospel was not for him a question of knowledge, but rather a life of action that began with service to the lepers and the carrying of stones and cement to restore old chapels. In God’s plan, this resulted in a movement of many men and women, who in contrast to the “world” became small, poor, dispossessed brothers and sisters, free to serve all in humility and by witness of their lives to preach the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

Dominated by the papal and imperial powers, the Middle Ages did not provide a favorable climate for the formulation of the rights of any human person. The language that prevailed in philosophy and theology was generic and universal, with little interest in the concrete, the contingent or variety of forms. There were two Franciscans who helped to break this mold. Reading the signs of the times, Duns Scotus stressed the individuality of people and things, created in the image of Christ. The love of God does not work with concepts and abstract categories but with individuals who have a name and a face. Rising above the abstract discourse about nature or our common human dignity obliges us to close the gap between human persons in terms of necessities, rights and responsibilities. William of Ockham continues the same thrust. According to him, God creates people and things, single and diverse, in full liberty. Empirical recognition of reality in its diversification takes priority and forms the basis for ethical practice with its light and shadows. Opposed to the concentration of power, Ockham became the “father of the conciliar Church,” giving an active voice to the faithful and their representatives in the building up of the Body of Christ on earth.

For the brothers, Francis is the way to the living Gospel that is the Lord Jesus. Open solidarity with all, in order to save all, marked the life of Jesus. He did good to all, and by the grace of God, witnessed even to death on behalf of all human beings (Mk 7,3: Hb 2, 9). Resurrected from the dead, he began the great work of subjugation, through the cooperation of all of creation. When finally everything has been subjected to Christ, the only Son, Christ will in turn be subjected to God, and so God will be all in all. (Rm 8, 18-25: 1 Cor 15, 28). Within this vast panorama of love, dedication and service, the Franciscan movement encounters the reason for its vitality and work. It is evident that the brothers will have to observe the norms of civil laws with justice, while others work for fraternity (GG.CC.80). It is also evident that the Church’s canon law regulates the rights of the faithful lay and clerics and their associations (CIC, 208-329). However, the suffering human world is much more than the Order and the Catholic Church.

4. Franciscan Mission Work on Human Rights

Servants of Christ and ministers of the mysteries of God on their journey through the world, the brothers work to reconcile all things in heaven and on earth with God through Christ. (1 Cor 4,1; Eph 1,10; Col 1, 20). Through Christ, the way, the truth and life (Jn 14, 6), the human condition was changed radically. But the passage from oppression to new freedom, peace, and true justice depends on the help of those who, following their Master, assist pilgrims on the journey. They especially are called to help the poorest, neediest and marginalized to lift up their heads and obtain their dignity by securing their rights. Despite a secularized formula, Human Rights incorporate the justice of God and Christian hope, and the encounter therein of the most profound and transcendent meaning of Human Rights--to save creation, still groaning with the sufferings of this time (Rm 8).

The globalization of economic and political power concentrated in the hands of a few people forms a continuous source of Human Rights' violations against the life and well-being of the multitude, provoking more and more violent reactions. Even rich countries are beginning to discover poor, marginalized, unemployed, drug-addicted, and young people without futures. The percentages vary from country to country, region to region. A large city in Latin America, a former colony in Africa, a Muslim or Buddhist country have their own particular human problems and present special lifestyles and evangelical practices for the brothers according to the Lord's inspiration.

Because Franciscan communities are local, it is not enough to have charters from the United Nations, the World Health Organization, etc. Each community has to think about the local human situation and study the conditions and possibilities of action in the region to avoid falling into paralyzed passivity in the face of global statistics. Because of this, conscientization begins where the friars live and work as promoters of social justice and peace in the midst of the poor, oppressed and weakest. Free of all fear and instruments of reconciliation, the friars are called to work to support human rights that until now have been denied to the oppressed. Closely imitating the profound love of Francis for all of creation, from brother sun to sister ant, the brothers will help to create a respect for mother nature in order that she may guarantee the well-being of all human beings. (GG.CC. 690-71)

In the modern era, time has long since arrived for the Church to initiate once again a dialogue with the world. Encyclicals and social and political messages of Leo XIII, Pius XI and Pius XII are well-known. But it is only with John XXIII that the magisterium takes up Human Rights explicitly, together with other interconnected rights and responsibilities, and puts them in the context of the Gospel and the mission of Christians on earth (*Peace on Earth*, 1963). The Second Vatican Council contributed two important documents: *The Church in the Modern World* and the *Declaration on Religious Freedom*. Paul VI and John Paul II continued this trend in response to new problems in today's world. In spite of much resistance, Human Rights have become an integral part of the social teachings of the Church as well as the practice of many lay Catholics.

Nowadays, abstract names like capitalism, neo-liberalism, development and globalization are used to camouflage the ever-growing distances in knowledge, power, goods and property between the rich and poor nations, between North and South. A collective consciousness and sense of solidarity is weak. The brothers of Francis of Assisi cannot wait until that which is written about Human Rights is dead and its

victims are only more marginalized. St. Francis cautioned that the servants of God should not be perturbed or angered because of injustice of others but should place themselves in solidarity on the side of the weak and poor so that these gain a human position in society. Two millennia of evangelization witness to the slow penetration of this ferment in the human masses. The practice of Human Rights demands patience and perseverance. Auschwitz, Hiroshima and the Gulag remain as signs that the road to the realization of Human Rights is neither broad nor smooth. Those who persevere until the end will be saved (Cf. Mk 13,13).

According to the model of Francis, the brothers do not live for themselves but for others within and outside of the institutional Church. Within this life of service without frontiers, Human Rights help us to discover the human needs in the faces of poor and suffering people. For those who commit themselves to the Gospel, the preferential option for the poor is not a decoration but an obligation. The criteria of the final judgment on humanity is our solidarity with the least of our brothers and sisters. Every time that you did good to the least of my brothers and sisters, the small, poor, abandoned, sick, marginalized and excluded in society, you did it for me (Cf. Mt 25, 31-46). Where there are violations of Human Rights, sin appears in all of its virulence. Yet, the grace of God will be more abundant by the mediating dedication of the brothers (Cf. Rm 7, 15; 5,20).

Learning how to enter into the sphere of Human Rights on behalf of the poor, ill-treated, and marginalized is not easy. Franciscans are not accustomed to be without housing, jobs, food, services, school and money. Even though it may be against our will, we easily arrange privileges, money for our works, gracious assistance and social support in case of a legal process or prison that may result from the struggles in which we participate on the side of the poor. In countries with few priests, many Franciscans are absorbed in ministerial work within the small world of the local parish. In order to create solidarity with the social classes that live on the margins of society, the challenge is to penetrate the comforts of the middle class that live alongside the door of the friary.

The Franciscan mentality that wants nothing for one's own "except for our vices and sins" (RegNB 1:17) opens the door to ordinary work in the world and the Church plus collaboration in local movements, non-governmental organizations and official state service in the area of Human Rights, quality of life, ecology and worldwide politics. Since the problems that afflict humanity are not the property of anyone, their solutions are not the monopoly of any one entity. Not even in Catholic countries does the Church have the power to give adequate responses to the human necessities of poor people, those without power. The three phases of "see, judge, act" require that the brothers analyze this subhuman reality of the poor, create workable options and carry out plans to break the cycle of paternal assistance from top to bottom. The principal subjects of any actions are the victims who are violated in their fundamental human rights. Poor people say, "May God be praised."

Human Rights, products of the long history of humanity, do not remain at a standstill either in theory or practice. In the face of protests, demonstrations, rebellions, political propaganda and armed struggles, new rights are emerging and will become firmly established in the collective consciousness. Along with this continued genesis, new social subjects, groups, associations and non-governmental organizations are being formed in many countries and are seeking to achieve their rightful space through

recognition and growth. Workers, women, youth, the elderly, deprived people, minorities and other marginalized groups are struggling to better their situation and to be respected as human beings with full rights. Claims regarding social justice, peace, work, security, the new economic order, democracy and the preservation of the natural order are emerging across the entire world. Brothers, let us finally begin (2Cel 6).

Bernardino Leers OFM

Examples from the lives of the friars...

If you mention the issue of human rights to almost anyone in **Brazil** today, the name of one man will most likely spring to their lips. Over the past quarter of a century, CARDINAL PAULO EVARISTO ARNS has become known as one of Latin America's greatest defenders of the rights of the poor and the oppressed, standing up courageously against the worst excesses of the 21-year military regime which ended in 1985.

During those two decades of repression and fear, the Brazilian economy expanded with the help of inexpensive foreign loans, spurring millions of hopeful people to migrate to the cities such as São Paulo in search of work. But the economic growth was soon shown to benefit only a tiny elite while living conditions for the vast majority of the people plummeted. In 1976 the São Paulo Justice and Peace Commission, pioneered by Arns, published a book that exposed in detail the links between such economic growth, institutionalized violence and the poverty of the people. Long before that, however, Arns was already making his mark on the archdiocese by encouraging religious and trained lay people to take the gospel out of the wealthier inner-city parishes and into the impoverished slums that were springing up on the periphery. This popular approach in the 1960's laid the foundations of the base communities that were to become the new face of the church in Brazil, as elsewhere in Latin America.

From his earliest days as auxiliary bishop in northern Sao Paolo, Arns showed himself to be committed to the rights of the poor. He quickly became known as “the bishop who rode the bus,” as he traveled throughout the diocese seeing firsthand what needed to be done to improve the plight of the growing number of families living in abject poverty and squalor. When he took over as archbishop of the city in 1970, he shocked many in the church by selling off the episcopal palace and surrounding parkland, earmarking the interest for the construction of community centers in impoverished areas. Arns's vision and enthusiasm for his mission were largely inspired by the work of the Second Vatican Council, as well as his own experience in the *favelas* around Rio de Janeiro during the first years of his priestly ministry. Don Paulo himself traces his first interest in human rights to the years he spent studying in Paris immediately after the Second World War. There he met former prisoners of war who had been tortured in Germany under the Nazi regime - an experience he was to relive in his own country during the worst years of the military dictatorship. As the repression against political opponents grew throughout the 1970's, Arns became known internationally for his outspoken condemnation of such abuses. He regularly visited political prisoners himself, offering personal support to victims of torture and to families of those murdered by government-sponsored death squads. One of his most significant contributions to the human rights struggle in Brazil was the secret archives he compiled detailing nearly 2.000 reports of torture at the hands of the military. A small team of lawyers helped draw up this accurate report on the victims and their torturers, copying transcripts of military court proceedings, which

were then smuggled out of Brazil. The complete document, entitled *Brazil Nunca Mais!* (*Torture in Brazil*) was published in 1985. Even after Brazil's return to civilian rule, Arns continued his revolutionary human rights work on behalf of the poor and powerless. He has demanded respect for Brazil's indigenous peoples, and supported Afro-Brazilian groups seeking recognition of their culture within the Church. He has pioneered projects to help AIDS patients and their families and has spoken out clearly in support of the environmental and landless movements in Brazil. He has also been active in promoting the bishops' education campaign, which encourages people to organize politically in order to achieve social justice. When LEONARDO BOFF was summoned to the Vatican because of his work on liberation theology, Arns and fellow Franciscan Cardinal ALOIS LORSCHIEDER traveled to Rome to appeal on his behalf. For the past 50 years since his ordination, Arns has stuck tenaciously to his principles of justice and respect for human rights - in and outside the Church. Though he has officially retired, he continues to be one of the clearest voices for the voiceless in Latin America today.

In **South Africa** the concepts of justice, dignity and human rights are now enshrined in the constitution of the new 'rainbow' nation which emerged with the overthrow of the former apartheid regime. The word "equality" is on everyone's lips and within a few years many may start to forget the widespread injustice and discrimination suffered by the majority of the population for more than four decades. Over that time there were many committed Christians, black and white, local and foreign, who worked hard for the human rights of individuals and of entire black and colored communities. One such man is SEAMUS BRENNAN or Father Stan, as he is affectionately known by literally thousands of people who have passed through the parish center he founded back in the 1960's. Originally from County Roscommon in Ireland, Stan first came to South Africa in 1965 as 'pastor of the colored people' in a rundown area known as Reiger Park outside Johannesburg. Talking one day to a neighbor, a man who had been drinking heavily, "the new priest" had his first insight into the lives of the non-white majority: as he poured out his frustrations, the man told how he had failed his school exams and could not afford the necessary books to continue his studies. "It's alright for you whites," he said, "you can go to the library and get all the help you need. But nobody does anything for us." That encounter led to the opening of a small library in 1966, followed by adult education classes for people of all races - a revolutionary step in that rigidly segregated nation. Year by year the numbers of students flocking to St. Anthony's parish center increased from several hundred to several thousand - so more classrooms were quickly added, as well as science and language laboratories and a computer room. As the popularity of Stan's center grew, so did opposition from local government officials, who told the friar he was breaking the law by having black students in a "coloreds only" area. It was only by using all his creativity, his contacts and his knowledge of local government bureaucracy that Stan was able to avoid closure, deportation or possibly worse. During the Soweto riots of June 1976, St. Anthony's was the only black school in the area that did not close down - the adult students there had come to see their studies as an integral and effective part of the struggle for equality. But the center did not just offer such education facilities to people who would otherwise have had a bleak future: it also expanded, with the help of local businesses, to include sports and social activities, a youth club, an old peoples' center, medical services, skills training projects for men and women and a restaurant - all operating on a nonracial basis. More recent additions have included The House of Mercy, a treatment center for alcoholics and drug addicts, who are taken in free of charge if they cannot afford the modest fees, and St.

Francis House for the terminally ill. Stan saw the need for such a hospice after witnessing the lonely and agonizing deaths suffered by many AIDS patients who had been rejected by family, friends and the community. His belief in and defense of the rights and the dignity of each individual have become a model for many other schools and parish centers struggling to overcome the terrible legacy of the apartheid years.

In the early 1960's OSWALD GILL was content teaching Greek and Latin to Irish seminarians but he also secretly harbored a vocation to work in Latin America. When he was offered the possibility of a parish community of 35,000 in Santiago, **Chile** -- where a whole new approach to catechetics at diocesan level was being developed -- he jumped at the chance. It was the beginning of a personal voyage of discovery about the differences between "North" and "South," the living conditions in much of the so-called Third World and the reasons that gave rise to such severe poverty. Oswald saw firsthand how people without access to land, natural resources or an education were unable to develop their personal and economic potential. Two events in particular left a lasting impression in Oswald's mind: his experience during the violent coup d'état which overthrew Chile's democratically elected President, Salvador Allende, and the Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM) meetings in Medellín and Puebla. These experiences helped him to understand poverty from the perspective of his parishioners, "as insecurity: the inability to own a home, feed your family, educate your children." It was an insecurity that Oswald was to encounter again while working with migrant farm workers in California. The Mexican and Filipino-Americans of his parish labored in the midst of some of the world's most fertile agricultural farmland, and yet they lived as impoverished, second-class citizens. Wealthy fruit and vegetable farmers took advantage of their backbreaking work throughout the growing season, suppressed their attempts to organize even the most basic of social services and sought to deny them USA citizenship. Oswald's mission among these workers became increasingly focused on restoring their human dignity through advocacy for their civil and legal rights. Reflecting on his work, Oswald chooses to paraphrase the words of Pope Paul VI: "Please, please stop talking about peace if you are not prepared to work for justice."

When the Province of Santa Barbara, California, **U.S.A.**, declared Sanctuary for Central American refugees in 1985 after a one-year province-wide discernment process, every friar was asked to do something in response. Some simply collected blankets or wrote letters to their congressional representatives; others took the more risky step of offering jobs to illegal immigrants or offering them a place to sleep. The working class parish of St. Ann in Spokane, Washington was so moved by the story of a Salvadoran woman refugee and her nine children who had witnessed unspeakable horrors perpetrated against her own family that the parish invited them to move into the church basement. After several months, the Immigration and Naturalization Service announced that it knew where the family was hiding and intended to deport them back to El Salvador. St. Ann's responded with a public press conference at which the parish leadership declared that the U.S. government would have to deport them before it could touch "their Salvadoran family." According to ED DUNN, "The parishioners began to see the universal connection of their faith. A Salvadoran refugee had as much a right to their compassion as the person next to them in the pew on Sunday. This was an extraordinary step," argues Ed. "People took risks in the face of their own government, risks that imposed on their own well-being." Perhaps the most dramatic result of the Sanctuary Movement, which at one time included some fifty churches throughout the American west, was that the choices of ordinary citizens forced change in the social

conscience of Christians throughout the United States. “It was no longer enough to say you believed in the human dignity of others”, adds Ed, “as a Catholic you had to be willing to put your own life on the line on behalf of their basic human rights.”

The inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission in **Spain** has long seen its work on behalf of immigrants and undocumented aliens as an essential component of its concern for human rights. Statistics show that some 600,000 legal immigrants and 80,000 undocumented foreigners now live in Spain, a full 2% of the population. With its growing desire to be part of the “first tier” of European countries in full monetary union, the Spanish government is taking increasingly discriminatory actions against all immigrants. The Spanish Franciscans have responded through a number of practical programs that emphasize the fundamental dignity of each immigrant. Friars have worked together with other like-minded groups to raise greater public awareness of the problems within Franciscan parishes and schools. Special employment schemes have been devised and advocacy work on behalf of immigrants has been tailored to the needs of those struggling to fit into their new cultural surroundings. Other noteworthy responses have been the active promotion of multicultural education and interreligious dialogue and efforts to ensure that immigrants' rights are protected under Spanish law. VICENTE FELIPE recalls that his own fraternity has come to the aid of “four Guatemalan refugee families through friendship, professional counseling and material assistance.”

The first recorded Franciscan presence in the southwestern **U.S.** dates back to 1539, although organized missionary work in the region really began with the establishment of St. Michael's Mission in northeastern Arizona in 1898. One friar in particular, ANSELM WEBER, earned the respect of the Navajo people there through his mastery of the local language and his willingness to travel hundreds of miles on horseback to meet each tribal elder. For this German-American friar the greatest issue of concern for the Navajo was the violation of their sacred land by the U.S. government. His sense that the Navajo echoed the Franciscan commitment as “stewards of the land” led him to work actively on their behalf; he was often called upon to help settle disputes between the U.S. government and the native people. He used the new technologies of modern surveying to help file and process homestead claims for countless families and traveled to Washington D.C. annually on the Navajo's behalf to meet with the leadership of the Bureau of Indian Affairs and help settle these countless claims. By the time of his death in 1921, he had effectively helped to increase the size of the Navajo nation by a million and a half acres. In this same year the friars helped establish the Navajo Tribal Council, which would prove an essential component of tribal leadership throughout the remainder of the twentieth century.

In 1902 another Franciscan friar, anthropologist BERARD HAILE, arrived at St. Michael's Mission to serve as chaplain of the mission school. His passionate interest in the Navajo language was to have an equally strong impact upon the lives of the native people there. Working alongside MARCELLUS TROESTER and other friars on a specially modified typewriter, Berard developed the first alphabet using Greek symbols to represent the sounds used in the Navajo language. At the same time Marcellus diligently modified and expanded the “parish census” to provide a comprehensive overview of Navajo culture, family structure, clan affiliations, births, deaths, social as well as religious customs which might otherwise have been lost forever. Like Anselm Weber, Berard spent many days in the saddle travelling to distant Navajo communities where he was able to make records of ceremonials and origin myths. “It seemed to me

that one had to study their customs, their outlook on life, on the universe, their concepts of the origin of man, vegetation and animals, before one could approach them on religious matters,” argued Berard--often in the face of ridicule from some of his fellow friars.

From individual initiatives in the defense of human rights, the Franciscans have recently begun to develop strategies for more effective advocacy and action at international level. Since the Human Rights Conference in Vienna in June 1993, the Friars Minor have joined with Franciscans International to play an increasingly active role at the UN and its affiliate agencies. IGNACIO HARDING and MICHAEL SURUFKA have been especially involved in the development of OFM participation at U.N. conferences and summits. Reflecting on his two-year assignment as the OFM Animator for Franciscans International, Michael comments: “Though the United Nations certainly has its limitations, it is the one place where the international community meets. This is where the global conversation is happening. It will go on with or without us, but we have been invited to take part in it and, as Franciscans, we have something to say and to hear.”

AGOSTINHO DIEKMANN, a member of Franciscan International's team for the Habitat II Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul spelled out the focus of this relatively new sphere of action: "The confrontation with other cultures, languages and outlooks, as also the deeper study of social, political and economic topics broadened my horizons significantly. Together with my colleagues of the FI Delegation, I discovered what the words of Saint Francis 'Going together through the world' and 'Our friary is the world' can mean today. We must involve ourselves on behalf of the poor as advocates for justice, peace and harmony among all creatures. Following the example of Francis, we reflected upon our grassroots experience and turned to the rulers of our countries with the needs of the poor in order to give a voice to those who have been silenced by injustice and oppression.”

General Constitutions

Article 69:1-2. In “protecting the rights of oppressed people,” the brothers should have recourse to nonviolent means (1). The brothers “should speak out against...every kind of warlike activity as a most serious curse on the world and the gravest injury to the poor,” sparing themselves “neither toil or hardship” in building the “reign of God's peace” (2).

Other references: articles 32,3; 92,2; 96,1-3; 97,2; 109,1; 129,1 and 185,1.

Discussion Questions

1. Do you belong to any national or international human rights group? Should you? Do you make positive references to such groups in your apostolic work?
2. Do you include violations of human rights in your private prayer? in your local fraternity's prayer? in prayer during provincial meetings or gatherings?
3. Which groups in your society are in greatest danger of having their rights ignored?
4. Have you personally experienced mistreatment regarding some basic human right? If not, do you know anyone who has had such an experience? How did it affect you or that person?
5. How does your country deal with immigration issues? Have you ever publicly supported or protested the country's stance on such issues?
6. How effectively does your provincial fraternity address the most important human rights issues facing your country? through declarations? actions? both?

7. What are the human rights that are infringed in your country and on the international level?
8. What are the causes of the infringement of those human rights: economic, political, psychological...?
9. Why is it that each one of us is more sensitive to the infringement of certain types of human rights and less so to that of others?
10. The conscientization of the Church and the Church's action in favor of human rights-
-can these be considered a sign of the times?
11. What is the relationship between evangelization and human rights? Which is the more appropriate: that the Christian community should have its own organizations in favor of human rights or that Christians become involved in social organizations together with other men and women of goodwill?
12. What kind of action do you consider most appropriate for Franciscans in defense of human rights?

Checklist for Future, Local Human Rights Campaigns

If you wish to respond to human rights violations and wish to activate a campaign:

- Do you have a clear, concise summary of the events that have taken place?
- Can you explain how the Franciscan community is involved?
- Do you have a written endorsement from the local (Franciscan) JPIC Commission?
- Has the local Franciscan superior and/or bishop expressed their support?
- Do you have written endorsements from the Franciscan superior and Bishop?
- Do you have the names and numbers of those (judges, politicians, etc.) to contact?
- Do you have photographs of those you are seeking to assist?
- Do you have the ability and know-how to access a fax machine and/or e-mail?
- Have you designated a campaign coordinator(s) who will respond to all campaign inquiries?
- Do you have a press list of people and organizations willing to help your appeal?
- Have you prepared a news release with clear information, focused direction, "contact numbers," and the name of your campaign coordinator?

6. Women and the Charisms of Francis and Clare



OFM General Constitutions, Article 4,1

The friars minor, joined as they are to the People of God, shall scrutinize the new signs of the times and always relate to a world in continual development.

Article 56,2

The first Order has the responsibility to preserve and to keep secure a spiritual unity with the nuns of the second and the third Orders and to promote their federations. However, their autonomy of life, especially in matters of governance, is always to be respected.

From the life of Francis ...

Francis courteously but firmly challenged many of his society's assumptions, especially ones about women. He felt that Clare was right to begin a form of religious life for women without a guaranteed income from rents. It took more than 40 years for the Pope to approve in definitive way the "Privilege of Poverty" as written in the definitive Rule of Saint Clare, and then it extended only to the Poor Clares at San Damiano!

According to friar-scholar Ignatius Brady, prior to Lateran Council IV, Clare and her sisters may have assisted Francis and his friars in caring for people suffering from leprosy. Francis gave a New Testament used by the friars to the mother of two friars; she had come asking an alms (2Cel 91). Another time he gave a poor woman a mantle (2Cel 92). Many miracles were worked on behalf of women (3Cel).

Although Francis forbade the friars from having “suspicious relationships” with women (RegB c.11), the examples of his own relationships with Clare and with Lady Jacoba indicate that not all relationships are “suspicious” Francis himself included married and unmarried women in the group whom the friars should invite “to persevere in the true faith and in a life of penance” (RegNB c.23).

Francis had no hesitation applying feminine imagery to himself and to the other friars. Describing his own community of friars he once told the pope about a woman who had a number of children by a king and then eventually sent them to claim their rightful inheritance (LM 3:10). The *Rule for Hermitages* divides the friars into Martha and Mary groups, exchanging roles at agreed-upon intervals (RegEr). “If a mother loves and cares for her child in the flesh, a friar should certainly love and care for his spiritual brother all the more tenderly” (RegB c.6). The law of the cloister did not apply when “Brother Jacoba” visited the dying Francis (LP 101).

Reflection

1. Different contexts

The enthusiasm generated by our appreciation for the towering spiritual genius of Francis of Assisi enables us to find aspects of his life and work to support countless hopes and ambitions. At the same time, this enthusiasm can lead us into the illusion that Francis (or Clare, for that matter) can offer models for every situation that challenges us today. When we speak of Francis in relationship to women--the women of his family, city, movement--this danger becomes especially evident. It is difficult to discover with accuracy the reality of his relationships with women in the primary sources and the layers of interpretation to which those documents are subject. It is equally difficult to know what parts of the questions we ask are attributes of a worldview made possible by modern philosophy and science. This worldview, which undergirds our striving to reincarnate the Franciscan ideal in our times, contains many elements that would leave Francis scratching his head in wonder and, for all we know, dismay.

The Franciscan who asks the question today moves, lives and breathes in a world in which a convergence of concern and commitment by and for women is everywhere to be seen. On the world plane we have the testimony of the United Nations Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995. Participants returned to their native lands with spellbinding stories of unity in diversity experienced and celebrated by the thousands of women who attended. Within the Church we see new efforts by John Paul II to address the concerns of women: his *Letter to Women* (1995) and *Mulieris Dignitatem* (an encyclical published in 1988). In addition, regional episcopal conferences, bodies of major superiors of religious and organizations of the laity have written documents or conducted studies that address both the injustices done to women and the need to correct these within various cultural perspectives. It is important to understand that in a publication such as this one a general examination of the issue must be critiqued within cultural settings that vary significantly. Friars working in regions dominated by patriarchal institutions will find a different mentality and reality than those who minister in cultures where matriarchal foundations continue to influence belief and behavior. With these cautions in mind, let us turn to the story of Francis and ask how he encountered women as he tried to walk in the footprints of Jesus.

2. The Cultural Context of Francis

The ecclesiastical world in which Francis came to adulthood held human nature in low esteem. Humankind was understood to be full of weakness and depravity, rushing headlong towards damnation with only a glimmer of hope that redemption could be won and preserved in the frailty of life. Monastic writers who tried to support the church's growing concern about clerical celibacy produced damaging tracts that presented women as the incarnation of Eve--mother of sin and betrayal. Roman legal structures denied women active roles in civic life and canonized private virtue and fidelity to father, husband and children. Thus the freedom of women in regions where Roman law held sway was highly mitigated and women were often disposed of in service to ambitions of male heads of families and clans. At the same time, the Church did provide some protection against forced marriages and the option of religious consecration. The troubadour culture newly emerging in medieval Europe was also promoting a refinement of taste and sensibility that would ennoble--at least in theory--the position of woman in the social order. Francis grew up within the schizophrenic environment that alternately exalted and demonized women.

When we study his biographies, we find ourselves asking, "Just how many women played a significant role in the life of Francis?" Three immediately emerge: his mother, Pica, Clare and Lady Jacoba. However, if we continue our search we find numerous other women make up the *dramatis personae* of his story but they often pass across the stage without name and without a proper voice. Consider the women of Greccio he reportedly admired, the nuns of San Severino, Praxedes of Rome, the five candidates he presented to Clare for her Order. What of the entire community of San Damiano, who revered him and eagerly waited for his rare visits and sermons in the later years? Going further in our search we begin to notice how often women are the center of the *Tract on Miracles*. How many women answered his knock when he begged in Assisi and other villages? How many women stood before him in cathedrals and piazzas? Did he never speak to them? Were there no conversations with the hundreds of women who became the early Sisters of Penance?

3. The Importance of Clare and Jacoba for Francis

Whatever we conjecture about this wide world of women, we know that two women occupy a central role of relationship and friendship with Francis: Clare and Jacoba. What do we learn from these bonds which clearly endured nearly a lifetime? Perhaps the most significant witness to the relationship with Clare is recorded in the *Form of Life* and the *Last Will*. In these short statements he affirms that he understood Clare to be his equal in vocation and dedication. He mandates a singular equality in treatment for Clare and her sisters, placing concern for them on the same level with concern for the fraternity. Clare was so conscious of the enormous power of that mutuality and that promise that she carefully enshrined it in the heart of her own Rule (Chapter VI).

Since Jesus was the model for all that Francis lived, did he find comfort in those encounters in which Jesus stepped beyond the pale in his encounters with women and did he equally find instruction in those passages that tell of the women who followed and ministered to Jesus? Did these indications that Jesus was willing to risk censure by association with women in his ministry allow Francis the freedom he needed to believe and behave in the ways that he did?

4. Francis' Relationship with Women--the positive and the difficulties

The biographies also allow us to see that Francis' relationship with women was not always calm, comforting and untroubled. Some of the stories left to us portray warm and sympathetic encounters. The *Legend of Perugia* tells of his visit at San Damiano for treatment and his composition of the *Audite*, a lovely instruction full of affectionate concern (LP 42,43). The *Fioretti* preserve the wonderful, parable-like story of the supper celebrated at the Portiuncula (Fior. 15). We know of his visits to Jacoba in Rome as reflected in his dying requests to her. A remarkable testament to the power of this relationship is forever captured in the placement of her mortal remains directly opposite his in the crypt chapel of his basilica.

However, we cannot afford to pass over those stories that portray a different image, a Francis who appears anxious, obdurate and insensitive to his feminine friends. We recall the sermon he gave at San Damiano which appears to deny the sisters the comfort they expected as he pours ashes upon himself, recites the *Miserere* and departs in silence (2Cel 207). There are negative statements about women attributed to him that clearly reflect the misogynist tendencies of clerical literature of the period (2Cel 112). We know, too, that the preservation of chastity was a struggle for Francis and that his ambivalence about his own passionate nature and its potential for wrongdoing occupied him mightily. This interior battle would have made a rosy view of relationships with women impossible for Francis. That it did not prevent him from establishing bonds of radical equality and affectionate admiration is itself a miracle of Gospel grace.

Therefore, we can affirm that Francis was an extraordinary human being who was not entirely free of the anti-feminine propaganda of the church of his time and the generally negative view of human nature--particularly its sexual dimension--that was a pervasive thread of Christian teaching and prejudice from Augustine's time to that of the Middle Ages. Francis created a form of life that required celibacy but dispensed with the protections of monastic enclosure. His increasing worry about the conduct of friars less gifted and clear in their dedication is reflected in his *Rule* and his biographies. The new influence of courtly literature and troubadour music appeals to the would-be knight; his language and imagery borrow the refinements and the romance of this vision of men and women bound in delicate alliances for noble reasons. The strength and heroic fidelity to the Gospel of certain women in his life draw from him admiration and dedicated friendship that is public and articulate. He draws women by the scores into the ambiance of his movement to establish the Gospel as the norm of all human endeavor. He welcomes these women no less than their masculine counterparts and explicitly includes them in his formation plans (*Letters to the Faithful*).

Francis is thus very helpful to us in the following ways:

1. He offers deep spiritual insight about the interrelationship of all beings in feminine and masculine terms (*Canticle*).
2. He demonstrates an ability to transcend cultural barriers for the sake of the Gospel's truth.
3. He leaves us a record of his deep friendships with Clare and Jacoba; this is no small consolation in our searching.

We need, on the other hand, to be careful to understand that Francis does not provide answers for some of our dilemmas:

1. The evolution of the role of women in an industrialized Western world, the new

awareness of women in all cultures except the most primitive, and the uncharted territory of life in postmodern and post-Marxist societies is our problem to solve. Francis did not walk where we must now walk. The veritable explosion of awareness of the sexual nature of human life and the explicit attention it receives in all forms of media pose unprecedented challenges for us.

2. The difficulties that women encounter in the church where patriarchal and sexist prejudice have often demeaned their persons and reduced their participation are creating serious rifts in some areas. The call of the brothers of Francis to be a source of reconciliation and justice for women is an urgent one in today's ecclesial community.

Finally, we should affirm that one sign of the creative faithfulness of the Franciscan family in our time is the increase in structures and occasions for Franciscan brothers and sisters to minister side by side. Today we see much work in collaborative projects internal to our Orders and the structures at international and continental levels that brings us face to face in pursuit of our vocation and cultivation of our voice in the world community. For all that Francis offers us a pattern and inspiration let us be grateful. For our own responsibility to discern what evangelical energy we need to walk as once Francis and Clare did in the flaming garden of the Portiuncula, let us be responsible.

Margaret Carney, O.S.F.

Examples from the lives of the friars...

If St. Francis were to return today and sit in on some of the many seminars and international conferences held recently on the role of women in the Church and in society--he would probably find it all rather hard to comprehend! Nowhere have the cultural parameters shifted more over the centuries since he and St. Clare founded their congregations than in this area of 'women's rights.'

Friars in Asia have taken the lead in attempting to address these changes of attitude. The Franciscan Conferences of Asia and Oceania (FCAO) decided to focus for two years on the situation of women in that part of the world and publish a report on their findings. The two-year investigation process upon which the report was based is widely seen as one of the most farsighted and constructive steps ever taken at conference level to promote understanding and action in the field of women's rights. Friars in the thirteen provinces of the region sent out detailed questionnaires to compile information on the status and social conditions of women within their countries. Each of these reports was in turn reviewed by three different women within that region. The results formed the basis of a seminar in Sydney, Australia, attended by the thirteen FCAO ministers, together with guests from other countries. Five women from different Asian nations and two Australians also joined the friars for the discussions. The second half of the meeting focused on the contribution of both Francis and Clare to the origins of the Franciscan movement as well as women's contribution to the future of Franciscan life. Because of the diversity of cultures among the nations within the FCAO, there were both different and common problems expressed by the women and the friars from across the region. Economic injustices, second-class citizenship, lack of respect and lack of awareness were mentioned in practically every report. The reflections of the women who responded to the reports and of the women who participated in the meeting reinforced in very personal ways the views and the pain expressed throughout the provincial

reports and challenged the friars to respond in creative ways. Suggestions range from the very practical setting up of child care or health and skills training programs to a complete revision of the traditional and oppressive interpretations of the Bible, which have been used to support the suppression of women's dignity over the centuries. The reports stress that pity for the plight of women caught up in poverty, prostitution or oppressive relationships is not enough. Friars must lead the way towards true empowerment and cooperation by making a radical examination of their own personal attitudes to the women they relate to in their daily lives.

The report concludes with two stories from ANTONIO EFIGUREN who worked at St. Clare's Hospice for the dying in Lamsai, **Thailand**. One story tells of a Muslim woman, forced into drugs and prostitution in Bangkok by her truck driver husband. Abandoned by her family, she is dying of AIDS alone in Lamsai. The other story is of a young woman of Chinese origin who also married a truck driver in Bangkok but was unaware of her husband's drug addiction and repeated infidelity. Within one year her only son died of AIDS, followed by her husband at the age of 31. She herself does not have long to live. Yet asked about her attitude to her husband, she replies "I was taught by my mother from childhood to accept that men are all promiscuous and too weak to overcome their sexual desires. I've lived up to that teaching so it does not hurt to know that my husband liked going with other girls."

Men and women Franciscans, secular and religious alike are increasingly aware that education is the key to changing such attitudes - education that may often appear in contradiction to prevailing religious and cultural traditions. For too long, they say, the contribution of St. Clare to the Franciscan charism has been hidden in the shadow of St. Francis - a fact that only began to emerge during the recent 800th anniversary celebrations. Until this fact is acknowledged, women will never achieve the equal recognition and responsibility they seek in the life of the Church. Franciscan Sister Maria Elena Martinez is one woman who has benefited from changing attitudes towards women in the Church. Currently the Novice Directress for the Sisters of St. Francis of Penance and Christian Charity in California, **U.S.A.**, Maria Elena was born to Mexican-American parents. In her early twenties she joined a Franciscan community and was sent for training as a Spiritual Director and she learned much about the challenges of multiculturalism. Teaching later at a high school in Los Angeles, U.S.A., Maria Elena was asked to serve as spiritual director at a local pre-novitiate community which could not find a friar to fill the post. Maria Elena agreed, and though she did not live with the friars, she was able to eat dinner with them daily, serve as spiritual director and offer classes. As Hispanic men from El Salvador and Mexico were also entering the novitiate in large numbers for the first time in this period, Maria Elena continued to serve as part of the Province's "formation team" for twelve years. According to Maria Elena, working with the Hispanic men was especially rewarding "because of their way of relating to their mothers and other women in their lives--they are far more open and vulnerable in the presence of a woman confidant. For many of the Anglo-American men it was more difficult. It was a process of guiding them and listening to them especially in areas where I was able to mediate the clashes between the Anglo and Hispanic cultures." Eventually Maria Elena also began to coordinate the orientation program for the province's "Guatemala Experience." After novitiate the friars move to the outskirts of Guatemala City where they work in a poor parish operated by the Central American province and live in an inserted house built, quite literally, on top of a garbage dump. Before the friars begin this experience, Maria Elena works with small groups of them, dealing with anger,

loneliness and sexuality--issues that are certain to surface while living in a foreign country. After the friars have been in Guatemala for a few months, Maria Elena meets with each of them individually. Her straightforward approach is a great blessing for many of them who are able to openly express their doubts and concerns. Upon their return to the United States, Maria Elena continues to serve as Spiritual Director for those who try to apply their experience in Guatemala to new ways of thinking about justice, peace and ecology in their own communities. Though some of the friars later move into comfortable positions within the province and become less open to the idea of dialogue with women, Marie Elena believes it is essential to keep challenging them--just as Clare challenged Francis on attitudes and the ability to live in mutual respect for all men and women.

“Some men are deeply concerned, but others don't accept the need for women's empowerment - they're afraid to let go of their power, in some traditions and cultures especially.” That's been the experience of Rose Fernando, Justice and Peace Coordinator for the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary. Originally from **Sri Lanka**, the first country to elect a woman prime minister back in the 1950's, she spends much of her time travelling around conducting workshops on justice and peace issues. Dressed in her knee-length gray habit and veil, her hands demurely folded in her lap, Rose is a far cry from that stereotype image of the radical Church feminist demanding the ordination of women priests. Yet when questioned on the promotion of women, her words and her enthusiastic expression tell quite a different story. “Everywhere I go I see women becoming more aware of their situations and speaking out with courage,” she says, “even in those cultures where women have kept quiet until now. In Asia, for example, all the different world religions have traditionally conspired to keep women down. Wherever I go I also insist so much on educating men and women together; it really is the key to change.” And things are changing for the better--albeit slowly--even within the Church, according to Rose. She cites the example of a 91-year-old sister she knows in Australia who has recently begun using inclusive language during the daily psalms and prayers.

When asked about her about her experience of cooperation among friars, sisters and lay Franciscans at international level, Rose replied: “I went to the U.N. conference on women in Beijing as a member of the non-governmental organization Franciscans International and I'm not too sure how many men really understand what we are trying to say - that all we want is partnership in society as in the Church”. Her own personal experience of lobbying at this level has been very positive, both in Beijing in September 1995 and at the Food and Agriculture Organization summit on hunger held in Rome in November 1996. Franciscans International is a new and concrete commitment to working together on issues of common concern.

Denmark is one country where that kind of cooperation is also happening at the national level, according to Marianne Powell, Justice and Peace coordinator for the International Council of the Secular Franciscan Order (SFO). A former University professor of English, she now works in education for the Diocese of Copenhagen, the only Catholic diocese in Denmark. The small Catholic population and the shortage of priests, in her view, is part of the reason why lay men and women have learned to work together so well in that part of the world. She herself was involved in the setting up of the Secular Franciscan Order in Denmark in the early 80's. In the decade and a half since then, some seven fraternities have sprung up with over 50 members, but their small numbers make cooperation with religious essential if they are to work effectively. At the

international level she helped to compile a survey on secular orders in other parts of the world. “The findings were varied; in some countries lay people are well organized with their Franciscan brothers and sisters. In others there are no official structures but the Franciscans are working together under diocesan justice and peace commissions. My role is to create greater awareness among these groups of the issues they can cooperate on.” In areas of justice and peace, she believes cooperation is the natural way of working together but she concedes, “That vision is still not shared by many men and women in much of the developing world.”

As a former friar KENGO KOBAYASHI in **Japan** was known as a supporter of women’s rights - in particular the rights of the most deprived women there, the immigrants. Many thousands of women leave the Philippines each year and flock to Japan in search of jobs that will enable them to support their struggling families back home. Some are drawn into the entertainment business, others are bought as brides by wealthy Japanese men, others work as domestics but all of them run the risk of exploitation by unscrupulous employers or “owners.” As head of Yokohama Solidarity Center for Migrants, Kengo can sometimes be seen demonstrating in the streets on behalf of these women. To help them to organize and empower themselves, he has also compiled a comprehensive manual for migrants detailing their rights under Japanese law and the organizations they can turn to for help. The book, published in August 1996, covers everything from entry and residence permits to labor and health issues, in particular the reproductive health of women, as well as laws relating to marriage, divorce and the education of children. For Kengo, working with these poor women has produced an unexpected conversion: seeing the world from the viewpoint of poor women and to accompany rather than lead them.

General Constitutions

Article 56:1 Recognizing fully that we have the same charism and very close mutual relationships with the nuns of the second and the third Orders of St. Francis, the brothers should always show them diligent care and concern.

Other references: articles 51 and 58.

Discussion Questions

1. Have Franciscan religious women expanded your appreciation of your Franciscan vocation? Have women in the SFO done the same?
2. Have women Franciscans (religious or SFO) challenged blindspots in your Franciscan vision? If so, how did you respond to her, them?
3. Are any Franciscan women your peers? Does that influence your apostolic work, daily conversation or life in your local fraternity?
4. Does your local community cooperate with nearby groups of Franciscan women? Does your provincial fraternity do the same?
5. Has your province recently invited a Franciscan woman to address a provincial meeting or lead a provincial retreat?
6. Do you or any fellow friars have women Franciscans as spiritual directors? How has that influenced your/their living out the Franciscan vocation?
7. What contribution does Clare make to your understanding and living your Franciscan vocation?
8. What contributions do women make to the faith of our Christian communities today?

9. What contributions are being made to the Church by women in religious life today?
10. What are the feminine contributions to ideas of God and the Church? What special contribution can women make to our entering the world of the poor?
11. Are there feminine values that can enrich the various forms of the following of Jesus?
12. Does the situation of women in the Church give them an advantage in understanding and living the evangelical life?
13. Can women play an important part in evangelizing with affection and sensitivity? What unique contributions can Christian women make towards the renewal of the Church?

7. Dialogue: Ecumenical, Interreligious and Intercultural



OFM General Constitutions, Article 95:1-2.

1. *The ecumenical spirit should be nurtured everywhere. When conditions permit, brothers should look for ways of working together with all other Christians...*
2. *The brothers' presence among believers of other religions should be kind and reverent, and brothers should work together with these believers to build up the people God has given them*

From the life of Francis ...

Perhaps no better example of Francis as a man of dialogue can be cited than the extremely positive response of world religious leaders to Pope John Paul II's invitation to come to Assisi to pray for world peace on October 27, 1986. The humility and honesty which Francis showed to each person are key factors in any dialogue--social, political or religious.

When Francis told the first friars that soon their brothers would include Frenchman, Spaniards, Germans and Englishmen (1Cel 27), he was preparing them for the need to dialogue! When the friars gathered in chapters, they dialogued about what God had already done through them and what new work God might want them to undertake. Thus the friars set out for Germany--twice (*Chronicle of Jordan of Giano*, #5 and 17). Learning the local language was a prerequisite for effective dialogue!

At one point Celano praises the unity of souls and harmony of behavior among the friars (1Cel 46). Francis exhibited a spirit of dialogue during his visit with Sultan Melek-

el-Kamel (1Cel 57). Those who go among unbelievers have two options: a) avoid quarrels or disputes, being subject to every human creature for God's sake, or b) preach the word of God openly (RegNB c.16). Those who avoid disputes and act courteously (RegB c.3) have some chance of being able to dialogue. Francis' humility had caused a large tree [Pope Innocent III] to bend down and raise up a small tree [Francis when asking the pope to approve the brotherhood's way of life] (L3S 53). When Francis preached, he spoke "with equal candor to great and small" (LM 12:8). "Men and women of every age flocked to see and hear this new preacher who had been given to the world by God" (LM 12:8). Francis told the friars that as long as they gave good example, people would provide for their needs. If the friars failed to give such example, the pact would be broken (2Cel 70). The "dialogue of life" continues!

Reflection

Introduction

Can we believe in a dialogue between religions in view of what happened in 1994 in the Middle East, Eastern Europe and in many other parts of the planet? However, the dialogue already exists, discrete, patient, and confident, between the official representatives of religions. Two common points unite them: a sympathetic curiosity and the sacred promise of not exercising any proselytism.

The non-Christian religions have not easily grasped the interest in this dialogue: each one of them considers that it possesses the "true" God, well inculturated. What is to be learned from others and what can be taught? Peaceful co-existence is sufficient. Two pre-occupations torment Christians who have taken the initiative in these meetings. The first, to be faithful to the command of the Lord: "Teach all nations and baptize them". The second: in what sense can we profess that Christ is the only savior of humanity.

To respond to these two questions Christians think they need the other religions; however respectful, the dialogue is set to continue for a time. This will be studied in depth on four levels:

- A fundamental dialogue due to the fact of living it together.
- A fundamental dialogue on the safeguarding and development of human and humanitarian values.
- The sharing of spiritual, that is, mystical experiences.
- The theological interchange and confrontation of languages about God.

The II Vatican Council declared that other religions were "seeds of the Word". John Paul II, in a prophetic expression, has declared: "When a person prays, it is the Spirit that makes him pray".

Some men and women have made their mark on the history of the Church through their testimony to fidelity to God and to faith in humanity. Among these testimonies Francis of Assisi has been, and still continues to be, a symbol of peace, reconciliation and fraternity for the tens of thousands of persons who venerate him throughout the world.

A) Dialogue in the Life of Francis of Assisi

Throughout the whole of his life, Francis of Assisi, besides being a man of prayer, was also a man of dialogue. It is this manner of presence in the world that he made privileged in order to enter into relationship with God, men, women, his brothers, his sisters and the whole of creation.

It is easy to point out moments of his life in which dialogue plays a central role, that of directing actors towards reconciliation, peace and fraternity. We do not wish to give a detailed account here, since that work would be too extensive, but we do wish to note some that are related to different forms of dialogue.

- A dialogue that converts: Lord, what do you want me to do? (LM 1,3).
- A dialogue that liberates: How St. Francis miraculously cured the body and soul of a leper (Flor 25).
- A dialogue that brings peace: How St. Francis tamed, through divine power, a most ferocious wolf (Flor 21).
- A dialogue that opens the heart: How St. Francis taught Bro. Leo what perfect joy consists of (Flor 8).
- A dialogue based on practice: His knowledge of Scripture. His prophetic spirit (Cf. LM 11,1).
- A spirit that opens up to the stranger: The meeting with the Sultan (Cf. LM 9,8).
- A dialogue that cures: The leper (Cf. 1C 146). The deaf and dumb (Cf. 1C 147, 148).
- A dialogue that transforms: How St. Francis converted the three murderous robbers (Flor 26).

B) To Evangelize in Dialogue.

A new Service for Dialogue in the General Curia OFM.

GUIDE LINES

Motivations

1. Evangelization, that in St. Francis had a very special feature, dialogue, is an essential element of the vocation of the Order. The General Definitorium, therefore, following the mandate of the General Chapters of 1991 and 1997, considers it urgent to deepen, support and promote the commitment of the Order to evangelization by setting up structures that help the Friars Minor to enter into a positive and fraternal contact with all peoples, without obstacles of a religious and/or cultural character, in order to announce the Gospel while recognizing and respecting the values proper to the different cultures.
2. Encouraged by this mandate and wishing to express concretely the V Chapter of the GG.CC., the General Definitorium has gathered the results of previous consultations and decisions to bring together in a unitary vision the contemplative and evangelizing dimensions of the Franciscan vocation, underlining at the same time, the communitary, fraternal and open-minded traits of Franciscan evangelization and of the impossibility of separating formation from action, testimony from annunciation.
3. The Definitory General, while collecting the fruits of the work carried out up to now and summarized in the document "Fill the earth with the Gospel of Christ (1 Cel 97)", invites the friars to consider their vocation within the broad horizon of a world

- situation that continuously evolves.
4. The situation of human relations on the threshold of the third millennium and the more recent documents of the Church magisterium place dialogue at the center of attention and preoccupations of those that seek the peace and well-being of humanity.
 5. Also, the continual reference by the Pope and the authorized representatives of Churches and religions to our Father as a promoter of reconciliation, dialogue and peace, and their pressing and repeated invitation to the friars to carry out the mission of Francis, change the commitment to dialogue into one of the prerogatives of the Franciscan charism. In fact, in the increasing number of those who are engaged in promoting reconciliation and peace, the spirit that animated the human and Christian experience of St. Francis is manifested.
 6. St. Francis was and is truly a man of dialogue in the strict sense of the word. He is a universal man through his most intense and radical Christian experience, reconciled with God, with himself, with all humans and with the whole of creation. He spreads the evangelical message to all with humility and charity.
 7. But in order for the spirit of St. Francis to be significant for people today it must also be the spirit of all Franciscans and should animate and characterize all their evangelizing work.
 8. In fact, the Franciscan culture and humanism offer an authentic response to the emerging problems in the various cultures and a well-founded hope of solving them. In a world characterized by disharmonies that directly affect humans in their relationships with creation and in the mutual relationships between persons and peoples, the Franciscan evangelization, solidly based in its own spirituality, in the Franciscan vision of the presence of God and in the humanity of Christ and in the vision of the intelligent man, is capable of giving an answer of hope by proposing a culture of proximity, an ecological and cosmic culture, a culture of dialogue. It is the way that makes the inculturation of the Gospel in the hearts of today's man possible (Cf. The Discourse of John Paul II in the Antonianum, with the command to the Order to be evangelizers of hope). The progress of technology and the sciences, the increase and the spread of the means of communications, the reciprocal influence of cultures, the speed of information, the new world of computing have created new situations that demand of us Friars Minor, if we wish to be faithful to our vocation, a response that would allow us assume the existing values and to purify that which could infringe on human dignity. Following the example of Francis, who wished to bring to all the Gospel made life, our form of life must respond to the new challenges of humanity in an attitude of dialogue.
 9. The universality of the religious experience of St. Francis and his manner of behavior with Islamic authorities, offer an example of dialogue with the members of other religions that have been shown to convince and involve representatives of all creeds.
 10. The experience of reconciliation, the establishment of the word of God, the relationship with creation and the model of the Franciscan community as a style of ecclesial life, convert the Franciscan experience into a point of reference for ecumenical dialogue.
 11. From all these elements the unitary vocation of the friars to ecumenism and dialogue is born. It is precisely because of this that the Minister General wishes to pledge the Order to evangelize with a new impetus and with new forms. The Definitory General supports this renewed commitment through the creation of an organism that wishes to be a sign of an active will, the occasion of aid and the involvement of all the forces actually employed in the fields of formation and evangelization, in such a

way that the directives of the Minister General do not remain simply on damp paper.

Structure

12. The Service for Dialogue (SD) is instituted, constituted in three sectors:

- ecumenical dialogue
- inter-religious dialogue
- dialogue with the cultures.

Commission for Ecumenical Dialogue (CED)

Motivations

1. It is not only the II Vatican Council that pledges the Catholic Church and each Christian to the way of ecumenism and dialogue (Cf. especially the documents *Unitatis Reintegratio* and *Nostra Aetate*). The present Pope also has recently underlined, with three important documents, the necessity and the urgency of involvement for the unity of Christians with a view to the unity of all persons (Cf. the Apostolic Letters *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* and *Orientalis Lumen* and the encyclical *Ut Unum Sint*).
2. The Order of Friars Minor cannot remove itself from this new consciousness or from these new orientations. In fact, on the establishment of our presence in the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States, the authorities of the Order have followed, since they took the first steps, the principles of dialogue and collaboration proclaimed by the Catholic Church. The result of the good relations established with the principal Orthodox Patriarchs is fruit of a humble and convinced commitment to the service of dialogue.
3. The new situation that is emerging on the threshold of the third millennium is characterized by hitherto unknown demands that require that the ecumenical commitment of the Order takes on stability and continuity in order to offer all the Friars the opportunity of ecumenical knowledge and formation.

Commission for Interreligious Dialogue (CID)

Motivations

1. The Church watches with attention her relationship with the faithful of other religions. She seeks points in common in order to unite our efforts in forming together a great community (NA 1) since all peoples form only one community and have the same origin, given that God had the whole human race inhabit the entire face of the earth (Acts 17,26).
2. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and good in these religions. She regards their ways of acting and living with sincere respect. She exhorts her children so that, with prudence, respect and charity, by means of dialogue and collaboration with the followers of other religions and giving testimony of faith and Christian life, they recognize, keep and promote those spiritual and moral values as well as the socio-cultural values that are found in them. (NA 2).
3. The Church exhorts us, by overcoming the opposite experiences lived in past

centuries between Christians and faithful of other religions, to exercise sincerely mutual understanding and to defend and promote together social justice, the moral good, peace and freedom for all peoples (NA 3).

4. The history of the Friars Minor is full of encounters with members of other religions, especially with the religions called historical: Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. There is a special connection with Judaism. The Church confesses that all the Christian faithful are included in the vocation of the Patriarch Abraham. She does not forget that she has received the revelation of the Old Testament through the Jewish people with which God sealed the ancient Alliance; because of this we wish to encourage mutual knowledge and appreciation and fraternal dialogue (NA 4).
5. As regards Islam, a considerable effort has been made to continue our Franciscan presence and to support our Brothers and Sisters that work in Muslim countries. Since 1982 the Definitory General supports this aspect of inter-religious dialogue through the International Commission OFM for Relations with Muslims. "As followers of St. Francis and of the first missionaries of the Order, the friars are to be especially concerned to go humbly and devoutly among the nations of Islam, for whom, too, no one is all-powerful except God" (GG.CC.95, 3).
6. "By a kind and reverential presence among them, the friars are to work with believers of other religions in order to build up the people God has given them" (GG.CC.95,2). Therefore, the Definitory General wishes to promote the inter-religious formation of the Friars with the creation of the Commission for Inter-religious Dialogue and takes the following measures in respect to its structure and activities:

Commission for Dialogue with Cultures (CDC)

Motivations

1. Evangelization is an essential part of the life of the Friar Minor. We evangelize because it is necessary to help the human person to find ways to find a response to his anxieties. The principal objective of evangelization is the person, not the increase in the number of believers. Also, the love of Jesus Christ for the person drives the Church and, therefore, the Order to continue its mission.
2. Evangelization does not penetrate to the depths of the human person if it does not reach the most intimate part of the culture in which it lives¹. A faith that does not make itself culture is a faith that is not fully embraced, not entirely thought out or faithfully live².
3. The evangelization of cultures has as a consequence the inculturation of the Gospel.

¹ We take as a definition of culture the following statement of the pastoral constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 53: "The word 'culture' in its general sense indicates all those factors by which man refines and unfolds his manifold spiritual and bodily qualities. It means his effort to bring the world itself under his control by his knowledge and his labor. It includes the fact that by improving customs and institutions he renders social life more human both within the family and in the civic community. Finally, it is a feature of culture that throughout the course of time man expresses, communicates and conserves in his works great spiritual experiences and desires, so that these may be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family".

² John Paul II, Discourse to the Participants in the National Congress of the Church Movement of Cultural Work, 10th Jan. 1982, no.2. The diversity of peoples, races, religions and cultures with which the Friars Minor are in relationships because of their vocation, requires a special preparation that facilitates a more fruitful activity.

The synthesis between culture and faith is not only a requirement of culture but also of the faith. This is not identified with any culture, it is independent of all cultures, but, at the same time, it is called to inspire and impregnate all cultures.

4. The profound inculturation of the faith will engender Christian values that will have their basis in the love of God and in the love of neighbor, a summary of the whole of Christianity. From this point of view the CDC will work in the bosom of the Service for Dialogue (SD) in such a way that the friars "are to lend aid readily to further this work of inculturation" (Cf. GG.CC.92, 2), that is called to impregnate all pastoral action of the friars.
5. Many cultural elements of the peoples are manifestations of the "seeds of the Word" (Cf. GG.CC. 92,2). But this presence does not signify that the cultures are already evangelized. The Order of Friars Minor has reaffirmed in its age-old tradition the urgency to announce the message of the Gospel in all ages, in all environments and in all cultures. The presence of Friars Minor who respect the cultures is an experience of the history of our Fraternity. The diversity of peoples, races, religions and cultures with which the Friars Minor have relations through their vocation, requires of these a special preparation that will help them to achieve more easily a fruitful activity.
6. By their vocation, the Friars Minor are called to "repair my Church" in each generation. This attitude is only achieved by evangelizing. This action can only be realized through a sincere evangelizing activity of cultures that justifies the existence of an organism that helps the Minister General and his Definitory to animate this undertaking that forms part of the essence of the vocation received from the Lord.
7. Having their identity clear, which is born of their totally evangelical life, the Friars Minor will know how to discern the values of authentic cultures, in a way that avoids all syncretism and rejects the anti-values that the false culture or the anti-cultures wish to introduce into the different peoples. At the same time, the inculturation of the Gospel requires the respect of the distinct forms in which the culture of he who evangelizes is manifest; at the time he is bringing the Gospel the cultures enrich the Friar Minor and they make him and his religious fraternity grow. The Order manifests in the diversity of the Friars, who come from distinct cultures, the variety with which it is possible to be faithful to the received charism.

Following in the footsteps of St. Francis, the ex-Minister General HERMANN SCHALÜCK concentrated on the necessity for dialogue as he traveled to various countries to meet with the religious leaders of the whole world. This practical example has been emphasized by the friars who try to commit themselves in a constructive dialogue with the members of other beliefs and ethnic groups - especially in situations where these differences have been at the root of tensions, conflicts or wars, as in the Great Lakes District of Africa or in the ex-Yugoslavia.

OFM Commission for inter-religious dialogue

Examples from the lives of the friars...

In today's multi-cultural world, dialogue between different faiths is an essential key to peace. Few people understand that better than FRANÇOIS PAQUETTE, former head of the Franciscan commission for relations with Muslims. Trained as a neuropsychologist in Montreal, **Canada**, he found himself dealing increasingly with patients from Sri Lanka, India, China and Vietnam at the health center where he worked

before joining the Order in 1987. He became fascinated by the different cultures and religions that were rapidly becoming a permanent part of his native city; his curiosity led him to start helping out as a volunteer at a local intercultural center.

But it was not until he was doing his novitiate that Paquette really discovered the power of such interreligious activities. One of the brothers was planning a local gathering to reflect the spirit of the 1986 peace meeting in Assisi and he went along to help. "For me it was a kind of miracle," he recalls with a smile. "I was stunned to see leaders of all the different religions in Montreal coming together to pray for peace instead of fighting amongst each other." Paquette's eyes light up as he explains how the annual initiative has grown along with his own participation in it. "Now we have around a hundred different delegations from the native peoples, the Bah'ai, Sri Lankan Hindus, Vietnamese Buddhists, Tibetan Buddhists, Laotian Buddhists, Cambodian Buddhists, two groups of Jews, Shi'ite and Sunni Muslims, Sikhs and also Christians from sixteen different denominations - about a thousand people altogether coming to our friary in Montreal to pray for peace! The setting is very simple, just a plain cross on which we place a banner for each of the different religions taking part and a big picture of a dove symbolizing peace. We want everyone to feel at ease and afterwards they are all invited to share with us in a vegetarian meal." That annual gathering, broadcast live on radio and television, may be the most visible highlight of the Franciscans' activities in Montreal. But throughout the year Paquette and his brothers are equally involved in all sorts of practical actions to support members of the many other faiths present in the city. These may include petitioning for land for the construction of a Vietnamese pagoda, protesting against a group of skinheads who scrawled graffiti on Jewish tombs, organizing an Islam-Christian funeral, or intervening to diffuse violence between Sikhs and Muslims at a local secondary school. "This last example," says Paquette, "really shows how we can make a difference for the future of our society. By working together with a Sikh leader and an Imam we were able to show the children the many aspects of their cultures which they have in common with people of other faiths. When they begin to see each other as real people rather than as part of a stereotyped group, they are able to leave behind the prejudices which have been passed onto them and even to start challenging the attitudes of their own parents."

There are many other examples of Franciscans who are promoting dialogue and peace among young people, sometimes through education programs, more often simply by bringing families from different ethnic groups into daily contact with each other. An interreligious kindergarten in Bosnia, or a school for Muslims and Christians in southern Lebanon helps children in those troubled parts of the world to grow up with a greater respect for the habits and traditions of people from other faiths. An annual interreligious media and film festival in Cairo influences thousands of young people and helps them overcome the prejudices of the past. The aim of the Franciscans is never to be seen as an "organizer" of events or activities but rather to be facilitators of this "dialogue of daily life."

In **Morocco** where the population is almost entirely Muslim, the friars are acutely aware of this form of witness that their continuing presence provides. BERTRAND COUTURIER has spent half his life among the people of Morocco and has seen many young Muslims grow up and find jobs after attending some of the courses the Franciscans are providing. High in the Atlas Mountains, better known for the tragedy of the Trappist monks in **Algeria**, a handful of friars and Franciscan Missionary Sisters of

Mary are teaching local boys basic carpentry skills while the girls learn embroidery and other crafts useful for becoming productive members of society. The sisters also provide a place for young women who come to give birth there and to learn about such issues as health and education, which help to promote their human dignity.

In the city of Meknes, **Morocco**, three other friars run the St. Antoine Center, a library and cultural center which provides courses in Islamic culture and literature, language lessons and sports activities for about 600 local students. They are supported by a team of twelve volunteers who have graduated from the center and now want to help with the friars' work. GUSTAVO SANCHEZ is a young Mexican friar who has spent two years in the Atlas mountains and another four years living and working with the students at the St. Antoine Center. After finishing his studies in Rome, he intends to return to Morocco to carry on his work there. "It's a project which is run by the students themselves," he explains. "Every month we meet together to decide what we want to do, how we want to work and how we can help the students to better understand and appreciate the culture in which they live. For example, during the month of Ramadan we alter the timetables of the courses and work through the day without stopping for lunch. This allows us to fast together with the Muslims and allows them time to prepare the special meals together with their families."

Despite the continuing tensions between the Croatian, Muslim and Serbian people of the former Yugoslavia, the tenth anniversary of the World Day of Prayer for Peace (Assisi, 1986) provided an occasion for various efforts aimed at promoting interreligious dialogue in Sarajevo, Mostar and Split. In Sarajevo, a panel discussion on the theme of the return of refugees as a precondition of lasting peace (which included the International Organization for Migration, the United Nations' High Commissioner for Refugees and officials of the Bosnian and Croatian governments) was held in the Academy of Science and Art of Bosnia & Herzegovina. An interreligious prayer service was also held at a cemetery in Sarajevo with the participation of a delegation of the Franciscan brothers and sisters from Assisi who presented an olive tree as a sign of peace to be planted in Sarajevo. MARCO ORSOLIC has also worked hard to build on these initiatives in a very practical way by helping to open a multicultural center and library in Sarajevo in December 1996.

The Kurdish people of Iran, Iraq, Turkey and Syria have long sought a unified homeland after centuries of dominance by oppressive rulers. Their growing communities in exile throughout Germany have led to new opportunities for friendship and collaboration. As members of the German friars' JPIC Commission, JÜRGEN NEITZERT and other friars have worked alongside seven Christian peace organizations in the German "Campaign Against the Arms Trade." Together with the other members of this campaign, they have begun to raise awareness about the pivotal relationship between the sale of German armaments and the plight of the Kurdish people in Iraq and Turkey. Jürgen Neitzert has traveled to **Turkey** together with Kurdish friends on numerous occasions, bringing humanitarian relief and a small semblance of peace to the people living in makeshift shelters in the slums of Ankara, Diyarbakir, Istanbul and other Turkish cities. More than three thousand villages, now ghost towns because of the forced eviction which comes alongside the Turkish military's heavy-handed treatment of the Kurd population, dot the countryside. The city of Diyarbakir alone has quadrupled in size since the early 1980's. The historically self-sufficient Kurdish slum dwellers are often forced to search for food in garbage dumps and many suffer from severe bronchial

infections throughout the harsh winters. Jürgen and his colleagues encourage community meetings among the Kurdish and Turkish people living in Germany and lobby German political leaders to try and halt the arms trade. As a Franciscan, Jürgen has felt uniquely placed to encourage non-violent solutions and Christian-Muslim collaboration.

In working together for justice and peace, people of different Christian traditions often discover the same deep personal commitment to others that is an integral part of their faith. Approximately seven years ago, the Irish Franciscans initiated a ministry of peace and reconciliation among the Catholic and Protestant people at Rossnowlagh, **Ireland**. Rossnowlagh is one of three “Designated Houses of Specific Ministry” organized by the Irish friars--the others being a prayer fraternity in Killarney and the Merchants Quay complex in Dublin--and is particularly well-placed in Donegal, near the border separating the Republic and the North. The Center offers hospitality to some 30 people and is a place where Catholics and Protestants can come from all across Ireland to meet together, pray and reflect on reconciliation. Conferences with guest speakers are organized regularly to augment the Center's normal activities. JOHN O'KEEFE, the Director of the Center, has helped set up a network of “experts” on prayer and reconciliation who are informally affiliated with Rossnowlagh. The Center is currently completing a library which will be attached to the retreat house and contain special collections on interreligious dialogue and peacemaking.

For more than ten years as pastor of Our Lady of Charity Church in Brooklyn, New York, **U.S.A.**, ROBERT SEAY, a noted opponent of capital punishment, was closely involved in efforts to bring about peaceful solutions to difficult situations involving racial and ethnic tensions. In the “Howard Beach incident,” a young African-American who was killed by a gang of white youths was the son of one of Robert's parishioners. The killing caused extreme racial turmoil in the city of New York. Robert worked with political and religious leaders in a variety of ways and served as consultant to the family of the slain youth in an effort to achieve peace. The simplicity and dignity of the funeral which Robert organized was a significant factor in keeping racial tensions from exploding.

In another incident known as the “Crown Heights riot,” a Hasidic Jew was killed by an African-American. Robert and other clergy were called to the police precinct to help diffuse the situation. Robert worked together with the New York City Mayor at that time, David Dinkins, providing moral support for his efforts to ensure justice and racial harmony. In the aftermath of the Crown Heights riot, a coalition was formed to examine more permanent ways of promoting meaningful dialogue between diverse ethnic and cultural groups in the city.

The Pastors for Peace program, which has helped transport huge quantities of basic supplies and building materials to the people of El Salvador and Nicaragua, is also founded on ecumenical collaboration. During some twenty years of community organizing, ED DUNN has found inter-Christian collaboration to be an essential component of peace and social justice initiatives. Ed recently joined a Presbyterian minister, Chris Hartmire, and a local project coordinator, Ellen Rogers, in setting up a sister-city celebration in Sacramento, California. The gathering, dubbed “Celebrate Hope,” was the highlight of almost a decade of collaboration between the people of Sacramento and the “new town” of San Bartolo, El Salvador. Through his support for the San Bartolo-sister city project and his ongoing coordination of the Central American

Pilgrimage, Ed has led hundreds of Franciscans and their parishioners to learn more about the life and lasting witness of the martyrs of Central America. For Ed, such collaborative efforts for justice are most effective when they are part of a shared faith community.

PHILIPPE SCHILLINGS has become convinced that Franciscans have special gifts to give to the work for migrant peoples throughout the world. He was a missionary in Brazil for twenty years before returning to his native **Belgium** in 1985 to work with Portuguese immigrants. As director of the European Office of International Catholic Migration in Brussels, Philippe was approached by a Kurdish immigrant who said: "Our trade union needs a chaplain and we want you to do it." Philippe replied, "Why me? I am a Catholic and you are Muslim." The Kurdish man answered, "But you are a Franciscan; you people are a bridge between Muslims and Catholics." Philippe is convinced of the need to develop a spirituality on that role as "bridge builders." Today as East European countries struggle to adjust their economies and social structures after decades of centralized communist control, thousands of people are still knocking on the doors of Western European nations seeking political asylum or simply a better way of life. Rather than focus solely on the problems and negative impact of migration, Philippe adds: "We must emphasize the positive aspects of the arrival of newcomers in our midst. Often, Franciscans are more at ease helping refugees and migrant peoples with their immediate needs of food, clothing and housing. But we also have to think long term about their situations and play an advocacy role for them. Focusing international attention on the root causes of migration is crucial before all people can enjoy the fundamental right to live a decent life in their own homelands."

The desire to share more deeply in the daily life of the local Hindu population led SCARIA VARANATH and SWAMI DAYANAND to move away from their traditional Franciscan friary in India and create their own ashram community, some 300 kilometers north of Bangalore. Depending totally on the donations that local people bring, the two men lived a very simple life of prayer and meditation. The house they lived in was given to them by the local bishop and is always open to anyone who wants to come and talk, learn, meditate or simply share a meal with the two friars. "Many ordinary people come to stay with us at the ashram for several days at a time," says Scaria, "Also the wealthy people who are searching for some light and meaning in their lives." Scaria recalls how he was taught to fear other religions as he was growing up in a very traditional Catholic family in the days before the Second Vatican Council. "I was told by my parents and church authorities not to talk to people of other faiths or to even look at Hindu temples and gods!" Now he says his studies of Hindu scriptures and literature have led him towards a greater insight into his own Franciscan vision of the world. "Hinduism is based on a profound spiritual vision of the oneness of reality in which rivers, seas, every living thing is a manifestation of the divine and therefore to be treated with respect."

Bringing the spirit of St. Francis to life amongst different cultures and religions was the idea behind the establishment of a retreat center near Bangkok in **Thailand** in 1985. Today that center still offers a place for meditation and prayer but has expanded to include a hospice for AIDS patients, almost all of them Buddhists who have nowhere else to go and die in peace. It is one of the many examples worldwide of dialogue through practical gestures rather than intellectual ideas. One of the friars who worked there, ANTONIO EGIGUREN, recalls how most of the local people would confuse St.

Francis with St. Anthony - "they were simply two statues that could be seen in the Catholic churches! We wanted to show the face of St. Francis to the people through our simple lifestyle and through our service to those most in need." The hospice can accommodate up to ten patients and has done much to combat the fears and prejudices which surround that kind of care for people dying of AIDS. The friars are not interested in pushing Christianity on their patients, but they tell one moving story of a young mother of two small children who came to the hospice after her husband died of AIDS. Not long before she too died of the disease, she told one of the friars that *Me Pra* (Mary) had come to visit and comfort her in the night. "But you are a Buddhist," the friar replied. "Yes," she said, "but *Me Pra* knows what it means to be a mother who suffers."

General Constitutions

Article 70. "The brothers should promote mutual acceptance and good will among people and be instruments of the reconciliation that Jesus Christ accomplished on his cross."

Other references: articles 68:1-2; 93:1; 94; 95:1-3; 96: 1-3 and 127:3.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the largest Christian groups (besides Roman Catholics) in your country? Do you ever join them in prayer? in formal dialogue? in works of mercy?
2. What are the largest non-Christian groups in your country? Have you ever joined them in prayer for world peace or for some other intention? in formal dialogue? in works of mercy?
3. How is St. Francis regarded by the Christian and non-Christian groups in your country? If positively, have you used this as a possible starting point for dialogue?
4. Does your local community or provincial fraternity participate in ecumenical or interreligious dialogues in the spirit of the October 1986 meeting in Assisi of world religious leaders to pray for world peace? Does the story of Francis meeting the Sultan encourage you to participate in interreligious dialogue? With what attitudes?
5. What obstacles to dialogue might you be presenting? might your local community offer? might your provincial fraternity experience?
6. Can you identify other forms of dialogue in the life of Saint Francis as well as those that were suggested above?
7. What recurring indicators do I notice in the way that Francis of Assisi enters into dialogue? What are his key strengths in promoting dialogue?
8. Which type of dialogue challenges me most?
9. When are there occasions I can promote dialogue in my daily life?
10. What are the factors that can motivate me to do so?
11. Who are those (people or circumstances) whom I could involve in dialogue?
12. Where, under what circumstances and how?
13. What are my fears and my challenges?
14. What are my own strengths and what can help me to be a initiator of dialogue?
15. In your fraternity do you have meetings with members of other Christian confessions or other religions? What is the purpose of these meetings? Is it for prayer, for dialogue or for reflection? What is your experience of these meetings?
16. Do you collaborate in campaigns or action on behalf of the poor, of peace or of the environment?

PART THREE

PRACTICE “HOW TO DO” SECTION

This third part has two sections. The first one describes the structures of the Order in relation to Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation. The second part proposes ideas and initiatives on how JPIC can be present in different ministries. This second section is opened with a chapter on the analysis of reality because, whatever our work or activity may be, it must be preceded by this analysis in order to better discern that which God requires of us.

Themes:

1. The Justice and Peace Movement within the Context of the Post-Conciliar Evolution of the Order: Chapters and Plenary Councils
2. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Structures in the Order
3. Inter-Franciscan Collaboration in the work for JPIC
4. Social Analysis
5. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in Specific Ministerial Contexts
 - Daily Life
 - Mission “ad Gentes”
 - Parochial Ministry
 - Word Ministry
 - Education Ministry
 - Formation Ministry

The Justice and Peace Movement Within the Context of the Post-Conciliar Evolution of the Order: Chapters and Plenary Councils

1. Changes produced in the spirituality of Vatican II

It is not an exaggeration to say that prior to Vatican II spirituality was something inward looking and self-centered, showing the following characteristics:

- Salvation is something personal, something for the soul and the afterlife; Christian practice is directed towards winning salvation.
- The world is suspect (the enemy of the soul); “flight from the world” is suggested as a way of perfection.
- Sanctification consists in purification and inner perfection by means of religious, ascetical and moral practices and a life of works of mercy.

In short, there was a concept of God, of Christian salvation and of the mission of the Church that removed people from preoccupation with social problems, from commitment to social change. This spirituality tended to hope that God would intervene at the proper time to correct the evil in the world. So all one had to do was to pray for God's intervention.

It is certain that even before Vatican Council II, especially since *Rerum Novarum*, a notable change was occurring in this kind of spirituality and that the Church was much more occupied with a solution to social and political problems. But it is above all in *Gaudium et Spes* that it became clear that a commitment to social and political action became directly associated with the mission received from Christ: “Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order; the purpose he assigned to it was a religious one. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction and vigor to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the law of God” (GS 42).

Among the many contributions of the Council to the Church, one of the most important and one that has already conditioned and directed many others, is its attitude towards the world, history and the social problem. The Council succeeded in getting the Church to turn her gaze towards the world and towards history. In *Gaudium et Spes* there is a positive evaluation of the world as something that has been created by God, redeemed by Christ and called to plenitude plus an evaluation of historical reality since here God reveals himself as the Redeemer of peoples. The Council directed the whole Church and every Christian towards service of the world for the construction of the Kingdom. This orientation has been described in the famous opening statement of *Gaudium et Spes*: “The joy and hope, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially of those who are poor or afflicted in any way, are the joy and hope the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well”(GS 1). Through the Incarnation the Kingdom of God is considered as the transformation of history. It is in history led by the Spirit that the Kingdom of God, with the Church at its service, goes on increasing. Thus a way has been opened in the following directions:

Listening to the world: reading the signs of the times while being in the midst of the world, participating in its joys and worries. In this way there has been an exodus of the Church towards the marginalized.

Embracing the desires, the values, the cries and the successes of the world: freedom,

equality, participation, pluralism, democracy, and preoccupation for justice. Offering a gospel practice based on living witness, service, collaboration and solidarity.

From the teaching of the Council a number of theological advances have later been made: in the promotion of justice as an integral part of the Gospel (Synod of 1971) plus the strong gospel and theological relationship existing between evangelization and human promotion (EN): "It is impossible to accept that the work of evangelization could or should ignore the extremely grave questions so much under discussion today which refer to justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. If that were to happen it would mean ignoring the teaching of the Gospel concerning love of our neighbor who is suffering or in need"(EN 31). It is sufficient to recall synods, social encyclicals, statements of bishops, political and liberation theology. In all of these serious attention has been paid to the orientation so many times repeated by John Paul II since the beginning of his pontificate: "Man in the full truth of his existence, of his personal being and also of his community and social being...this man is the primary route that the Church must travel in fulfilling her mission" (RH,14).

As a consequence of the Council's impelling the Church to be preoccupied for the world, in 1967 Paul VI appointed the Pontifical Commission "**JUSTICE AND PEACE**," just as *GS 90* had desired: "Taking into account the immensity of the hardships which still afflict a large section of humanity, and with a view to fostering everywhere the justice and love of Christ for the poor, the Council suggests that it would be most opportune to create some organization of the universal Church whose task it would be to arouse the Catholic community to promote the progress of areas which are in want and foster social justice between nations."

2. Centrality of work for justice and peace in the new theology of religious life.

Faced with a situation which found religious life divorced from society, lacking a significant and prophetic force and cast in outdated molds, Vatican II planned an adequate renewal "comprising both a constant return to the sources of the whole of the Christian life (the following of Christ in accordance with the Gospel) and to the primitive inspiration of the institutes and their adaptation to the changed conditions of our time." To that end "Institutes should see to it that their members have a proper understanding of people, of the conditions of the times and of the needs of the Church; so that, making wise judgments about the contemporary world in the light of faith, they may be able to help people more effectively" (PC 2).

Orders, Congregations and Institutes immediately followed the call of the Council and by means of the documents of general chapters, plenary councils and general constitutions we can see how both the documents of the council and other documents of the magisterium, especially *Evangelii Nuntiandi* and the social encyclicals, have greatly influenced a new formulation of religious life in which the evangelizing and prophetic characteristics are fundamental, as indeed they are for the whole Church. Right from the end of the Council certain fundamental and rather general tendencies began to appear in religious life:

To begin with, the option for the poor and for real poverty within the Institutes and communities began to be taken seriously.

In Orders and Congregations, commitment to the promotion of justice and the defense of human rights came to be understood as part of their very mission.

To make these commitments real, there was a movement towards small communities inserted in poor barrios, sharing the conditions of life of the poor and participating in their difficulties and struggles.

The traditional setup, which many religious Institutes had in the areas of education, health care, orphanages, etc. began to be questioned. A current arose in favor of de-institutionalizing and proposing that religious men and women should render their services through institutes distinct from their own religious Institute, whether the former be ecclesial or secular and civil.

These tendencies were confirmed in 1980 by the Sacred Congregation for Religious and Secular Institutes in their document *Religious and Human Promotion*, offering criteria for discernment on the importance and urgency of adequate participation of religious in the integral promotion of people. We find the same in *Consecrated Life*, the post-synodal apostolic exhortation on consecrated life (1996), especially chapter III.

3. Post-conciliar evolution of the Order: Chapters, Plenary Councils, GG.CC.

Since the Council and the 1967 GG.CC., there has been a great effort made among the Friars Minor to understand our vocation in today's world. Since then there has been a whole process of development leading to our 1987 GG.CC., in which the option for justice and peace appears quite clearly. In that process there have been some key moments. Let us see them:

The first important moment was the **General Chapter of Medellín** (1971). Its document *The Formation of the Friars Minor* states that renewal depends to a great extent on the formation of the friars; number 7 says that the concept of Francis corresponds to the needs and aspirations of the modern world. In n.8 it says that "we must become poor with the poor and minors with the minors" (lowly); number 10 speaks of our insertion in today's world and of dedicating ourselves to its great causes (cf. *Octogesima Adveniens*, nn. 5 and 48); and in n. 11 it asks: "Are we the people we ought to be? Do we truly feel called to look after the needs of the world?" and concludes: "This most surely calls for an ongoing conversion on our part, individually and in common." In n. 26 it speaks of minority as a characteristic of franciscan life, saying that "minority makes each friar and the Fraternity instruments of peace."

In chapter V, "Dimensions of formation", Section 4 "Formation for communication with the world," number 52 speaks of "being present in the world" because franciscan life is not a flight from the world; rather is it, after the example of the Incarnate Word, a life in the world to give witness to the certitude of transcendent reality and to discover the good things that God has placed in it. Then number 53 remarks that as a consequence we should be "attentive to the social reality."

In addition to these quotes, the Chapter of Medellín began to speak of the need to insert ourselves in today's world, to respond to the needs of the world. But, as yet, it did not have much to say and, with a certain amount of ambiguity and fear, it did not identify the problems to which replies must be given. Already in the chapter's other document on "The Missions of the Franciscan Order", Chapter V ("We are men of Peace") says that "faithful to our vocation of peace, fundamentally we are men of peace, but we are not committed, since the peace for which we strive is the fruit of justice and love." There is an exclusive option for witness.

The second great moment is the **General Chapter of Madrid's** document: *The Vocation of the Order Today* (1973). Here the accent is laid on today. For if the Life and Rule of Francis - the vocation of the Order is a known quantity and from it our identity is clear, what needs clarification, nevertheless, is the incarnation of that vocation in the here and now. This law of incarnation is fundamental to all Christianity. Without it, without a commitment to man and the world, it is impossible to be a sacrament of salvation.

Chapter VII is entitled "Messenger of peace in the world" and this is its content:

n. 31: Our essential mission consists in living our plan of life: living-creating a fraternity of love and being open to the service of all, living in poverty and work, participating in the hopes of the poor. Our contribution to the Church and to humanity is like this; first and foremost, to give witness by our lifestyle.

n. 33: "Our wish to create a fraternal community in the very bosom of the people brings with it, like it or not, social and political repercussions." And we are warned that we should be aware of partisanship and live the Beatitudes perfectly.

n. 34: setting out from that starting point, it will be possible to have a real share in the political problems and the social struggles of the day. To that end: We must have accurate information which enables us to have an objective analysis of reality, so as to unite our voice with that of the oppressed, we must share in the work of the poor and the marginalized. We must insert ourselves in their manner and way of life.

The General Chapter of 1979. It is since this general chapter, above all, that the Order made a decided option for a commitment in favor of justice and peace. Of the seven priorities which the Chapter established for the Order in the following six years, the fifth requests that the Friars Minor cooperate in building the world through participation in its problems and by a multiple and intensive presence in these. The sixth one says: "conscious of our position as promoters of peace and justice, let us be on the side of those who suffer persecutions and manifold manipulations, living in such a way that our own lives may promote peace and justice."

At the end of the chapter, a document was prepared and approved in which explicit reference was made to the many pressing problems and the difficulty of solving them, such as, hunger, poverty, lack of housing and work, injustice, the problems of children and of the old, the trampling of human rights, the terrible danger of nuclear arms, the degradation of the atmosphere... as also the concrete problems of the moment in different countries of the world (Nicaragua, Vietnamese refugees, Brazil, Rhodesia).

In response to that Chapter, the first letter of the General Definitorium to the Order, dated September 10, 1979, was on the tragic situation of refugees, especially in southeast Asia. On that occasion it announced the setting up in the Order of a Commission for Justice and Peace, manifesting the "franciscan involvement" in these problems, in accordance with the priorities established by the general chapter. In its governing program the general definitorium also announced that each conference of provincials should appoint a commission for justice and peace or at least cooperate with such commissions already established in their region.

Plenary Council of Bahia (1983). Since the early eighties there has been a very clear consciousness in the Order that our mission is to evangelize in the world in which it is

our lot to live and that we must realize clearly whether we really desire to provide an answer to its problems and needs.

Because of the importance of the theme of evangelization in itself and the need for the Order to study it more deeply so as to discern how Franciscans can be “mediators between gospel (franciscan) values and modern culture and society,” this was made the subject of the Plenary Council of 1983 in Bahia, Brazil. Here a suggestive and interesting document, *The Gospel Challenges Us* was approved. Together with the documents of the General Chapters of Medellín and Madrid, this has had the greatest influence on the GG.CC. of 1987. This becomes obvious if we observe how the marginal notes of the articles which the GG.CC. dedicate to the theme make constant reference to these three documents. In fact, in order to understand the message that the present GG.CC. wish to impart, it is essential to read them in the light of these three documents.

In the document of Bahia we are reminded of our duty to contribute to evangelization in the Church (chap.1) and to the construction of justice and peace in the world (chap.4), and we are also reminded of the franciscan and gospel manner in which we must behave since we are Friars Minor, “sent as brothers” (chap.2) and “minors among the poor” (chap.3).

In chapter 4 (“Instruments of justice and peace”), the most original paragraph with reference to former documents is n. 38. Here are suggested concrete initiatives that the friars ought to embrace. These we will enumerate together with the Proposals for Action which the General Chapter of 1985 gave for the following six years, which resume statements of other documents in a similar vein, referring to action rather than theory. Indeed, as Minister General John Vaughn said in his opening address to the Plenary Council of 1983: “We have the information. We have the documentation. We also have the inspiration of many apostolic friars who have preceded us. What we seem to lack now is the imagination and the stimulus to truly face up to the risks and the formidable challenges which the Lord, the Church and the world place before us”:

- a) **To pray** that we may become men of peace with God and humanity, making prayer and fasting part of our efforts for peace
- b) **To support movements** which seek peace in our society by participating personally in them.
- c) **To endorse nonviolent movements in support of peace**, giving our backing to those who, for reasons of conscience, are opposed to wars, especially nuclear wars, and those who oppose the arms race and the traffic in arms; to support those who are imprisoned for their convictions and efforts in the name of justice and peace.
- d) **To develop a pedagogy of peace**, especially for the youth of our seminaries and schools.
- e) **To look for ways of eliminating the injustices which are found in our midst.** This theme should be fully discussed in the local chapter during one year: thus say the Priorities of the Chapter for 1985 so that we can be credible witnesses to the peace of Christ.
- f) **Each province should have a Commission for Justice and Peace** and, where possible, have friars working full-time for justice and peace while supporting friars already occupied in Commissions for Justice and Peace. The representatives of the provinces should form an assembly for Justice and Peace within the conference.

That is the road traversed by the Order after the Council before arriving at the present GG.CC. approved at the General Chapter of 1985, in which the themes of justice and peace are very much in evidence, especially in chapters IV and V.

The General Chapter of 1985: As well as approving the text of the GG.CC., the General Chapter of 1985 published a Six-year Plan (1985-1991) in a short message entitled *Our Call to Evangelization. Proposals for Action*. The chapter understood that in the General Constitutions and in other recent franciscan documents there were three themes which constantly came to prominence: the contemplative dimension of our lives, the option for the poor/justice and peace plus formation in the missionary spirit/evangelization. These became known rapidly in the whole Order as our “three priorities.” Number 23 in this document cites nine concrete proposals in the area of Justice and Peace, some of which are quoted above. Reflection on these proposals, especially in our chapters (general, provincial and local) would give us useful material for reflection on essential elements of our heritage, a useful examination of conscience and an impulse towards putting the proposals into practice.

Three years after the General Chapter of 1985, the plenary council of the Order met in Bangalore, India. This plenary council also published a document entitled *Ministers of the Word..Servants of All*. The council noted with satisfaction that in the whole Order there was “real enthusiasm for the three priorities of the last General Chapter”(n. 14). The council treats of the second priority (Justice and Peace) in nn. 33-44. The Council noted with satisfaction that the interest of the friars in these themes “seemed to be on the right track” (34). “For an ever-increasing number of friars the poor man is not just a brother but a preferred brother” (36). Poverty is seen not just as a vow but also as solidarity with the poor with a view towards his complete liberation (cf. n. 36). An increasing number of provinces have at least one inserted fraternity in poor areas or among the marginalized. Some communities have handed over friaries to be centers for the recovery of alcoholics, of drug addicts and other similar cases (cf. n. 37). The council notes the participation of the friars in peaceful campaigns for justice and peace in many parts of the world and notes with satisfaction that ecology is also a problem that preoccupies a growing number of friars (cf. n. 39). The Council records the creation of Commissions for Justice and Peace in many provinces and conferences and observes with special satisfaction that the Office for justice and Peace in the General Curia “is engaged constantly in the work of animation and coordination... informing about or proposing models and projects in this area” for the Order, for the Franciscan Family and for other sectors of the Church (cf. 40).

The General Chapter of 1991 decided to continue with a fuller treatment of the three priorities of the Six-Year Plan of the 1985 Chapter, situating them in the context of the GG.CC. The Chapter added the words “and the care of creation” to the second priority (justice and peace). The Chapter asked “that the Entities of the Order should examine the concrete steps they have taken or that should be taken in their option for the poor, in their commitment to a society of justice and peace, and to respect for creation,” (*The Order and Evangelization Today*, n. 27), an appropriate argument for an examination of conscience, especially in our Chapters.

In 1996, Minister General Hermann Schalück published a document on evangelization, “*To Fill the Earth with the Gospel of Christ.*” In this document he affirmed a commitment to the defense of life in the evangelizing work of the Friars Minor (Chapter

3, 1c) also emphasized the option for the poor (chapter 3, 2c) among Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (chapter 3, 2d), Ecumenical and Interreligious Dialogue (chapter 3, 2c), among the list of priorities.

While searching for God's will in the Scriptures, in our sources, in the happenings of the last six years, in the contemplation of the faces of so many human beings, in the reality of the "signs of the times," the **General Chapter of 1997** decided to approve a service for dialogue, organized into three commissions: ecumenical, interreligious and dialogue with cultures. The conferences were also invited to look at the feasibility of promoting such an initiative (*From Memory to Prophecy*, n. 7:1-2). The Chapter ratified the preferential option for the poor (n. 8:2); it "encourages the realization at conference level and in union with the whole Franciscan Family a concrete commitment in favor of JPIC; a commitment born of our spirituality and constituting the Franciscan contribution to the celebration of the new millennium" (n. 8:3). It also solicited "the General Definitory through the Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, in collaboration with all the Conferences and Provinces, to create a network of personnel and resources to intervene in the plight of refugees" (n. 8:4).

Pat McCloskey OFM

2. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Structures in the Order

OFM JPIC Structures

**International Office (Curia, Rome)
Executive Committee**

International Council

Conference Commissions

Provincial Commissions

Inter-Franciscan Commission

- 1) **Province Level**
- 2) **Conference Level**
- 3) **International Level**

The Order hopes “to involve friars full-time for justice and peace where possible and support those friars engaged in this work in Justice and Peace offices of the Order and Provinces” (*The Gospel Challenges Us: Reflections on Evangelization*, Bahia, 1983, #38:5). While the content of JPIC work is specific to each province and culture, some general recommendations are useful regarding JPIC structures at the provincial and conference levels of the Order.

1) PROVINCE LEVEL

Some provinces identify a JPIC animator or team in each local fraternity. Many provinces have a committee of friars (with other full or part-time responsibilities) working on JPIC issues. Other provinces have a JPIC office with a friar working full-time, in some cases he is assisted by a lay staff.

The primary work of the provincial coordinator is to animate the friars of his province in the areas of justice, peace and ecological concerns. He participates through the distribution of information, developing a process of social analysis within the province and participating in programs of action that address social justice concerns. He participates in his conference’s JPIC council/commission.

The 1983 Plenary Council of the Order (Bahia) encouraged the full-time model wherever possible; the 1993, 1995 and 1997 meetings of the International Council for JPIC

reaffirmed this desire.

Friars involved in JPIC ministry of a province need a clearly written job description that should include:

1. A mission statement about JPIC work in the province.
2. A clear description of the lines of authority and accountability with the provincial administration, initial and continuing formation programs, communications office, etc.
3. A policy statement about the competence of the friar/commission/office to make public statements in JPIC matters.
4. A description of membership in and the operation of the provincial JPIC commission or office.
5. Clear expectations regarding animation and advocacy projects.
6. An outline of the types of programs are desired with Inter-Franciscan collaboration.
7. Adequate finances.
8. Expectations of co-ordination with other social and church agencies (e.g., interreligious JPIC groups, diocesan JPIC commissions, human rights organizations, Caritas, Greenpeace, Amnesty International, etc.).

Hopefully the friars(s) involved will have:

1. Interest in JPIC issues.
2. Experience with the poor.
3. Credibility in the province.
4. The time and support from the province to do the work effectively.
5. Access to the friars of the province and to the provincial administration.
6. The ability to communicate well.
7. Good health.
8. Local JPIC representatives in the friaries.
9. JPIC connections within the Franciscan family.

Experience around the Order indicates that inter-Franciscan collaboration cannot substitute for OFM JPIC commissions or offices at the province and conference level.

2) Conference Level

JPIC councils or commissions at the conference level are a development of article 114 of our General Constitutions and General Statute 164. There are similar structures for the areas of formation and missionary evangelization. The Conference's JPIC Council / Commission is composed of the JPIC coordinator of each of the provinces and entities of that particular conference.

a. Chairman, President, Coordinator of the Conference JPIC Council /Commission.

Needs to have the time to be able to work not only at his provincial level but also the time to coordinate the JPIC work at the conference level and to develop the projects of inter-conference collaboration.

b. Council / Commission.

Needs statutes that describe clearly the body's membership, mandate, finances and the lines of authority and communication between the Council and the Conference of Ministers Provincial. Following is an example of Statutes from the English-Speaking Conference (Canada, USA, England, Ireland and Malta).

The Statutes of the JPIC Council of the English-speaking Conference

CONSTITUTION

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Council (council) is a permanent council of the English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor (conference) that is composed of justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) representatives from the provinces, vice provinces, and custodies of the conference.

The council meets regularly for three main purposes:

1. To serve as a resource body to the conference, assisting it in addressing and developing, JPIC agenda awareness and projects for implementation.

“Since many human beings are still victims of dehumanizing poverty, injustice and oppression, the brothers should devote themselves, with all people of good will, to restoring the social order, so that it can be based on justice, liberation and peace in the risen Christ. After weighing the causes of the injustice in each situation, the brothers should participate in activities that build up charity, justice and international solidarity.” (General Constitutions, Order of Friars Minor, (OFM), Article 96.2)

2. To provide opportunities for development of expertise, sharing of information and resources, and mutual support to friars and others who are involved in JPIC ministries.

“The brothers should be altogether convinced of the seriousness and urgency of social problems. They should be thoroughly familiar with the Church’s social teaching as well as the teaching about the family and human dignity and pass this on to others. They should examine critically other cultural facets that might be helpful in starting a dialogue to offer a Christian response to these problems.” (General Constitutions, OFM, Article 96.1)

3. To share in and reflect on a common experience involving social awareness and occasionally to take prophetic action. "...the proclamation of the reign of God is inseparable from action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world " (1971 Bishops Synod)

“The brothers should be aware of the horrendous dangers that threaten the human race. They should speak out courageously against the arms race and every kind of warlike activity as most serious curse on the world and the gravest injury to the poor. The brothers should spare themselves neither toil nor hardship in building up the reign of the God of peace.” (General Constitutions, OFM, Article 69.2)

Statutes and By-Laws

1. The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Council (council) is an established committee of the English-speaking Conference of the Order of Friars Minor (conference)

- a) The council serves as a resource to the conference.*
- b) Social awareness and the development of justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) are its normal areas of contribution to the conference.*
- c) An appointed representative from the conference serves as a liaison between the council and the conference*

- d) *An annual report on the activities of the council is submitted to the conference for review at its October meeting.*
- e) *The council is an available resource to the Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) in Rome and participates in the International OFM Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Council.*
- f) *The council annually awards the Martin J. Wolf Award to a person or persons who live(s) the gospel in his spirit.*
- g) *The council is a forum for interfamily collaboration.*

II. Membership

A. Members

Each entity of the conference appoints one or more JPIC representatives to serve as members of the council. The conference liaison is also a member.

B. Associate members

Each of the various Franciscan families, i.e., Capuchins, Conventuals, TORs, Atonements, Franciscan Federation, Secular Franciscan Order, Poor Clares, etc., is invited to delegate a representative to serve as an associate member of the council. A similar invitation is extended to the Interprovincial for Missionary Evangelization; the Interprovincial Formation Council, Franciscans International, and the Franciscan Mission Service.

C. Other participants

When appropriate, other persons may be invited to attend council meetings.

The brothers should promote a spirit of unity and cooperation among all members of the Franciscan family so we can proclaim the gospel more effectively. (General Constitutions, OFM, Article 88)

III. Structures

A. Chairperson

The chairperson is elected by the council and serves for a term of three years. The chairperson can be re-elected for an additional three-year term. The council can choose to extend the number of terms beyond two. The chairperson's job description is determined by the council.

If the chairperson is unable to serve, the Executive Committee, in consultation with the conference liaison, will designate a temporary chairperson to serve until the next council meeting.

B. Conference liaison

The conference liaison is an official member of the council, appointed by the conference. to represent the conference at council meetings and to relate to the conference on behalf of the council.

C. Secretary

The chairperson designates a secretary to record the minutes of the council meetings. The secretary is not necessarily a member of the council.

D. Treasurer

The council may elect a treasurer to oversee the financial records of the council. The treasurer is responsible for making an annual financial report to the council and to the conference. The election of the treasurer coincides with the election of the chairperson. If no treasurer is elected, the chairperson serves in that capacity.

E. Committees

1. Executive committee

The council elects an executive committee of two or more members, one of whom is the chairperson, who chairs the committee. The executive committee's job description is determined by the council.

2. Other committees

Committees will be set up by the council when needed. Both members and associate members may serve on committees. Associate members will have an active voice in the work and deliberations of committees. Each committee will elect a chairperson and will report back to the council.

IV. Meetings

A. Frequency

The council ordinarily will meet twice a year.

B. Purpose

Each meeting will try to respect and incorporate the following:

- 1. Addressing, developing and making recommendations on JPIC agenda for the conference and its constituent entities.*
- 2. Mutual support and education for members, associate members, and other participants.*
- 3. Resolutions and prophetic action on JPIC issues.*

C. Voting

- 1. The council normally operates by consensus of its members.*
- 2. If the need arises, a deliberative vote may be taken, each member entity having one vote. A simple majority vote is necessary for passage.*
- 3. At any time, all present may be polled for a consultative vote.*

V. Finances

Each entity is asked to contribute, through its JPIC structure, a dollar amount, based on the annual census of friars of the conference, to fund the ordinary work of the council.

VII. Amendments

A. The Statutes and By-Laws are the responsibility of the council. Amendments must be proposed at one meeting and decided at the next.

B. Amendments are made by the process described in Section IV.C above, with the exception that, if a deliberative vote is taken, a two-thirds majority vote of the member entities present is necessary for passage. Amendments must then be approved by the conference.

Constitutions and By-laws were approved by the provincial ministers of the English-speaking Conference at their October 1997 meeting.

3) International Level

a) JPIC Office, Rome

The International JPIC Office (Rome) was established in 1981. It is to “assist the Minister General and his Definitorium in questions regarding justice, peace and the integrity of creation, conforming thus to the decisions of the General Chapters and Plenary Councils in keeping with the spirit of the General Constitutions and Statutes”. The staff for the Office is appointed by the General Definitorium. Initially the Office

was called the “commission for justice and peace.” By 1985 the term office was used in the General Statutes of the Order (article #120.1).

The directors of the Office were: Marco Malagola (Province of Turin, Italy, 1981-83), Ken Viegas (Province of Pakistan, 1983-85), Gerard Heesterbeek (Province of Holland, 1985-88) and John Quigley (Province of St. John the Baptist, USA, 1988-1997). In July 1997 Peter Schorr, the General Definitior from Central Western Europe, was appointed director for the office and in September 1997, Gearóid Francisco O’Conaire (Central America) was named deputy director.

The Director /Deputy Director attend meetings, give talks to provincial groups and travel within the conferences. To build up communications among the central government of the Order, the conferences and the provinces, the staff of the international Office maintains communications with the ICJPIC members (post and e-mail correspondence), organizes meetings, writes and publishes documentation and information and maintains data banks for different mailings from the Office. The office is also making efforts to integrate a consciousness and methodology of JPIC in the formation programs of the Order.

The JPIC Office has coordinated initiatives that support and promote the brothers and sisters who suffer because of their faith or convictions or activities undertaken for justice, peace and integrity of creation. Some of these initiatives were for friars imprisoned in former Czechoslovakia (1986), the friars and sisters in Bosnia (1992), Franciscans in Rwanda (1994), the confiscation of Palestinian Christian land in Bethlehem (1994), friars who work with the landless of Brazil (1996) and Franciscans working for human rights in Colombia (1997). The Office has written to and spoken with governments and Non-Governmental Organizations; mobilized letter campaigns; made interventions at the UN Commission for Human Rights (Geneva); and initiated the Franciscan Peace Missions in Croatia and Colombia.

b. International Council For Justice, Peace And The Integrity Of Creation (ICJPIC)

“The International Council for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the Friars Minor (ICJPIC) is a consultation group, constituted by the General Definitorium, so as to aid the Director of the JPIC Office, the General Definitorium, and the Conferences in an important commitment of formation, conscientization, animation and the Order’s commitment in the area of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.” (Statutes of ICJPIC approved 7 July 1989, revised 9 November 1994 and approved again by the General Definitory in March 1999.) The Assembly of the ICJPIC is convened by the Director of the JPIC Office once in every two years; extraordinary meetings may be arranged with the prior consent of the General Definitorium.

The composition and responsibilities of the International Council are described in articles 2 and 3 of the Council’s statutes (below): “The members of the ICJPIC are the Delegates of the Conferences of Ministers Provincial, one for each of the 15 Conferences, elected by the Conferences according to their Particular Statutes and the Norms of the ICJPIC; the members of the Executive Committee; and such others as may be named by the Minister General.

To be eligible as a Delegate of the ICJPIC it is necessary to be the Promoter of Justice and Peace in a Conference or Province, or at least to have special expertise in this area.

The ICJPIC has met five times:

- 1987 **Rome, Italy.** The topic was “Justice and Peace and Formation”. The focus was on the formation program that is inserted among the poor of Manila in the Filipino province.
- 1991 **Jerusalem, Israel.** The topic was “Non-Violence”, interaction with the friars of the Holy Land, civil authorities of the Jewish and Palestinian communities. Study of the Israeli-Palestinian situation.
- 1993 **New York and Washington, D.C.** Topics in New York: our participation in Franciscans International at the United Nations, the identity of the International Council and in Washington: an exposure to the American Catholic Church (United States Catholic Conference in Washington). Several international JPIC projects for the Order were proposed to the General Definitorium and were approved (e.g. The Croatian Project, a focus on Ecology, support for Franciscans International and the appointment of a OFM friar (Michael Surufka) for the participation of friars in Franciscans International, the publication of *Pax et Bonum* and *Contact* by the Office in Rome. At the conclusion of the meeting the ICJPIC stated that it “*believes that the time is approaching where we and our societies need to have friars freed and trained for full-time ministries in the areas of justice, peace and ecology. The Council strongly favors the development of an international team of friars who would work full-time in areas of justice, peace and ecology. Each of these friars would be selected and trained for a particular area of competence, for example, human rights work, ecology work, refugee work. These friars need not live in Rome. In fact there is preference that they be situated throughout the world and work together in coordination with the General Office in Rome.*”
- 1995 **Seoul, Korea.** This meeting produced various projects that were recommended to the General Definitorium for their approval. Most of these were developments of projects initiated by the ICJPIC in 1993. For example: the successful experience of the friars involvement in the Croatian Project during the war gave rise to the concept of “Franciscan Peace Missions” which could involve friars in other countries who needed international assistance or attention during a local civil conflict. The council called for the writing of the JPIC Resource Book at Seoul and gave a clearer focus to our work for ecology by calling it environmental justice. The council also gave its support to the promotion of continuing formational opportunities for friars in international experiences.
- 1997 **Rome, Italy.** The ICJPIC made 11 recommendations to the General Definitorium many of which called for continuity in and strengthening of projects proposed in previous ICJPIC meetings. For example, the acceptance of the Franciscan peace Mission in Colombia; the finalization of the Resource Book and the project “Jubilee 2000.”

***Statutes for the International Council for Justice, Peace
and the Integrity of Creation (ICJPIC)***

Art. 1:

The International Council for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation of the Friars Minor (ICJPIC) is a consultation group, constituted by the General Definitorium, so as to aid the Director of the JPIC Office, the General Definitorium, and the Conferences in the important commitment of formation, conscientization, animation and the Order’s commitment in the area of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Art. 2:

- § 1 Membership in the ICJPIC is comprised of the coordinators (delegates) of the Conferences, one per Conference, elected by said conference according to their particular statutes and the norms of ICJPIC, the Executive Committee and other members nominated by the Minister General.
- § 2 JPIC coordinators are eligible as delegates for ICJPIC if they are working at the activity of promoting for JPIC in the Conferences, or have some competence in the area.

Art. 3: The tasks of ICJPIC are:

- § 1 promote the knowledge and application of the documents of the Church and the Order regarding the JPIC;
- § 2 collaborate with the Secretariat for Formation and Studies, the Secretariat for Missionary Evangelization as well as with other offices of the General Curia with regard to JPIC and Franciscan spirituality in initial and ongoing formation;
- § 3 analyze the aspects of JPIC in the tradition of the Franciscan charism and their application in today's world;
- § 4 gather and transmit documentation and information regarding JPIC, especially as regards the activity of the Friars Minor;
- § 5 present suggestions, proposals, and projects to the Minister General and to his Definitorium for the animation of the Order in the area of JPIC;
- § 6 present suggestions, proposals, and projects to the Conferences and Provinces.
- § 7 help and encourage the activity of the coordinators;
- § 8 reflect upon the scope and priority that comes from the work of the ICJPIC Assembly and make adequate evaluations for application to the life and activity of the friars;
- § 9 propose modifications of the particular Statutes of ICJPIC for the approval of General Definitorium;
- § 10 present the list of candidates for membership in the Executive Committee.

Art. 4:

- § 1 The Director of the Office convenes the ICJPIC Assembly for JPIC once every two years; extraordinary gatherings can be called with the prior consent of the General Definitorium.
- § 2 The Assembly is run according to the agenda and the work program approved at the beginning of this same Assembly, as proposed by the Executive Committee.

Art. 5:

- § 1 The Director for the JPIC Office, after having consulted the ICJPIC, proposes the Executive Committee to the Minister General and his Definitorium for their approval. Said committee is formed by: the Director of the JPIC Office, the Deputy-Director, and at least four other persons.
- § 2 The Executive Committee is to report to the ICJPIC on its work.
- § 3 The Executive Committee remains in charge for four years; half of the members are nominated every two years.
- § 4 The Executive Committee meets at least twice a year.

Art. 6: The tasks of Executive Committee are:

- § 1 assist the Director of the JPIC Office in the carrying out of the projects and the suggestions made by the ICJPIC Assembly and approved by the General Definitorium;
- § 2 prepare the agenda and work program which is to be approved by the General Definitorium;

- § 3 propose and encourage new initiatives and projects in the area of JPIC;
§ 4 with the Director of the Office for JPIC, prepare an annual report on the activity of JPIC in the Order, which is to be provided to all the Provinces.

c. Executive Committee of the International JPIC Council

“The Executive Committee of the ICJPIC is appointed by the Minister General, having consulted his Definitorium for their approval. Said committee is formed by: the Director of the JPIC Office, the Deputy-Director, and at least four other persons.”
(Article 5.1 Statutes of the ICJPIC.)

Among the tasks of the Executive Committee the most important are the following: to assist the Director of the Office for JPIC in the implementation of the projects and suggestions made by the Assembly of the ICJPIC and approved by the General Definitorium, to prepare the agenda and the work program of the Assembly of the ICJPIC, for the approval of the General Definitorium and to propose and encourage new initiatives in the area of Justice and Peace (Article 6. Statutes of the ICJPIC.)

JPIC Office - Rome

3. Inter-Franciscan Collaboration in the Work for JPIC

1. Principle and Reality of Inter-Franciscan Collaboration.

The Constitutions of all three Franciscan Orders dedicate a chapter to relationships with the whole Franciscan Family. Our General Constitutions dedicate Title II of Chapter III to them.

Art. 55.2 says "The friars are to endeavor with all their might to nourish and promote the full development of this Franciscan charism among all those who are imbued with the spirit of St. Francis; they are to seize any opportunity to come together to offer assistance in common undertakings."

It is a clear indication that since the Second Vatican Council there has been a movement of coming together, of getting to know each other and of later appreciation and collaboration between the great number of Franciscan branches: of the First Order, of the Poor Clares and other female contemplative groups, of the Secular Franciscan Order and the multitude of groups of TOR.

This feeling of Family is the fruit of a new cultural and ecclesiastic sensitivity, which is more universal and ecumenical, and of a greater penetration into the writings of St. Francis and Saint Clare by all. The recent Rules of the Third Order Regular and Secular, as well as the Constitutions of the First and Second Orders, that apply the permanent values of the Rules of Franciscan and Clare to present-day situations, have succeeded in presenting the fundamental values of the Franciscan life. The fundamental Franciscan values that we all share are those that allow us to have one vocation and one charism and to feel ourselves as being of one Family.

It is a movement of communion found on the lower levels - it is propagating among us a certain sense of Family, and also on the highest levels of responsibility among the different Franciscan groups that have jointly published documents on various occasions and that, in 1996, officially founded the Conference of the Franciscan Family -CFF- (comprised of OFS, OFM, Conventuals, Capuchins, CFI-TOR and Brothers of the TOR).

This movement of communion, although still fairly limited, is made real through collaboration in initial and ongoing formation, in historical-spiritual research, in pastoral work, in missionary activity and in commitment to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

2. Inter-Franciscan Collaboration in the work of JPIC

a) Inter-Franciscan commissions for JPIC

The increasing inter-Franciscan collaboration, although still very limited, is being brought about, perhaps in its most intense way, in the area of work for justice, peace and the defense of nature. This is due to a variety of factors;

- We understand these values to be central to our charisma
- They are parts of the signs of the times
- They offer concrete possibilities for collaboration

- The brothers and sisters most sensitive to these values are usually less attached to their own ideas and are more open to collaboration with all, especially with those who work along the same lines.
- It is also possible that by being still a minority the Franciscans of each branch committed in these areas feel the need to unite in order to have greater power and capacity and to have a greater impact, be it within our family or within society. For some years now, in fact, inter-Franciscan work has been going on in these areas. Indeed, in some countries the Franciscan movement for JPIC was born "inter-Franciscan".

However, even though this inter-Franciscan work has been very positive, especially in facing up to our presence in society, we must not lose sight of the need to carry out an animation of our brothers in each branch on the basis of these values for an option for the poor and for the work for peace and protection of the environment. In some places it has happened that the inter-Franciscan work of minority groups has forgotten the need for animation in each of the branches and provinces.

b) The Inter-Franciscan Commission for JPIC in Rome.

Since the year 1981, the Inter-Franciscan Commission for Justice and Peace (IFCJP) has existed in Rome. It is composed of six delegates from the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF), that is, the Secular Franciscan Order, the brothers OFM, Conventuals, Capuchins, The International Franciscan Conference of the Third Order Regular (CFI-TOR) and the brothers of the TOR. This Commission normally meets three times a year. The members of the commission investigate how to collaborate and support the work done by each group. They also answer the questions and appeals that the brothers and sisters of the whole world send them. During the last five years the IFCJP wrote a joint declaration "The characteristics of the work of Franciscans for justice, peace and the ecology". In 1995 they wrote a proposal for the reconstruction of Franciscans International (FI), a proposal presented to the CFF and to the international executive committee of the FI.

3. Franciscans International

Franciscans International is, up to now, the only common international project for evangelization of the Franciscan Family. It was begun as an Inter-Franciscan project in 1983 in the U.S.A. Membership was individual and voluntary and a small annual fee was paid. An office with its personnel was set up in New York. On 3rd. February, 1989 it was registered as a non-governmental organization (NGO) at the Department for Public Information (DPI) of the UN and in its declaration of principles it proposed to work, in collaboration with the UN and other NGOs, in favor of the poor, peace and the integrity of creation.

In the first years of the nineties an International Executive Committee was created. It sought the consultative status of the UN Category of ECOSOC (Economic and Social Council) which was conceded on 4th. August 1994. This allows us have an active and direct voice in proposing questions for the order of the day, of transmitting information on questions of international life, of presenting our preoccupations and solutions to urgent social problems.

During these years it began to be organized in many countries on the different continents by means of personal membership. It participated in the great assemblies of the United

Nations: the Summit on the Environment and Development (1992) in Rio de Janeiro; the World Conference on Human Rights (1993) in Vienna; the World Conference on Population and Development (1994) in Cairo; the World Summit on Social Development (1995) in Copenhagen; the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) in Beijing; the Second Conference of the United Nations on Human Settlements (1996) in Istanbul; the World Summit on Food (1996) in Rome.

In 1995 the CIFJP presented to the International Executive Committee a proposal that received the support of the Ministers General and of the Presidents of the Franciscan Families. The central points of the proposal were as follows:

- 1) Since the Franciscans International speak in the name of Franciscans throughout the world it should be accountable, in some way, to the elected superiors of the Franciscan Family.
- 2) It is necessary to re-think the model of individual membership since many Franciscans do not see the need to become part of an organization that speaks in its name and of which they are members.
- 3) By giving the status of UN category to FI, the international community is telling the Franciscans that they expect some action on our part. We must make a greater and more concentrated effort to work with the UN and its different organizations (such as UNESCO, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees -UNHCR-, The UN Commission for Human Rights, FAO). This endeavor will require the commitment and active participation of the whole Franciscan Family.

In October 1996, on being officially formed, the Conference of the Franciscan Family assumed the responsibility for the Franciscans International and named a "Working Group" that would discuss and propose new statutes and plan the future of FI. The discussion between Franciscans International and the Conference of the Franciscan Family (CFF), facilitated by the Working Group, will point out the future direction of FI and those to whom they are to give account within the framework of the Franciscan Family and the UN.

4. With the Dominicans in Geneva

For some years Franciscans International have sought a presence in Geneva where many of the policies that directly affect human rights, trade unions and refugees are discussed and approved. The discussion on the possibility of an office intensified over the past five years when the International Executive Committee of FI asked the European Executive Committee to study a practical way of establishing FI at the UN Geneva. In 1996 this subject was discussed and approved by the European Executive Committee. At the same time, Timothy Radcliffe OP, Master General of the Dominican Order, and the Dominican coordinator of JPIC requested the availability of Brothers OFM to collaborate with them in a common office for Human Rights in Geneva. Our response expressed a great interest in this request in conjunction, of course, with our desire to work within the environment of Franciscans International. In February 1997 the European Executive Committee of FI approved a proposal of collaboration between the FI and the Dominicans in a new office in Geneva. We worked together in the meeting of the Commission for Human Rights (March-April 1997) through the participation of four Brothers OFM from different parts of the world who intervened on the subject of The Holy Land, Colombia and others. A little later, in May 1997, a young woman prepared in this field began to work for us as executive director.

5. Final evaluation

The experiences of the last six years show that the advantages and difficulties that accompany collaboration within the Franciscan Family are many. The CFIJP has tried, with relative success, to cooperate in a series of projects. The way is never easy and is complicated by the fact that during seven hundred years we have been identified through our reciprocal differences. It is relatively easy to cooperate in a particular project, the VIII Anniversary of Saints Francis and Clare, for example. However, it is a challenge of great implications to collaborate in permanent projects that presuppose personnel and financial recourses as occurs in a common house of studies, a program of international formation or a common endeavor of missionary evangelization. Franciscans International is an example of how advantageous and difficult it can be to try to work together. Lay society does not understand the divisions between the Franciscans and they hope that the "Franciscans" contribute with ease in the projects of peace, in identification with the poor and in their concern for creation.

JPIC Office - Rome

4. Social Analysis

*(From the Manual for Promoters of Justice and Peace,
JPIC Office of the Union of Superiors General, Rome, 1997)*

Introduction

Striving for the transformation of the world is neither a task for naive dreamers nor for hotheaded enthusiasts. Transforming the world implies that we know something of the world and what needs transformation. Any involvement in action for justice must recognize the systemic injustice that is responsible for much of the world's hunger, homelessness, violence and environmental destruction. A significant part of any program of formation for justice, peace and integrity of creation should be concerned with systems or structures of injustice and how and why they function. What is needed is a METHOD or process to examine social systems, and the symptoms of their malfunctioning that lead to injustice. There are a number of useful manuals of social /structural analysis; but perhaps the most comprehensive is Holland and Henriot's *Social Analysis: Linking Faith and Justice*.

It is necessary that JPIC promoters / animators examine justice problems very carefully before they take action to solve these problems. This careful preparation is necessary if they are to understand the problems they are dealing with. A method of examining or analyzing justice problems is required because there is a danger that such problems may be made worse if justice workers are not fully aware of the root causes of these problems.

Social analysis is a popular and effective tool that enables us to examine the structures of society: political, economic, cultural, social, religious - and to uncover the root causes of social injustice. It helps us move from what Donal Dorr calls face-to-face compassion to asking how and why: How did these people get to be poor? Why is unemployment increasing? Social analysis identifies those who hold power, those who make decisions, those who do and do not benefit from these decisions in society. It enables us to see the interconnections and influences that operate in any social system. This method has been further developed by Christian groups who use Christian theological reflection as well as social analysis to develop a plan of action for the promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation.

Social Analysis is a call to “open our eyes, ears and mouth.” Mark presents three miracles that are symbolic of Jesus' inviting us to open our ears, our eyes and our mouth in our search to understand the What and How of Mission. He reproaches his disciples saying: “Do you not yet understand? Have you no perception? Are your minds closed? Have you eyes that do not see, ears that do not hear? Or do you not remember? ... “ (Mk 8:18)

healing of the deaf man, Mk 7:31-37.

healing of the blind, Mk 8:22-26; 10:46-52.

healing of the mute, Mk 9:17-27.

Social Analysis invites us to LISTEN, to SEE, to HEAR the cries of the world in which we are living.

The method

The method of social analysis is not difficult to use. It involves the basic SEE, JUDGE, ACT method of the Young Christian Workers and Young Christian Students, later taken up by Latin American theologians in their work with Basic Christian Communities and reflected in much of Liberation Theology.

There are four main steps in social analysis.

(Much of the contents of the following four steps have been taken from, *Working for Justice and Peace* by Tony Byrne CSSp, (Mission Press, Zambia) 1988, p 57-63)

(Before embarking on the actual process of social analysis, it would help to have a discussion on values.)

1st Step: Starting point: the members of the group list the problems for analysis or examination.

- See if there is a connection or link between the injustices.
- Decide which are the most serious and list them.
- See if there is one common name that will describe all these injustices.
- Decide on one specific problem that the group will examine by this method. It is important to remember that it is almost impossible to analyze two problems at the same time.

2nd Step: Structural Analysis

- Describe the problem in detail.
- When did the problem begin?
- Why did it begin?
- When did we become aware that it was a serious problem?
- What brought it to our attention?

Structures in general:

- Begin with a discussion on the structures or organizations in society.
- Examine the problem in question in relation to the structures of society: economic, political, class, cultural and religious.

Economic Structures:

- Who is the cause of the problem?
- Are there multinationals or local companies that would like this problem to continue or would even like it to get worse because they are gaining money from the problem?
- Are there individuals or groups in this society helping to maintain or support this problem because they are gaining financially from it?

Political Structures:

- Who gains power as a result of this problem?
- Are there any politicians or political parties who use this problem to gain or maintain power?
- Who are the people with authority or power who allowed this problem to happen?
- Are there any local community leaders who want this problem to continue so that they will have power?

Class Structures:

- Does this problem help to create, maintain and support social division in society?

- Are there certain people gaining social importance or status because of this problem? Who are they?
- Are there certain individuals or groups of people losing social importance or status because of this problem? Who are they?

Cultural Structures:

- Do our culture and traditions help to create, maintain and support this problem?
- What cultural values and traditions help to make this problem more serious?
- Examine the problem in relation to attitudes or mind structures.

Religious Structures:

- What are the religious structures or Church organizations that might be involved in this problem?
- How do these religious structures or Church organizations help to create, assist or maintain this problem?
- Do some religious or Church organizations gain from this problem?
- Do they use it to maintain importance or increase their membership?

Mind-structures or attitudes.

Injustice is often caused by unjust structures in society. Yet, even if these structures are changed, the problem of injustice still remains because of people's attitudes or mentalities.

These attitudes, sometimes called mind-structures, are difficult to change. To change mind structures or attitudes that create unjust situations, there is a need for conversion. This conversion demands that people should have minds and hearts that “hunger and thirst after justice.”

What attitudes do we have that help to create, maintain and support this problem?

Can we recognize or name some attitudes that we have as individuals or as a community that help to make this problem a serious one?

At the end of Step Two, it would help to take a few moments to answer the following:

- As a result of these considerations and discussions, are we getting a better understanding of the causes of the problem?
- What are the most important insights or new ideas that have surfaced or come to light as a result of this analysis?

3rd Step: Christian reflection on the problem in the light of the Scriptures and the teachings of the Church.

- To find out if the Bible and the teaching of the Church can help to throw new light on the problem:
- What does the Bible say about the problem?
- Can we identify some statements of the Church made by a pope, a council or a group of bishops that can be applied to this problem?

4th Step: Plan action, thinking globally, acting locally:

Plan of action:

- What is the solution to this problem?
- What can we, as a group or as individuals, do about this problem?

- What resources do we have to help us with our plan of action?
 - Can we get more resources to help us?
 - Is there a part of the problem that we can tackle now?
 - What is the first step we should take?
- Responsibilities are shared among the members.
 - A time limit is set for each stage of the plan, and for the implementation of the whole plan.
 - Financial and other resources are reflected on, and carefully worked out.

EVALUATE:

- What did we set out to do?
- How far did we get?
- What helped us to make progress?
- What hindered progress?
- What do we need to do now? Change objectives? Change methods? Renew our resources?

N.B. (Evaluations need to be done at the various stages of the implementation of the plan; celebrations - including liturgical celebrations - need to be integrated into the whole process of a social analysis)

Another way of approaching this method is to:

SEE

What do we see around us? Why are things the way they are?

JUDGE

In judging a situation what bias do we bring? What lens do we see through? What might our unconscious sense of the issue be? What wisdom and experience of life do we bring to the issue for analysis? Whose wisdom do we relate to - that of the rich or that of the poor?

Have we really made an option for the poor in assessing the situation? Do we listen more to the elite for our sense of reality than to the experience of the poor? Where is the wisdom of the Gospel? Working for justice requires a spirituality deeply rooted in the Scriptures, otherwise our work will be overwhelming and impossible. Called to be evangelizers as well as social transformers, we pray, reflect and search for God's plan to bring about the reign of God. We judge the situation in the light of God's plan.

ACT

Being more aware of what is going on in the world around us and judging the situation from the perspective of the Gospel, it is necessary to act. Collaboration with others in the community (NGOs, other religious denominations, local groups) and where possible, networking internationally is extremely important and likely to be far more effective.

A Practical Approach:

Active engagement with poor and marginalized people, involvement in ongoing social analysis and constant reflection on our attitudes and actions will help to develop the

critical consciousness necessary to contribute to the transformation of the world.

I
am a black woman
tall as a cypress
strong
beyond all definition still
defying place
and time
and circumstance
assailed
impervious
indestructible
Look
on me and be
renewed.

Mari Evans

("I Am A Black Woman" in Margaret Busby, ed., Daughters of Africa (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), p.300)

"They snatched me off the street. I put up a fight against the security police, but they hit me on the head. My mother and father's faces haunted me. One method used by Iraqi jails epitomizes their barbarity. And that is rape... No matter how much I'd heard about it, nothing prepared me for the actual experience. It lives on inside me. I still bleed a lot. It was done not by just one man, but by a group of them. They stifled my screams and protests. I had to give in. And it was a side show; lots of people came to watch".

Kurdish woman

(Quoted in Amnesty International, *Human Rights are Women's Rights*, 1995 p.85)

As mentioned in Section I, for many women violence is a terrible fact of daily life - violence in war, political violence, sexual violence and domestic violence. Violence was the issue at the Beijing Conference on Women that cut across cultural and geographic boundaries. Ayesha Khanam of the Bangladesh Women's Council stated, "Violence against women is an issue that begs global action." Among the issues of violence raised at the Beijing were the genital mutilation of girls, "dowry deaths" in India where thousands of young brides are killed each year because their families pay insufficient dowries, physical abuse in the home--in the US about one-third of all women murdered die at the hands of a husband or boyfriend--and the use of rape and enforced prostitution as weapons of war. How to stop this violence is a challenge for us all - women, men, lay, religious, Christians and people of other faiths.

Below is an outline of a structural analysis approach to Women and Violence:

Setting the Scene: A parish group is discussing a recently published national survey on domestic violence. The survey indicates one in five women have suffered violence from a male partner. 59% of the respondents knew of other women who had been victims of violence; 13% reported mental cruelty - they had been locked in their rooms, stopped from meeting their friends, verbally abused and deprived of money; 10% had suffered severe physical violence - kicked, pushed down stairs, beaten, stabbed and the victims of attempted strangulation. Others had been sexually abused, threatened with knives and

guns. The editorial in the local paper concludes:

“So while the Government can provide better laws for the protection of women it cannot devise a program which would reduce domestic violence until it knows what is causing this violence. It should set itself this target, and in the meantime do everything it can to support both refuge and rape crisis center.”

Can we respond to this? What can we do? Who is suffering violence in this parish, unknown to us? These and a dozen more questions quickly surface. How might such a group respond using a method of social analysis? It is important to note that the analysis of such an issue would require at least two sessions of two hours.

1st Step: Clarifying the Issue

Search out and share information on domestic violence. Purchase a copy of the survey, perhaps invite a speaker. Outline the history of domestic violence in the country. What political, economic, cultural, social and religious developments in society have contributed to violence against women? Look for the connections and interconnections. What values are at stake here?

2nd Step: Analysis of Structures

Are there economic structures which lead to violence against women, e.g., dowry system, lack of legal and property rights, women as chattel, men as breadwinners, unemployment? Are there forces in society that benefit from the economic dependence of women?

In the political structures who has power? Are there political parties or groups that give tacit support to the use of physical violence against women? Who benefits from having women “kept in their place”? What, if any, ministerial roles do women have in government? Are there groups that view the rise of feminism as a threat? Do women have any rights?

Is there cultural support for violence against women, e.g., a tradition of machismo? What form does social interaction take--women together, men together? Alcohol as an important male ritual? Chastity expected of women, not of men? How much education do men receive? How much education do women receive? How does the media present women--sexual objects, wanton, fickle, brainless?

Do the social structures encourage violence, e.g., employers own their workers and discipline accordingly, poor housing, inadequate health care and social support? Who makes the decisions?

What roles do women have in the religious structures? Are there teachings, traditions and practices that assign women a particular role? How are women depicted in mythology?

In the Bible? In the Church?

Are there connections between the economic, political, social, cultural and religious structures that contribute to violence against women?

3rd Step: Reflection and Prayer

Use a passage of Scripture such as the Samaritan Woman (Jn 4:1-42). What does this passage and what does Scripture say about this issue? How does Jesus respond? Are there teachings of the Church, statements by the pope, bishops and religious leaders which help clarify the issue?

4th Step: Planning Action

What is the solution? Concretely, what do we want to see changed? What resources do

we have in the group to help us respond to the problem of domestic violence? What part of the problem can we tackle now? How do we communicate with the wider parish? What first step will we take? Who are responsible for the various aspects of the plan? By when do we implement the various steps?

Evaluation

It is enormously important to put in place a process for reviewing and evaluating the action plan and the actual action taken.

JPIC Manual of the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the
Unions of Superiors General, Rome

5. JPIC in Specific Ministerial Contexts

• Daily Life

We present these options to you as a practical proposal of how to concretize the ideas theoretically offered in the first two parts of the Resource Book. We want to do this in such a way that these ideas become as much as possible a matter of daily life and an historical incarnation of our Franciscan lifestyle.

We distinguish our proposals on two general levels and two particular levels:

General Level:

the provincial level (what the Provincial administration could do);

the local level (what every fraternity and every friar could do);

2. Particular Level:

“Ad intra” (within our structures);

“Ad extra” (outside our structures).

I. Everyday JUSTICE

A. At the provincial level:

1. “Ad intra”

- a) In initial formation, do not discriminate against candidates who have not opted for the priesthood. Give them equal opportunities for studies and for technical formation.
- b) Maintain the right of non-priest friars to hold any office in the province and their right to a certain number of delegates to the chapter.
- c) Provide the greatest care and assistance, direct and indirect, to the aged and ill friars, if possible in their respective friaries. There should otherwise be a comfortable and welcoming infirmary for them.
- d) Help the nearest relatives of the friars in their economic or structural difficulties, even placing at their disposal part of our structures.
- e) At the time of civil elections, furnish every friar, through the provincial JPIC office, adequate and as complete as possible information concerning the platforms and the candidates of the various political parties.

2. “Ad extra”

- a) An annual checking of the accounts, with the determination of a fixed percentage of gross income, fixed annually, to be given back to the poor in the form of a project for human betterment (“promotion”), possibly decided upon by all the friars.
- b) Make use alternately of capitalization and savings such as ethical banks and mutual self-administered funds. Also, forego higher interest. Or forego a personal interest.
- c) Have as a priority the betterment of the structures regarding public worship and welcoming, as well as taking into consideration friars who are not ill.
- d) Verify directly and personally at fixed intervals, through the provincial JPIC office, whether the confidence placed in a political candidate was merited or not.

B. At the Local Level:

1. "Ad intra"

- a) Favor as much as possible and equal distribution of responsibilities, in such a way that all the members of the fraternity be co-responsible participants, according to their charisms, in the good management of the house. Provide for turns for all regarding the more elementary and heavy services, such as cooking and general cleaning of common areas.
- b) Facilitate the possibility of profiting from vacation times by each friar, providing for all the friars the funds needed, not forgetting the vow of poverty.
- c) See that each friar can freely develop his own talents for the service of the fraternity and of the Church.

2. "Ad extra"

- a) If there be need to hire non-Franciscans for domestic work, the first criterion for choosing one should not be his / her productivity and efficiency but the need of the potential candidate.
- b) Pay a just wage to personnel dependent on us, even in the absence of adequate legislation, putting in first place his /her security in society.
- c) Buy and use as much as possible the products of just and cooperative dealers, even if the cost is above average.
- d) Help, support and eventually join religious and civil groups that fight for justice (e.g., Amnesty International, etc.).
- e) Be interested in political and social activity in the area by helping, supporting and eventually forming groups for the defense of the most marginalized, even at the cost of one's own physical integrity and liberty.
- f) Always and everywhere exercise the right to vote. Then, vote for the parties and movements that strive for greater equality among persons and safeguard the freedom of worship and the dignity of the person.

II. PEACE, Our Sister Everyday.

A. At the provincial level:

1. "Ad intra"

- a) Foster as much as possible moments of fellowship and festivity.
- b) Make known as much as possible the "good works" of the friars; facilitate communication; appreciate one another's work. "Communication increases communion."
- c) Make the evangelical option for nonviolence and antimilitarism.

2. "Ad extra"

- a) Form a group of friars as "emergency peacemakers" (after the example of the International Brigades for Peace - BPA), directly responsible to the provincial minister or the provincial coordinator of JPIC, to be sent to "hot zones" in case of possible conflict. They would contribute, by their nonviolent presence, to peacemaking between the parties. Such provincial groups should be coordinated in their operation by the General JPIC Office.
- b) In the spirit of Assisi, promote a Day of Fasting and Prayer for Peace annually on October 27.

B. At the local level:

1. "Ad intra"

- a) Fraternalize as much as possible with improving good manners, greeting each other daily, and sharing with the brethren our joys and sufferings; pray for each other; commemorate and celebrate birthdays and namedays.
- b) Don't try to always "get in the last word." Accept the opinions of others.
- c) Don't feel that one is the victim of the community. Don't victimize anyone.

2. "Ad extra"

- a) Live minority, being subject to all.
- b) Don't criticize, don't call anyone to judgment, even at the cost of justice.
- c) Publicize and support conscientious objection to military service and conscientious objection to military spending.

III. CREATION, Our Common Home

A. At the provincial level:

1. "Ad intra"

- a) Train the provincial and local treasurers to an ecological mentality.
- b) In the course of initial and ongoing formation, provide courses on "human ecology."

2. "Ad extra"

- a) Buy products in recyclable containers;
- b) Publish everything on recycled paper.
- c) Prefer, when possible, means of transportation using methane or liquid propane gas, even if less efficient.
- d) Buy habit cloth which has been treated as little as possible.

B. At the local level:

1. "Ad intra"

- a) Oppose widespread consumerism by choosing a moderate lifestyle, especially in food and clothing, and as far as possible that which is simple and natural.
- b) Don't favor but OPPOSE whatever is "throwaway" in style.
- c) Separate refuse, especially paper, glass and plastic. Each house should have one or more collection places and persons responsible for collecting the materials.
- d) Live in houses heated with methane or natural gas. Where possible, convert from coal or diesel fuel.
- e) Limit the use of energy and water to what is strictly necessary.

2. "Ad extra"

- a) Encourage, support and join, or eventually form, ecological movements which will educate public opinion in a nonviolent manner and will put pressure on community, provincial, regional and national administrations to adopt measures aimed at saving creation (nature). Example: Differentiated garbage collection, a more ecological system of transportation and industry.
- b) As much as possible, use the bicycle as a means of transportation; it is at once healthy and nonpolluting.
- c) If the bicycle is impossible, use public transportation, preferably those run on electricity, natural gas, or "green" gasoline (in that order).
- d) Cultivate the land using natural fertilizers, not for the most efficient production. Respect seasonal cycles of repose.

e) Buy natural products that produce little pollution.

As we said at the beginning, this is a list of proposals which does not claim to be exhaustive and certainly does not embrace all the possible geographical situations of the Friars Minor. We did, however, try to expand our horizons as widely as we could.

It is up to you, good brother, with your conscience to put into your context the message we have tried to offer you in the light of the Gospel and of our legislation. Bring it into your environment and you can become a sign of the love of God for which there is no substitute. This sign will express itself in a lifestyle that is both sober and joyful, following the example of Saints Francis and Clare.

Roberto Cranchi OFM

• Mission “ad Gentes”

From its very beginning Religious Life appears as the Incarnation of God's radical love for his world, as a sign of the radicalness of the Gospel and as a liberating force transforming the world. It is worth remarking that, from its first appearances, Religious Life was not defined as an expression of the pastoral or charitable activity of the Church, but rather as a visible and legible sign of what it means to be Church at the service of the world. Evangelization “Ad Gentes”, often with its dark and bright sides, has been the work mainly of the Religious, both men and women, lay and clerics. In every period some particular aspect of mission has been emphasized:

- The mission “Ad Gentes” could be described as bringing the civility, the law and order of the Reign of God to illiterate, impoverished and often violent people.
- The mission “Ad Gentes” became a project to Christianize the natives of the New World.
- Our mission “Ad Gentes” was to bring as many people worldwide to the truth, which for us at that time meant, into the Roman Catholic Church.

Mission “Ad Gentes” Today

In the last thirty years not only have our lifestyles, clothing and prayer life changed, but our civil societies have changed with incredible speed. Within the Church there have been strong developments in scripture scholarship and theological reflections, as well as an incorporation of the natural and social sciences into our theologies. Our understandings of God, Church and Mission are being affected by these changes.

For centuries the observation of the sun rising and setting daily on the horizon gave people reason to think that we were the center of the universe and that the sun rotated around us. What began as a casual observation grew into a cosmology, that is, an interpretation of the perception. From this cosmology the Christian Church and western civilization constructed a complete worldview encompassing God's design for the human race, the need for salvation, worship, law, ethics, iconography, etc. The new perceptions of Galileo Galilei were not harmless or mere curious observations. Using a simple new lens Galilei introduced a tremendous shift in the perception of the way humanity understood its place and our solar system within the universe. The experience of the new perception forced the previous cosmology and many of its corollaries to crumble and new ones to take their place. This crisis was not without serious problems. This new information was a tremendous threat to the way Christians had understood God, their world and their place in it. The threat to the cosmological underpinnings of society was so strong that it was not only difficult, but even dangerous, to talk to bishops and to try to convince them to see reality in the new way.

Today we are in a similar time of crisis where our cosmological assumptions are changing. Perhaps the new lens that introduced the beginnings of a new cosmology is the lens of the camera through which we saw the earth from the moon. People all through the world have had the common experience of watching other people break the law of gravity, move into space and from the moon watch our planet rotate like a glowing Christmas ornament suspended against a black sky. Together we watched ourselves and our planet, a globe without borders, fragile, alone and brilliant, from a camera that sat on the moon 280,000 miles away.

Today one half of the human race, the women, are defining themselves and their rights vis-a-vis the other half, the men. This is probably one of the most important discussions in the history of the human family. The world is becoming a global village where more people are interested in spirituality but do not identify with a religion. As we learn more about creation and electronically meet new brothers and sisters throughout the world our perceptions change. We not only see nature and one another differently but our understanding of God changes. Fewer people are frightened by the concept of God. All religions are seen as good and helpful for people's journey. More spiritualities are creation-centered and identified with the struggles of the poor and human rights. Physicists who were previously considered the enemies of religion are now giving us lectures on how matter and spirit are aspects of the same reality and that the base of all matter is spirit.

For the first time in history the whole global family can now be simultaneously affected by the same experience at the same time. Television has united us around a new village fire. We watch the Russian White House in Moscow being attacked; together hundreds of millions of people from every country in the world gasps at the same instant as we watch the winning goal of the World Cup being scored in Paris. We can Tele-fax across closed borders, over the heads of despots, giving people hope as well as updated data about human rights violations. Access to information shifted power from factory production output to information. Information gives people the possibility to make choices for their lives.

Over the last ten years or so we have been witnessing a shift in focus: from an ecclesiocentric and/or exclusively Christocentric model of mission (and also of Religious Life) towards a model which, though thoroughly ecclesial and grounded in true discipleship, is open to the horizon of the world to come, of the "new heaven and the new earth", that is of God's Reign. In this way, it is the Reign of God which defines the identity of the Church and which is also bound to re-define Religious Life within the Church. If the identity of the Church is mission, then the Reign of God and its values (peace, justice, divine filiation and human fellowship, unconditional respect for all life, brotherhood/sisterhood of all the nations under one God) become the goal of the Church's mission.

It seems that contemporary theology has reached a fairly strong consensus about the base for the self-understanding of the Church (also of Religious Life): The center of Jesus' life and ministry was the proclamation of the breaking in of the Reign of God by words, gestures ("deeds") and especially through his death and resurrection. Biblical scholars tell us that Jesus' self-understanding consisted in his being the prophet of that new reality which is called the Reign of God. He speaks about a God who relates to every single human being, to the whole of creation, to history in and through which his love will unfold and grow until the end of time. "The Kingdom of God... is the utopian vision of a society of love, justice, equality, based on the inner transformation or empowerment of human beings. A vision in which people will 'act' and 'live together' differently because they will 'be' and 'feel' themselves differently" (P. Knitter).

Vatican II has placed mission at the very center of the Church's self-understanding: The Church is missionary by its very nature. Mission belongs to the very essence of the Church. One could easily say: The Church's identity is mission. In this perspective

mission does not proceed from a special mandate received from some ecclesial authority, but from baptism itself by which every Christian is initiated into that "communio". A "communio" which is not a closed circle' but rather a living body whose nature consists in the act of sharing and self-giving, much the same as Jesus has given himself away for the sake of the "many". In a very clear sense the Church does not exist for itself. It is rather, as *Lumen Gentium* puts it, the "sacrament" of the communion of humankind and of the whole creation with God, the sacrament of God's salvific and liberating plan for his creation.

Mission and Reverse Mission

When we speak about "mission", it is easy to look for a project, a book to publish, a tract to write, a film to produce in order to communicate the "content of the message" in order to change others' lives for the better. But "mission" is not the same as a certain amount of measurable information to be communicated, taught or handed over. It is an attitude of being sent to announce by presence and/maybe by word the Reign of God.

Seven hundred eighty years ago at the time of the Crusades our brother, Francis of Assisi, traveled to the east with the intention of preaching to the Sultan, the enemy of his people. If the Sultan would convert, then there would be peace. Francis was fortunate because the Sultan was a wise and open man. Rather than be angered by Francis' preaching, the Sultan invited him to live in his camp and to continue their discussions over a period of time. Francis experienced another conversion in his life. He did not become Muslim but he returned to Assisi with a great respect for the "Saracens". He was more deeply evangelized himself than was the Sultan. In the First Rule for our life Francis wrote that the brothers who go among the "Saracens or other unbelievers" should live among these people being "subject to all", quarreling with no one and by their lives give witness to their faith as Christians. If and only when it pleases God should they preach and baptize.

Francis gave us a wonderful model of evangelization and mission. We go into a situation that is foreign to us and we live respectfully with people as we come to understand their ways. We do not argue with them and we do not attempt to preach until God makes it clear that we should do so.

Mission is thus an attitude, a viewpoint, an enlightenment (Buddha) which allows us to see what is really here: to see, to experience the humble and simple God living among us or better put: we living within God. Mission is choosing to have your eyes opened and to be a witness to the Reign of God where spirit and matter are in harmony. It is to believe and to hope in the Reign of God that is around us, that is beneath the surface of life, that is within each person. It is a chosen attitude, a disposition toward peace and toward justice, desiring to see all as it is intended to be by God. It has the ability to bring out what is hidden, like "the steward who brings treasures from the storeroom". It is a way of seeing and understanding the world and its people with faith in the Incarnation of God's Love. There is a marvelous story about St Ignatius Loyola that describes this attitude of faith. When St Ignatius was an old man living in retirement, often he was seen in the garden walking among the flowers. Every so often he would wobble up to a plant that was in full bloom. He would push his cane up against the flowers and gently shake them saying, "I know, I know, do not shout about it so loudly"!

Discipleship - A Basic Attitude for All Times

It was not only the content of Jesus' teaching that captured the apostles' attention. It was also his personal interest in them and his calling power. Calling them to see, to be awake to the Reign of God that was within and around them, so that they could be free to be their true selves. In Simon, Jesus saw the hidden strength of a great leader underneath the vacillation of a coward who loudly denied knowing him before a servant girl in Herod's courtyard; it was the hidden gentleness of James and John who both wanted to call down the fire and brimstone of Sodom and Gomorrea upon the Samaritan town which would not give them night shelter; it was the hidden fairness of Zaccheus who promised retribution to all whom he had cheated; it was the hidden integrity within Matthew the apostle and martyr who had been willing to work for the enemy and to collect tax money from his own people. Our mission is to help those who are blind, deaf or indifferent to experience and respond to the Reign of God that is within and around them.

Questions

Dedication to Reign of God will open up many questions about the way we do things when we go about our mission: For example, what would it mean for us as religious to be in China and go to China in the future? What would be the intent of such a mission? The Chinese have the world's oldest continuous civilization. We believe that God has been loving the Chinese people, living and working among them for thousands of years. So why would we feel called to go live among them? What would we need to tell them? or to ask of them?

What lessons are we learning from our recent experience of evangelization in Rwanda? In other parts of Africa? What about the feasibility of religious communities becoming active NGO's associated with the United Nations? How could we preach or witness our faith that Christ has died, Christ has risen and that Christ will come again to the United Nations community?

When we implant the Church or our institute in other countries how mobile, flexible and poor are we? How respectful is our attitude towards the culture and ways of our hosts? Do we retain the ownership of structures and of the young local Churches? Is now the time when the "young" Churches developed by our Institutes should now become themselves active in "sending" missionaries? Why are there not more missionaries from Africa, Asia, Latin America? Do we evangelize by our witness to evangelical dignity and equality among ourselves - lay and clerics, men and women - since we all are bound together by the same fundamental task of evangelization? Do we export our old problems and divisions to the young Churches?

Challenges

What about the renewal of Religious Life and our mission "Ad Gentes"? Lest we fool ourselves, we need to remember that in nature most renewal is through death. Unless the seed fall to the ground and die it will not produce a grain of wheat. Death opens up the possibility of progress and development, a rebirth to a life that is very different from a prior stage. Maybe we are being prepared for the next planting and like the seed can only believe and hope that the unknown future is within us. Perhaps we are now being pulled into the next period, across the threshold. Often there is resistance whenever creation comes to an evolutionary boundary crossing. New energy is created by the fric-

tion caused by the resistance to evolutionary draw forward. This new energy helps to propel creation into its next stage.

All of our institutes need to adapt, both these at home and those abroad, to the issues surrounding us: the challenge to form smaller groups of Christians living a gospel-inspired life among people who are indifferent, blind or hostile to the Reign of God; learning how to live in international and intercultural communities, not just because of necessity but as a public witness to the solidarity of the human race; working and collaborating together, men with women, women with men; praying and working, on a regular basis, with people of other religions; sharing with the scientific community the message that God has become part of creation; speaking on behalf of those who do not have voice at public meetings such as the World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen), the World Conference on Women (Beijing), the World Conference on Habitat (Turkey).

Lessons about the renewal of Religious Life and our mission "Ad Gentes" can be learned from our smaller brothers and sisters, hydrogen and oxygen molecules, which even though they are so well defined and useful, often merge and find new life when they lose themselves and become our Sister Water, who St. Francis reminds us is precious, useful, chaste and pure. In water, hydrogen and oxygen have a temporary and useful fulfillment that was undreamt. However, each must change, convert, lose itself in order to unite, to become something new. Earlier in history the message of the Incarnation passed from its Jewish home to the west; to Greece and Rome where there was a fusion between the message from the Orient and the culture of the West. In many ways this exchange or union is similar to the fusion of hydrogen and oxygen to make our gentle Sister Water. A question for us: Are we prepared personally or institutionally to bring the molecule of our world and let it merge completely with another's world so that there will be a new understanding of the Incarnation and its ramifications? For example, what if the West were to bring its world of theology and reflection and let it be transformed and inculturated into the teachings of Confucius so that there would be a Chinese Catholic Church?

Much of Religious Life as we knew it is dying and changing into a new life that is yet unknown, undreamt. For the next century, I believe that there will be various experiences of Religious Life in the Church. Not only will they be diverse but they may be functioning out of different ecclesiologies and in very different social situations. In some countries religious communities will prosper as they did fifty, sixty years ago in the north. In other places even with our best intentions and efforts, the answer to our prayers will be fewer numbers and even the disappearance of some communities that served the Church very well in the past. It will also draw out the new forms of Religious Life from the Church for the global society, forms which will be consistent with predecessors in the past but different, perhaps as different as a seed compared to a sapling.

Just as the prospering commune of Assisi was the catalyst for the innovation of Francis and Clare, we can expect that our new world will be the catalyst for the new spiritual leaders, the new forms of life publicly dedicated to God. These new forms of "religious" life will respond in fresh and in bold, different ways to the challenges that come from the evolving global village. They will probably be concerned with opening the eyes of those who cannot see the obvious parts of the Reign of God.

Attention must be drawn to the danger of an incorrect reading of the Religious Life, a danger which exists both in the local Churches of the South as in those of the Northern hemisphere: Some consider only the utilitarian aspect and thus relegate to the background the "raison d'etre", the fundamental charism of Religious Life, which consists in being a humble but nevertheless prophetic sign of God's loving presence in the world and in the whole of creation, in being a sign of the living Spirit which gives birth to an ever new incarnation of the Gospel and witnesses to the coming of the Reign of God within the different cultures of the world. I would like to emphasize the fact that in its deepest dimension, Religious Life is not a resource at the service of pastoral ministry. It is rather essentially important in itself, in and through giving witness to God and the transforming power of the Gospel in the Church and in society. "The apostolate of all religious consists primarily in the witness of their consecrated life, which they are bound to foster through prayer and penance" (CIC 673).

Conclusion:

Some Special Challenges

1. The call to new frontiers

Religious Life refuses boundaries. (Saint Francis: The story of Lady Poverty asking the friars to show her their cells, "Our cloister is the world"). More often than not Religious Life defies strict definitions, the naming of structural elements and geographical limitations. Its very nature is dynamic and not static. Religious Life has often been the primary agent of change within the Church and in society. By its very nature it is a constant pursuit of the "ultimate" in life and history, the continuous search for the fullness of life and of history. Religious Life breathes and celebrates that endtime already now. It is thus proclamation, anticipation and prophecy. Religious Life with its mission "Ad Gentes" is a sign of the Reign of God which is part of the dialectic of the 'already' and the 'not yet'.

Here are some simple questions for your reflection and perhaps your discussion:

- Are we the presence of the Risen Lord in the world?
- Are we the voice of the poor seeking to be heard in a world which is structurally unjust?
- Are we a cry for justice that is not easily silenced?
- Are we the signs and "sacraments" of a compassionate God?
- Are we the alternative to greed, nationalism, consumerism, racism, upward mobility?
- Are we peacemakers, with peace reigning first of all in our own hearts and in our own Institutes?
- Are we a word of hope, a song of encouragement and hope for those who need courage?
- Are we caretakers of our Mother the Earth?
- Are we the gatherers of the alien, the stranger, the widow, the orphan, the migrant, the asylum-seeker, the unemployed, the forgotten?
- Are we a sign of a reconciled Church (the question of being an international Institute..)?
- Are we that special gift to the Church which calls it back to its initial love and discipleship?

2. "Passing over"

Jesus' mission was a personal Passover (*Kenosis*) from what is familiar and secure into a world of sinners, outcasts, the indifferent, the corrupt and the impure. Today, a creative following of Jesus has to contemplate and implement our community's Passover into the lives of the poor, by making our option for the poor a self-emptying into other contexts and other cultures, a true inculturation.

3. Establish an inculturated Church

We speak about the necessity of acting the whole world into the conscious awareness of with integrity to implant a Church which is inculturated but also one which is international ("Catholic"). With having the advantage of history and studies of modern social science today, we should not act impetuously and blindly. We need to be careful to avoid the danger of incommunicability through a superficial and erroneous concept of inculturation. We also need to be cautious of the danger of a new nationalisms which can hide within the language of inculturation and "respect for cultures". An essential part of our mission "Ad Gentes" is to help people avoid being trapped by the destructive elements of tribalism. But before we go to other places to give advice to other brothers and sisters we need to be certain that we have the practice of addressing these same human problems within our institutes.

4. Witness to Gospel Dignity and Equality

This last point brings me to the challenge that we evangelize by our witness to the evangelical dignity and equality that we practice among ourselves. We have continuing historical problems concerning the relationship between lay and clergy, between men and women, and yet all are bound together by the same fundamental task of evangelization. It is important for us as religious institutes to examine ourselves and to ask: Do we export our old problems and divisions to the young Churches? Reconciliation must take place among ourselves on a daily basis if we hope to be witnesses of the Reign of God among other nations, tribes and cultures. The message that we preach by word and deed must be incarnational, that is, it must demonstrate our firm conviction that God takes creation and our societies seriously. Mission "Ad Gentes" must include the wisdom and commitment to the struggle of the poor that is contained within the social teachings of the Church. Our work for justice and peace is an integral part of evangelization. Dialogue is an essential element to our mission "Ad Gentes" - dialogue as evidenced in a public manner by the famous encounter of world religions in Assisi in 1986.

Hermann Schalück OFM

- **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Work in Parochial Ministry**

What we wish to focus on in this section is how can we integrate justice, peace and ecology work within parish ministry?

To help us we offer the following objective: That justice, peace and ecology be a fundamental part of parochial ministry and not just the competence of a few specialists.

Hopefully the following ideas and practical hints might help the parish commitment to justice, peace and ecology. We will look at the following areas:

1. The Triple Ministry of Jesus.
2. The Social and Prophetic Ministries.
3. The Parish and Other Groups.
4. The Education of Leaders.
5. The Understanding of the People.
6. The Role of the Fraternity.

The Triple Ministry of Jesus

Every parish to varying degrees tries to integrate the triple ministry (prophetic, liturgical and social ministries) into its structures and projections.

It is difficult to develop a balanced pastoral approach. Sometimes a ministry of aspects developed to the detriment of others. It is easier to promote and enthuse the people in liturgical and sacramental ministries than for the social and prophetic ones. The objective of a balanced ministry is to make Jesus and his gospel present in its finality and not just aspects that please us or are easier to present.

With clarity on this point, it is easier incorporate justice, peace and ecology into the parish ministry. A good coordination of ministries is fundamental. With this a series of difficulties arises: the self-sufficiency of groups and movements, a breakdown of the unity and the inability to achieve common goals.

We suggest that each parish strive to achieve a coordinated and participative parish council made up of people from the different church groups and ministries. Taking into consideration the pace, the culture and the socio-political and religious situation of the people, it is essential to work out a pastoral plan with priorities that can be evaluated.

The Social and Prophetic Ministries.

The team and commissions responsible for the social and prophetic ministries are directly, but not exclusively responsible for the promotion of justice, peace and ecology in the parish.

According to the parish study of the socio-economic and political reality (diagnosis), where it exists, these commissions can identify areas of human promotion and the most vulnerable groups that require attention. No parish can respond to all the challenges. It is this necessary to make a list of the most important human development priorities to be focussed on and the relevant themes to be reflected upon by the communities and groups of the parish.

If the problem is lack of water, environmental contamination, many displaced people or the rejection of a particular group, it is possible for the parish to engage in a reflective process with the intention of elaborating specific actions to alleviate the situation. Actions should be the fruit of reflection and where possible by the greatest number of parish community members; once the work is carried out, it should be evaluated. Often the results are not as important as the participative process used. Many initiatives will fail, but eventually some will succeed. It is better that projects fail sometimes with everyone involved than the success of a few. It is better to lose a battle and win the war.

At the same time, there will always be specific areas that require immediate action by the few. The number of initiatives or responses to local, national and international problems often isn't the issue, but the coordination of the aforementioned and the information shared with the whole community.

It is not wise to reduce justice, peace and ecology work to a specialized few. If people identify a specific group, knowing human nature, the work will be left to them. All work starts with the few. However, these few should have the overall vision to involve others and be ready to hand over responsibilities and leadership when it is opportune.

The Parish and Other Groups.

1. The parishes aren't the only ones preoccupied with justice, peace and ecology issues. Strength exists to the extent that people are united. The parish should make it its business to get to know all the other groups, organizations and churches that promote life and human dignity: community organizations, political parties, trade unions, associations, municipal councils, Protestant and Orthodox churches, other denominations and religious Orders. Particular attention should be paid to knowing the objectives and projections of the local dioceses and how to coordinate with it.
2. The objectives of all the groups and their practical nature should be critically analyzed.
3. If gospel values are respected, it is better to collaborate with these groups rather than compete with them.
4. It is important to evaluate now and then the coordination and the results of the work to avoid manipulation.
5. The parish should invite other groups to participate in its initiatives where possible and exclude anybody who does not have the right intentions.

Education of Leaders.

1. The leaders of the justice, peace and ecology ministry need an initial and permanent formation: theological, social teaching of the church, Franciscan spirituality, organizational and technical, etc.
2. We suggest that the leaders should have been actively involved for a time in the parish before getting directly involved in justice, peace and ecology issues. It is easy to be swamped or lose the Christian perspective in this work.
3. The promoters need a balanced spirituality.
4. Have had contact with other church groups or at least know them.
5. Appreciated and accepted by the communities.
6. Prudent and capable of risk taking.
7. Not associated with party political leadership.

Understand the People.

Generally people shy away from justice, peace and ecology issues due to fear (in countries of conflict) or because of dualist understanding of holiness or due to badly thought out, poorly supported or failed projects.

One must go at the rhythm of the people. Without a good religious and broadly comprehensive education, not much can be expected. When it becomes obvious that the promotion of life and human rights are a fundamental part of holiness, something can be achieved.

How can one enthuse the people?

1. At the beginning, select projects or simple activities that don't suffocate people. There is nothing like success to motivate.
2. Avoid polemical and risky projects at first.
3. The projects should respond to what the majority feels is important in the beginning.
4. Select responsible and key people: better still if they are motivators.
5. Don't impose projects, no matter how important.
6. Make sure that there is leadership continuity.
7. Clarify objectives and evaluate.

Role of the Fraternity.

1. Accompany the parish diagnostic and planning processes.
2. Listen respectfully to the people's suggestions.
3. Support actively the social ministries initiatives for which justice, peace and integrity of creation has its competence.
4. Support does not necessarily mean the direct involvement or physical presence of the friar.
5. Economic, logistical and motivational support to groups by friars.
6. Avoid protagonism and creating a dependency on the friars.
7. After a while one's participation should become less.
8. We are not eternal in a parish. After we go, the parish community remains along with the justice, peace and ecology work.

Gearoid Ó Conaire OFM

• Word Ministry

Ministry of the Word

Over the centuries, JPIC issues have been part of the friars' word ministry. Because of Anthony's Lenten sermons in 1231, for example, the citizens of Padua passed a law against the imprisonment of debtors. Friar-preachers had a role in the start and spread of pawnshops, allowing people to raise capital without paying high interest rates charged by banks. Writers and preachers have defended the rights of native peoples on several continents. Friars have joined with other parts of the Franciscan Family regarding each of the seven JPIC themes highlighted in Part Two of this Resource Book.

In all of their ministries, the friars face a double challenge identified by St. Francis in the Rule of 1223: to observe the Holy Gospel (chapter one) through a passionate living of the evangelical counsels yet without arrogating to themselves the right to judge those “whom they see wearing soft or gaudy clothes and enjoying luxuries in food or drink” (chapter two). A major reason that Francis of Assisi profoundly influenced his contemporaries and succeeding generations is that he combined a passion for living the Holy Gospel with an acute sense of his own incompleteness in doing so. People have, therefore, seen Francis as an integrated and transparent man, always seeking to respond more generously to God's abundant grace. Francis challenged them and also encouraged them to “begin again.”

When friars have respected the need for humility as well as a passion in living the Gospel, they have succeeded in influencing their contemporaries to improve justice and peace conditions. When friars have excelled in passion for living the Gospel but have lacked humility about their incompleteness in doing so, those friars have been countersigns for the Reign of God and have failed to improve justice and peace conditions.

An imbalance of passion and humility has hampered the evangelical witness of Franciscans in the past and could so do again in the future, in any ministry. Practical experience with the marginalized and the poor will bear rich fruit in every friar's life and ministry. Below are a few possibilities for addressing JPIC concerns through popular preaching, writing and radio/TV/multimedia--regardless of whether friars consciously make a connection between life/ministry and JPIC issues.

Writing

- popular-level articles in Franciscan or other publications regarding initiatives related to the seven themes in Part Two of this Resource Book,
- interviews with Franciscans and others prominent in those seven areas,
- writing Letters to the Editor to praise good articles about JPIC concerns or to protest misrepresentations (e.g., caricatures) in these areas,
- promoting reconciliation within the Church and the human family,
- for Franciscan publications, ensuring justice for staff members regarding wages, pensions and promotions,
- maintaining contact with friars more on the frontlines of these issues (e.g., their contributions in provincial newsletters, visits or personal letters to and from such

- friars),
- engaging in direct part time ministries in one of these seven areas (e.g., prison chaplaincy, soup kitchen, advocacy work), and
- doing scholarly writing (journal articles or books) regarding these seven areas and others related to JPIC.

Radio/TV/Multimedia

- special or continuing broadcasts regarding these seven themes, using interviews as much as possible,
- some radio stations, for example, have regular programs to promote literacy or improve health education,
- use of friar-missionaries and other friars for interviews,
- cooperating with other groups (religious or secular) in producing programs to address these seven themes,
- producing programs addressing these seven themes for use at the provincial or conference level, and
- justice for staff members regarding wages, pensions and promotions.

Parish Missions

- refer to twinning of parishes (within the same diocese, country or on the international level) as something already done or a possibility to be explored,
- reconsider talks already developed; possibly incorporate new material from one or more of these seven themes,
- personal testimony of the preacher about his growing appreciation for one or more of these seven themes,
- to prepare people for the sacrament of reconciliation, incorporate elements from these seven themes into the examination of conscience (e.g., telling racist or sexist jokes),
- urge listeners to become better informed regarding these seven themes,
- consider giving all or part of the mission in a team format with a woman,
- use appropriate AV materials for these themes, and in the talks, address the danger of a privatized religion which has no social consequences.

Retreats

- develop talks incorporating as many of these seven themes as feasible,
- encourage retreatants to reconsider the place of these seven themes in their life, especially their changing understanding of a particular theme and their possibilities for direct action concerning it (e.g., volunteer work),
- use appropriate AV materials for these themes,
- consider giving all or part of the mission in a team format with a woman,
- ask your contact person for this group about the status or recent history of any of these seven themes for that group,
- make reference wherever possible to local initiatives regarding these seven themes,
- recommend books, magazines or movies to continue the retreatants' education and reflection on these seven themes, and share personal experiences of growth regarding these themes.

Patrick McCloskey OFM

• Education Ministry

“If we are to reach peace in the world, we shall have to begin with the children. And if they will grow up in their natural innocence, we won’t have to pass fruitless ideal resolutions, but we shall go from love to love and peace to peace, until at last all the corners of the world are covered with peace and love for which consciously or unconsciously the whole world is hungering.” Mahatma Gandhi

“... The nations have been brought up with wrong goals. Our schoolbooks glorify wars and cover their atrocities. They indoctrinate children with hatred. I would rather learn peace than hatred, rather love than war. The schoolbooks have to be rewritten. Instead of perpetuating old conflicts and prejudices, educational systems must be filled with a new spirit. Our education begins in the cradle: the mothers of the entire world have responsibility to educate their children in a sense of everlasting peace...”

Albert Einstein

Introduction

We know that for most friars, time and resources are already stretched to the limit. We see that there are tremendous efforts in the educational ministry already underway. Nevertheless we would like to highlight peace and integrity of creation within this ministry - issues that have been somehow neglected by the educational structures all over the world. Since many of our brothers are actively involved in teaching, they can be promoters of these issues, which are essential part of the Franciscan charisma. This Resource Book and this article are not an attempt to be a comprehensive program for universal use. Rather, we look to the commitment and creativity of the friars to influence the necessary changes in their countries’ educational systems in order to include justice, peace and integrity of creation in the content and curricula of schools. We encourage friars to help communicate the importance of teaching justice, peace and integrity of creation, i.e. teaching concern about others, especially the poor and those on the margins of society; reflecting Christian and Franciscan teachings on justice, community and safeguarding of creation.

General outlook

In the contemporary climate of tension among nations with the power to destroy our sister, Mother Earth, the need to develop new initiatives in educating for justice, peace and safeguarding of creation is evident. It is no longer adequate to learn how to avoid conflict but how to promote the positive art of peacemaking; nor is it sufficient to develop new technology to solve the ecological problems in place of developing a loving responsibility for creation. The physical survival of the life on earth and the spiritual survival of human race demand that education for justice, peace and integrity of creation become the core subject of education and not only one theme in it. Such education is understood in the broadest sense as a grassroots pedagogy to be employed in a wide variety of settings. It focuses on the goal of fostering respect for the otherness of all human beings and of all creation and leads toward an ultimate goal of loving them. In an attitude acquired through this type of education, the *realpolitik* of political thinking and of political peace efforts as well as of "sustainable development" may fail to bear witness to "reality." This kind of education may lead to a call for an alternative politics which would enlarge "realism" of *realpolitik* to encompass the reality of authentic

reconciliation among human beings and of "sustainable development" to consider the good of non-human creation.

There is much conflict in the schools all over the world, conflict that too frequently takes a destructive course. It goes unresolved and tensions build up; assaults on children, teachers and property are commonplace. Educational institutions, which should provide a positive environment for resisting the drift toward violence, are seldom effective in dealing with the cause of antisocial behavior. They often retreat to measures of security and take hostile actions against the offenders.

Yet the very attempt to stamp out violence by methods which are themselves violent towards children and youth in conflict only confirms that violence is an acceptable, if not preferable, method of solving problems in a particular society. Such methods are dehumanizing and fail to provide youngsters with positive alternatives to violent patterns of behavior. They learn more from the ways we respond to aggression and conflict than they will learn from our words. What we say is important, but it has to correspond with what we do.

Many people never develop the attitudes and skills to handle productively the conflicts they face in the course of their lives. Much of their knowledge of handling conflict is acquired haphazardly and in contexts which emphasize destructive methods (television, video and movies). If children were systematically taught how to manage conflicts constructively, they would become less vulnerable to emotional disorders, suicide, violence and other forms of antisocial behavior. Beyond this, we must prepare the younger generation to deal constructively with the conflicts that inevitably occur among nations in our nuclear age.

Nonviolence isn't just about ending wars. It's also about creating peace in our own hearts. To teach peace through nonviolence is to give the young a chance to develop a philosophy of force: the force of justice, of love, of sharing wealth, of organized resistance to corrupt power, the force of ideas. Schools should arm students with ideas and expose them to the history, techniques and practitioners of nonviolence. To choose to live by philosophy of nonviolent force is to choose Jesus over Caesar, Saint Francis over Napoleon, etc. Courses on nonviolence should begin in kindergarten and first grade and then continue through elementary school, junior high and senior high school.

It is often unrealistic to hope to resolve conflicts with nonviolent force (negotiation, compromise, organized resistance, non-co-operation, civil disobedience, civilian-based defense) because these methods are rarely taught in schools. Until recently, teaching of nonviolent conflict resolution skills has been largely relegated to private and pacifist-oriented schools. The effect of the schools' neglecting peace courses is peace illiteracy. Not only should peace be given a chance, but also it should be given a place in the curriculum.

But instead of assigning blame, each of us needs to ask what more we can be doing to reform the schools. It is student themselves who must supply the moral pressure to get peace courses. We have to teach them that this world is theirs and so is the future; to teach them to think of the world they want to live in, what they need to build it and then demand to be taught that.

H. Felder described (1923) the Franciscan movement as “the biggest peace action ever assumed, and the biggest peace ideal ever proclaimed.” The necessity of living this ideal has always been current and challenging for Franciscans. We are challenged to transform the global culture of violence in the direction of a culture of peace. We can find guidance in our great Christian and Franciscan tradition. With opened minds and receptive hearts, peace can be taught and learned.

We have the responsibility to inspire in younger generations the determination and ability to resolve conflict without using weapons. A world in which people can become sophisticated in the skills of problem solving, dialogue and negotiation is a world in which we are educating for survival.

Practical suggestions

To teach successfully, education has to be firmly directed toward practice, i.e. toward the concrete interactions among inhabitants of our common Mother Earth. It is often considered that by acquiring knowledge we are already altering the situation at hand. But we do not. Acquiring knowledge may alter a situation only if this knowledge guides one’s actions and words while interacting with other persons. Consequently, basic principles of education for peace and safeguarding of creation, which involve learning positive reciprocity and unlearning damaging reification, must be put into practice if they are to yield positive results.

Many opportunities exist for religious education programs to focus on Catholic social teaching regarding justice, peace and integrity of creation. Those involved in religious education programs and teaching in schools may want to consider some of the following ideas.

Some suggestions for peace education:

- Incorporating the concern for justice, peace and integrity of creation contained in Scriptures and Franciscan tradition into ongoing educational programs and school curricula.
- On the level of the OFM conference, elaborate manuals, brochures, leaflets, posters, etc. with topics of social and ecological justice and peace.
- Encouraging children to face the anguish of their freedom by making choices and accepting responsibility for those choices (teaching them that responsibility is no punishment but natural consequence).
- Educating youngsters to identify less with their social roles than with their tasks as complete human beings.
- Providing an educational milieu that values and encourages the talents of all children.
- Providing games and educational materials that encourage the development of cooperation as well as competition.
- Encouraging children and students to learn about and offer services to poor children and elderly people as part of their religious education program.
- Sponsoring special projects such as essay contests, visits to local agencies serving needy children, elderly people, poor citizens, etc.
- Providing guest speakers for some school meetings throughout the year (e.g. human rights activists, social workers, ecologists, missionaries, etc.)
- Providing educational opportunities for children in the developed countries to learn about children and cultures of developing nations.

- Practice naming different feelings such as anger, frustration, intimidation, etc. to be able to transform them into creative acts of getting closer to each other.
- Discussing violence in TV programs.
- Promoting a commitment to charity and justice by, e.g., organizing the collection of money which would otherwise be spent, for instance, on buying firecrackers, for Christmas presents, etc.
- Classes could be encouraged to adopt a child in need, providing friendship, assistance, letters, etc. It is important to put a human face on poverty, sickness, etc. Valuable lifetime lessons can be learned from such contact.
- Planning events for disabled children with school children or students.
- Participating in letter writing campaigns or other activities which promote political responsibility and Christian role in shaping policies affecting justice, peace and integrity of creation.
- Planning events that create opportunities for recreational, social and spiritual nourishment, e.g. class retreat, sporting events, parties in nature.
- Sacramental preparation for Confession, First Communion and Confirmation could include drawing attention to Christian responsibility for the state of the world, for social justice, peace and deterioration of creation in order to develop a sound Christian sense of solidarity.
- Planning supervised travel that includes cross-cultural dialogue.
- Taking part in organizing different events on international or national level and trying to include themes of justice, peace and integrity of creation.
- Establishing scholarship funds to help send young people to different national and international events in which the issues of social and ecological justice are dealt with.
- Inviting youth from other classes, schools or parishes to ongoing activities in one's own class, school or parish.

Some hints more oriented to discovering our kinship with nature:

- Trying to integrate ecology in the educational structures.
- Making nature a place of meditation in practicing symbolic (i.e., sacramental) attitude toward nature, giving each creature its name which represents its dignity; using the mystery of nature as a source of inspiration for prayer.
- Celebrating the feast of creation (shabbat) at different occasions, especially at the feast of thanksgiving for the fruits of the Earth.
- Organizing excursions in nature where Mass can be celebrated on different themes such as on brotherhood of God's creatures.
- On the regular basis providing information on the impact which the economy has on the environment and on the relationship between rich and poor countries, areas, nations and peoples.
- Cooperating with the organizations involved in safeguarding of creation and directing certain projects.
- Teaching children to express their happiness and thankfulness in contact with water, air, fire, earth, animals, etc.
- Taking part in children's affection with the beauty and mystery of creation and encourage them to be moved by their amazement to a deep happiness.
- Encouraging children and students to quietly watch a thing until it starts "to watch" us and speak to it till it starts "to speak" to us about its value and place in the life on earth.
- Organizing song contests, essay writing, drawing and painting contests on the different topics in the field of integrity of creation.

- Developing the spirit of vulnerability and sympathy for the weakest in nature--for all human beings and other creatures who suffer.
- Organizing tree planting.
- Organizing actions of collecting recyclable materials in the countries or areas where it is not organized.
- Getting the children used to sharing things and to encouraging adults to share cares, some equipment, etc.
- Using ecological themes as the basis of different ecumenical events.
- Representing a stand that the best protection of nature is gained by new picture of people and their role among other God's creatures.
- Not ever getting tired of praising God and thanking him for the life on earth and for his presence in his creation.

“Peace education is a celebration of life. It will not eliminate conflict. However, conflict can become the impetus for creative cooperative problem solving, empowering a new generation of young people to deal constructively with war, poverty, hunger, racism, environmental degradation, and injustice. Peace Education is not static but active involvement” (Alice Friedman).

Bo_e Vuleta OFM

• Formation Ministry

Ratio Formationis Franciscanae (OFM)

Introduction

There are a multiplicity of references to justice, peace and caring for creation in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*. Unless we can translate these inspiring sentiments into concrete actions, we have nothing to offer to the marginalized, the poor and oppressed of our world. As the former General John Vaughn said in 1985: “We have many documents and words. What the world expects from us are actions.”

What we hope to do in this section is share with you some of these concrete actions that are taking place in provinces around the world. There are obviously many more that won't be referred to here, but hopefully these examples will encourage our friars both in initial and ongoing formation to continue to struggle for a more just and peaceful world in harmony with all of creation.

There are many references to justice, peace and the caring of creation in the *Ratio*. We have chosen six subtitles under which some sections of the *Ratio* are quoted and concrete examples given of lived experiences in the provinces. These subtitles are: Fraternity, Presence, The Voice of the Voiceless, Critical Consciousness, Openness to All, Ongoing Formation.

I. Fraternity:

- a) # (RFF 18)
- # (RFF 21 a)
- # (RFF 28 b)

b) Lived experiences

1) Friars who have practical experiences of involvement in justice, peace and caring for creation issues, in the broadest sense of the word, are invited to share their ideas and struggles with the friars in initial formation. This contact has proved extremely beneficial in many provinces. Younger friars often attribute their later involvement in specific ministries to encouragement by and the testimony of their older confreres.

2) In Africa, USA, Central America and India, friars from different cultural and language groups participate together in initial formation. Some provinces encourage their young friars to study, work or live with friars from other cultures for a period of time during their early formative years. This encourages tolerance and prepares friars for future international challenges together.

II. Presence:

- a) # (RFF 22 b)
- # (RFF 25 a)
- # (RFF 32 a)
- # (RFF 155)

b) Lived experiences

1) Insertion among the poor in small fraternities is common practice in many provinces. In the Philippines, Brazil, Central America, Germany, Italy and Colombia, most friars at some stage in or during all of initial formation live in an inserted community among the poor. The friars do all the house chores themselves. In some cases they cooperate in parishes. Others work in a variety of church and secular apostolates to earn their living. They are generally economically self-sustaining.

Because of the proximity to the people and the simplicity of their lifestyle, the friars have the opportunity to experience the day-to-day struggles of the people, thus giving their theological and academic reflections a more realistic and practical slant.

The novices of the Santa Barbara Province of California spend their second year of novitiate living in a marginalized area on the outskirts of Guatemala City. They learn Spanish and live among the poor for a year before commencing formal studies or trades.

2) Contact with the marginalized:

Most provinces encourage the friars in post-novitiate formation to visit and share with prisoners, the sick, refugees, drug addicts, the elderly and lepers, etc.

3) Support for local organizations

Many provinces (Basque, Central American, Brazilian, Korean, South African) encourage their young friars to participate in and support local community organizations both religious and civil, whose objectives are the betterment of the community. Instead of promoting parallel organizations, solidarity with those already struggling for justice, peace and the caring of creation places the friars alongside the people rather than in leadership positions.

4) In many provinces, young friars take a break from their studies and give a year or more of service to their provinces. Some go to missionary territories of their own or other provinces and work with the poor. Others accompany marginalized groups at home, usually where the friars already have commitments.

III. The Voice of the Voiceless

a) # (RFF 25 b)

(RFF 34 b)

b) Lived experiences

1) Involvement in provincial commissions for justice, peace and caring for creation
In Central America young friars are encouraged to involve themselves in the work of justice, peace and the caring for creation commission. They form an integral part of the team, which does not depend solely on the friars formally appointed by the provincial administration. Some of these friars have been encouraged to prepare themselves in relevant areas through participation in short-term courses, seminars, etc., both at home and abroad. Thus the province is taking steps to insure continuity and preparedness for the future.

2) Friars in many provinces directly and indirectly support organizations that tirelessly work for human rights, i.e., Amnesty International, etc. They join a local branch of the organization and write to governments and relevant authorities, seeking the release of prisoners, many of whom are deprived of their rights and are systematically abused.

IV. Critical Consciousness

- a) # (RFF 32 b)
- # (RFF 79)
- # (RFF 162)

b) Lived experiences

In some provinces the friars set aside an agreed on period of time during their monthly community chapters, to reflect together on themes and issues related to justice, peace, and caring for creation. One of the friars prepares a short analysis about what has been happening at a local and national level in the social, economic, political and religious fields. The others then share whatever they know and whatever consequences this has or might have for the friars and the people. If there are any practical implications, specific tasks are decided upon and responsibilities assigned.

V. Openness to all and rejection of violence

- a) # (RFF 21 b)

b) Lived experiences

1) The friars in the Basque country refuse to do military service, which is obligatory for everyone in Spain. They also refuse to do community or civil services, which are offered as alternatives. In the context, they feel that these services prop up the military ethos. For their objections many have faced up to one-year imprisonment.

2) Sharing Living Space with the Poor

In Australia, Singapore and Thailand, the friars offer hospitality to people suffering from AIDS, sharing their living space with them. Other provinces have openly declared their houses as sanctuaries to refugees, both political and economic. The Irish, some Italian and U.S. Provinces have handed over either permanently or provisionally sections of their buildings for work with the poor and marginalized: drug addicts, AIDS patients, street children, etc.

In Uruguay, the friars in association with the Franciscan Family has opened one of their houses to non-governmental organizations involved in human rights and promotion work, as well as reflecting on these challenges from our charism.

VI. Ongoing Formation

- a) # (RFF 58)

b) Lived experiences

1) Provincial Gatherings

Many provinces organize on a regular basis (on a yearly or every two to three years) a provincial gathering to reflect on justice, peace and caring for creation issues. All the friars are invited. In most cases, the local promoters participate. The purpose is to share work experiences and to agree on future involvement. In some provinces, these gatherings are organized in conjunction with the Franciscan Family. Simply professed friars are encouraged to participate.

2) Many friars join local community organizations that struggle for the betterment of their areas. In general, they avoid protagonistic positions of leadership. Other friars join support groups and work at home to raise consciousness about justice, peace and caring for creation issues in other countries, continents and cultures.

Gearoid Ó Conaire OFM

PART FOUR

APPENDIX

1. Option for the Poor – Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the General Chapters and Plenary Councils 1971-1997
2. Biblical Texts
3. Franciscan Texts
4. Social Teaching of the Church
5. Option for The Poor – Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the General Constitutions
6. Selection of texts on JPIC in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae*
7. Characteristics of Franciscan Work for JPIC
8. Addresses
9. Prayers from Various Faith Traditions

**Option for the Poor, Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
In the General Chapters and Plenary Councils 1971-1997**

General Chapter Medellín 1971

Formation of the Friars Minor

Chapter I - The Franciscan Vocation

8.- Poor with the poor, less with those who are less

These and many other similar aspirations can be practiced, and in fact are being carried out in many ways. Isn't it true that these reflect as well St. Francis' original intuition? - the insight of a man who was fraternal, poor, small, an instrument of peace burning with the desire to live a Gospel life, making known the "love that is not loved."

St. Francis' contemporaries recognized in him the Gospel fully restored, when he yearned to follow Christ to the height of contemplation at Mount Tabor and also to the Passion on Mount Calvary, fostering charity in human hearts, teaching them by his example and by his word to live in peace with all, recognizing the dignity and equality of our neighbor. Francis wanted his friars to be poor with the poor and to be less with those who are less.

10- Insertion in the world, a point of attraction

If our Order, remaining faithful to its Holy Founder, were capable of inserting itself in today's world, devoting itself to the world's great causes, the Order could easily attract to itself some who, moved by an inner desire for complete commitment, long to live real values.

Chapter Iii - Specific Elements of Formation

1. The marks of a Franciscan life

24.- Love of God and people.

Living in God's love above all else expresses the Franciscan way of life. This love, as is evident, includes people, too. It is the same to clothe oneself in Christ as to love every person and to show oneself kindly and good to all created beings.

The Friar Minor, following the apostolic life of Christ and the apostles, yearns to be a sign, giving witness to the coming of God's Kingdom, with a joyful, humble, simple, serene and fully human life. He promises to measure himself continually against the Gospel, under the light of which he is always ready to begin again.

Immersed in a particular human life, a Franciscan seeks to understand St. Francis' apostolic spirit, that his every activity may be inspired from within. By giving witness and preaching, he strives to refer to the Gospel every social and cultural situation in

today's world.

26.- Littleness

Littleness, like fraternity, is another essential mark of our life. The Franciscan religious is *minor* insofar as he works to conform himself to the Lord in the *kenosis*, following Him in humility and in meekness, quick to serve God with a filial and joyous obedience, while quick to serve all the brothers, ready even to take the lowest place. The friar minor, while seeking a proper shaping of the Church and the Order to present times in order to bring all to God, rejects every form of domination over others. He is ready to suffer, with a healthy and humble audacity, misunderstandings and dangers, too. Littleness must not be mistaken for weakness.

Littleness makes of each brother in the Fraternity an instrument of peace, preparing each Franciscan to sacrifice serenely his own possibilities, making each one ready for renunciation, depending upon the needs of the common good: work, change of residence and activity, availability for service without recompense, etc. Franciscans are to be prepared even to constitute in the Church, should it be needed, an available (substitute) service group. But being little is neither superficiality nor impotence; on the contrary, it calls instead for a necessary skill and for persevering labor.

50. Material and spiritual poverty.

St. Francis reminded all his friars that Christ had lived poor and as a pilgrim, and not only He, but the Blessed Virgin and the disciples, too, and Francis encouraged them to follow that example. Thus, educators will strive to have their students collaborate in living such littleness, a mark of our fraternity. By their lives and words, they will teach the brothers to be small and to be subject to every human being for love of God.

This implies a continuing self-denial and a true humility. We mustn't become vain over the good that the Lord says and does through us, but rather we must accept our being considered as low, as simple and despised; for a man is what he is before God, and nothing more.

The friars' formation is attained through a life of poverty: may their housing be simple, located in modest places. But it is well not to confuse poverty with filth or with neglect. May contacts with the poor be fostered, both in order to know their difficulties and dreams, as to perceive, not seldom, their truly Gospel sense of participation and solidarity.

May the friars, like St. Francis, rejoice when they find themselves among the lowly and despised, among the poor and weak, among the ill and among beggars.

4. Formation for communicating with the world

52. Present in the world.

May a true candidate formation unfold as well at a level preparing them for the world of which they are members and in which they must work.

Franciscan life is not a flight from the world, but rather, in the pattern of the Incarnate Word, it is a life in the world, that they may give witness to the certainty of transcendent reality, discovering the goods which God has placed in the world, so that these may be expressed and used for life, directed toward God as signs.

Insertion in the world should reflect the candidate's level of human, professional and spiritual maturity. But insertion should be understood according to the spirit of St. Francis. He worked hard among the people, yearning to withdraw to the desert, imitating Christ in his prayer and communion of life with the Father. And in this way Francis demonstrated that he lived in the world, yet that he was not of the world, but that he gave himself to others.

Besides the friars' ordinary relationships with their own family, they must consider useful their occasional contacts and tasks among every kind of people, for which the candidates learn and perceive people's particular character and psychology, the opportunities that must form part of their apostolate, and the fact that celibacy and marriage can complement one another mutually in God's Church.

53. Attentive to the social reality

It will also be useful to establish a fitting relationship with all the educational social media, that these may foster the students' evolution. But it must be kept in mind that in this vast and complex social reality, educators should help the candidates, not to be mere passive spectators, but rather to acquire a critical stance vis-a-vis the goods and influence of today's world.

The friars should also be formed in matters of understanding and evaluating social phenomena, in order that tomorrow they may imbue the mentality, customs, laws and structures of the society where they live with a Christian spirit. Thus, insofar as it is up to them, Franciscans collaborate by their words and lives in the bringing on of a more humane and just temporal order.

7. Formation for Ecumenism

59. A universal mentality

Today's ecumenical movement calls for a formation that takes into account the need to enlighten candidates' minds in a true sense of the universal.

Besides an assiduous study of ecumenical theology or an introduction to this subject, the friars are to be given an opportunity or occasion to express their ecumenical spirit via friendly and informal dialogue, through common prayers and discussions of controversial topics with non-Catholics or with people of other religions, but always according to the norms of the Church, which has made clear her concern and her intention on this matter of such importance.

General Chapter Medellín 1971

Missions in the Franciscan Order

5. The Fraternity: Service to Humanity

It is our firm belief that, for these times, the life of Fraternity in imitation of Christ and St. Francis can be the means of great service to mankind; and what we want to see is our Fraternity actually serving the needs of the men of today.

The Son of God walked the ways of a true Incarnation that he might make men sharers in the divine nature. He became poor for our sakes, though he had been rich in order that his poverty might enrich us. The Son of Man came not that he might be served; but that he might be a servant and give his life as a ransom for the many - that is, for all.

6. Collaboration in Our Fraternities

We cherish the hope that our fraternities will be at the disposal of our fellow men that they will help others to realize the Gospel values of human dignity, total development and true liberation in order “to make it possible to pass a better critical judgment upon, and to elucidate a fundamental notion that remains as the basis of modern societies as their motive, their measure and their goal: namely, progress”.

Chapter II: People Living in Communities Are Our Mission

Not To Lands, But To People

7. Our mission is not to lands but to people - to particular and local communities - to whom the Father speaking through the Church, sends us. The people to whom we go may be people of no faith. Whoever they are, we desire to be their brothers, their friends, their servants. We have however, a very special place in our hearts for those people who long for a new meaning of life, for those who thirst for the fullness of truth, for human dignity, justice and freedom, for the poor and the sick, the neglected or rejected of the world. More than ever before, we are determined to live among them and for them.

In our times a special obligation binds us to make ourselves the neighbor of absolutely every person, and of actively helping him when he comes across our path - whether he be an old person abandoned by all, a foreign laborer unjustly looked down upon, a refugee, a child born of an unlawful union and wrongly suffering for a sin he did not commit, or a hungry person who disturbs our conscience by recalling the voice of the Lord: "As long as you did it for one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it for me."

Chapter V: We Are Men of Peace

18. No Peace without Justice

We friars cannot be blind to the hard realities that confront many of our brothers in many parts of the world today. It is an undeniable fact that in many areas human misery, poverty and injustice have reached a boiling point. “Peace is development” is our stand! However, peace is not possible in the absence of justice.

19. Authentic Witnesses Accepting Risks

We believe that Christian life is basically a conversion to the Crucified and Risen Christ, and the consequent concrete witness of that conversion. As followers of Francis we must be authentic witnesses of the Gospel, who serve our people with loyalty and

dedication, and we must be ready to accept any risks that must be taken for the sake of peace, justice, persecution and the Kingdom of God.

20. Men of Peace, But Not of Compromise

Faithful to our vocation, we are basically “men of peace” - but not of compromise; and the peace to which we dedicate ourselves is that which is the fruit of true justice and love. When there is question of violent revolution, the general norm or rule for Christians is to disapprove it; but Christians also recognize that there is a theological, social, and juridical tradition allowing for the use of violence in certain cases.

Madrid General Chapter 1973

The Vocation of the Order Today

Chapter IV. Brothers Among Men

12. Not Alone, But with Brothers. The Lord has called us to live according to the Gospel, not alone but within a community of brothers. It is within and because of this community that our vocation is brought to maturity, for it is the privileged place of our encounter with God. It is our wish not only to live side by side, striving towards the same goal and helping one another to reach it, but to turn towards one another in mutual love, according, to the example and commandment of the Lord. We must look upon one another as brothers with mutual respect, make known our needs with simplicity, render one another the humblest of services, avoid disputes, grumbling, anger, negative judgment - in sum, love one another in deed and not in word only, but all with the tenderness of a mother for her children.

15. Undiscriminating Love. The truly fraternal community is not a reality that is closed upon itself, but one whose dynamism reaches out to all men, for they are all revelations of Christ. We must love and receive with kindness both friend and enemy, whether they come to us or we go to them. Along with those who desire it, we can also search for new forms of Christian life in the style of the Franciscan family. **While recognizing the fact that our world is divided into social classes and ideological categories, we refuse to judge and to condemn men by virtue of these classifications.** As witnesses to the Gospel, it is not our lot, in our contacts with men, to indulge in disputes or to practice proselytism, even of a religious nature; we wish simply to be peacemakers, without pretension, courteous, joyful, submissive to everyone, practicing non-resistance if necessary, remaining convinced that we are the servants of a Word that is far greater than we. By a love both lucid and gentle, we must bear witness to the pricelessness of each person.

16. Liberating the Oppressed and the Oppressors. We are in a world where economic, social and political structures bear down on men from all sides and through subtle forms of manipulation, make true freedom impossible. **We cannot be indifferent to such a state of affairs, nor in collusion with any situation where man cannot live as man because he is either underdeveloped or exploited.** Therefore, in the name of justice and charity and precisely for the sake of being faithful to our vocation as “heralds of peace,” we are called to battle against these evils and to work for the liberation of both the oppressed and the oppressors, proclaiming to them conversion and faith in the Gospel.

Chapter V. Servants of All

18. Rejecting the Desire of Power. The name of Friars (Brothers) Minor which we bear expresses both the requirement of fraternity and that of humble service ("minority"). Already within our group we are invited to obey one another (Rule of 1221, Art. 5) and, when a position gives us a certain authority, to exclude all domination and desire for power, to render the humblest of service.

19. Order of Little Brothers. With regard to all men, and submitted to all creatures because of God, we must present ourselves, both as a community and as individuals, as little ones, servants, of whom no one is afraid because we seek only to serve, not to rule or to impose ourselves, especially for spiritual purposes. An attitude of this kind requires a childlike spirit, littleness, simplicity, a determined optimism in the face of men and of events. We must accept insecurity of institutions and of ideas, uncertainty about the future, recognizing that we are weak and vulnerable, "worthless servants" (Lk. 17:10), and that only God is strong. In this manner we will contribute our share to the splendor of the face of the Christian community, which is also the face of her Lord, who came to serve and not to be served.

Chapter VI. Disciples of Christ the Poor One

20. Our Permanent Challenge. Our rule and our life are to follow the footsteps of Jesus Christ in all things. Since he made himself poor for us we are called to serve the Lord in poverty and humility living as strangers and pilgrims in the world. The living of poverty in its twofold social and spiritual dimension is our particular and permanent challenge.

22. Living like Little Ones. Today we must discover how we, in a different socio-economic situation, can maintain the essentials of the choice of our poverty. **In the past, the Order, constantly drawn to the radical poverty of Francis, has always reacted, with greater or lesser force, to the tendency to become too well established materially.** We are all invited to seek how to express the same exigency today. Lack of landed property, subsistence assured by work, precarious employment, are nowadays the normal condition of a great many people, but greater still is the vast number who live in inhuman conditions. It is in this direction, having regard for local situations, that we should search in order to learn to live like the little ones of today. While participating in the present situation, but not accepting any structures which keep so many of our fellow human beings in misery, we strive to be, along with them, the leaven of a new society called to total participation in the salvation of Christ (cf. Rom. 11:12).

23. Free and Less Encumbered. If we learn to live this way, we will play a role of challenge within a society largely geared to production and consumption. **Having no properties, living by our work, in a simple, modest, dignified way, refusing to bow to publicity which has only the consumer world in mind, we will give the true meaning to material goods, bringing ourselves closer to the poor, the marginal, and also to all those people who have found no meaning in a society of abundance and are looking for a life that is freer and less encumbered.**

24. Free of Fear. Our poverty also implies sharing. What we have, we share not only among ourselves, but we also seek to give to help others who are in need, whether

material or spiritual. Freed of all fear by the poverty we have chosen, joyfully living the hope that is based on the Promise, we can give witness to the men of our time that the world has a meaning which surpasses it and draws it towards a future which we call Jesus Christ.

25. Ecology and Fraternal Humanity. In line with the *Canticle of Brother Sun*, we will extend our fraternal concern to nature herself, today threatened by the avaricious and irresponsible conduct of an industrialized, consumer-oriented society. The earth we have received is a gift from God who loves us. **It is our wish to humanize it through a dominion which will make it totally fraternal, at the service of all.** Thus, we ally ourselves with a major preoccupation of our times while making clear the reason for our attitude: this creation originates from Love, which gives it meaning. Its meaning lies in the emergence of a fraternal humanity, gathered in Christ, through whom and for whom the world was created.

Chapter VIII. Messengers of Peace in Our World

31. The New Humanity. The essential mission of our fraternity, its vocation in the Church and in the world, consists in the lived reality of our life-commitment. We believe that by striving to live our faith-experience in the midst of the community of men, by creating a fraternity of love and of service open to all, by living in poverty and earning our way, by sharing in the hopes of those who are poor, we can present an initial picture of the new humanity gathered around the resurrected Jesus. Our contribution to the building up of the Church is first of all of this order: it is by our way of life that we bear witness.

33. In the Heart of the City. Our desire to create, in the very heart of the city, a fraternal community, where men of diverse types and backgrounds share life, goods, work; a fraternity which renounces all dominion in order to serve, which chooses a lifestyle that brings it close to the poor and makes it sensitive to the lot of all who are oppressed, creates, whether we wish it or not, both social and political repercussions. **We must take care not to confuse this desire with any particular political current or to let it be used by any of them; rather, we must strive to push the demands of the Beatitudes to the limit.** Thus we will show the possibility—though in a relative way, for no human accomplishment can be identified with the Kingdom of God—of having a community where a man is free, recognized as a brother, respected for his worth.

34. Social and Political Struggles. Starting there and taking into account our vocation as men of peace, we will be able to take part truly in the problems plus the social and political struggles of our day. This requires serious and correct information so that we can avoid sentimental enthusiasms, summary unjust judgments, irresponsible declarations, and will be capable of an objective analysis of situations. **In addition, if we seriously try to live in justice and in mutual sharing, if we take part, according to our possibilities and gifts, in the fate and in the work of the poor and the abandoned of our times, we will then have the right and the duty of joining our voices with those of the oppressed.** But we will do so out of love for the person we discover in every man, regardless of the social group to which he may belong. Thus, working as true peacemakers, we will hasten the coming of the Kingdom of God in which there must no longer be walls between men, nor dominion of men over men: “no longer slave nor freeman, . . . but sons of God.”

Assisi General Chapter 1979

Priorities and Concrete Directives

Established by the Chapter

2. The friars minor in the midst of an ever more secularized world, are to contribute to its Christian upbuilding by fraternally involving themselves in its problems, by their numerous and profound presence and evangelical preaching.

6. Let us cooperate with the "basic Christian communities" in order that the Gospel spirit might be manifest more clearly. Likewise, mindful of our mission as peace and justice promoters, let us be with those who suffer persecution and exploitation. Let us live in such a way that our own lives promote peace and justice, mindful of the Lord's words in our Rule (RegB 10): "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven."

Bahia Plenary Council 1983

The Gospel Challenges Us

Chapter I. Our Mission Is Evangelization

13. In our world, full of hopes and aspirations, we see a desire for community, peace, justice and the promotion of human dignity together with a desire for the satisfaction of basic human needs. At the same time society is plagued with atheism and religious indifference, conflicting ideologies, wars, racism, oppression and an ever-widening gap between rich and poor. Faced with such a world situation, what do we have to offer?

14. Jesus tells us: "The Spirit of the Lord has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people" (Lk 4:18-19). This is the mission of the Church to reveal Jesus and the kingdom he proclaimed. He wants to free all humans from sin and all that oppresses them so they can enjoy the fullness of his life - a life of justice, peace, hope, joy and love.

15. On our part, accepting Jesus' way demands metanoia, personal and communal conversion, as we seek to penetrate cultures with Gospel values. We must be more and more evangelized ourselves, freeing ourselves from sin and from any part we might have in injustice and oppression, from all that in any way hinders us from receiving and proclaiming God's love at work in the world.

16. Searching to be better evangelizers, we look to Francis who brought new insights and emphases to his times.

Brotherhood - When some in the Church condemned those outside her fold as heretics, and even sent armies against them, Francis proclaimed the good news that they are our brothers and sisters.

Peace - When city warred with city and society was divided by the feudal system, he proclaimed the good news of peace.

Poverty - When riches were sought after as a god, he proclaimed the good news of the "blessedness" of the poor.

Minority - When the goal of many was power and might, he proclaimed the good news

of being little ones.

Ecology — When some feared nature, and others sought to subject it to their uses, he proclaimed the good news that the earth was our sister/mother, and all creation one family to be treated with respect.

Presence - When some religious secluded themselves from the people, Francis wanted his friars to be near ordinary people, present to the *minores*.

Holy Spirit - When the Church was highly institutionalized, Francis was conscious of the role of the Spirit and never tired of reminding his brothers to be “men of the Spirit,” and told them that the Holy Spirit is the true Minister General of our Order.

17. As Friars Minor, then, we are called to be an “evangelizing vanguard,” in a Church which must be continually reincarnated and renewed. Accordingly, we must be especially alert and sensitive to the movements of the Holy Spirit, both within and without the Church. Besides ministering to the faithful, we see a need to reach out in our own societies to those yet untouched by the Gospel and to those alienated from the Gospel as traditionally presented. By our presence we will try to help them interpret their experience and encourage the good that we find. If it seems to be God's will (RegNB 16:7), we will explicitly proclaim the Lord. Moreover, to those local Churches in Asia, Africa and Latin America in great need of assistance, we ask our friars to respond generously. Three billion people have yet to hear the Gospel. We have a great opportunity and challenge to bring the vision of Francis and at the same time to be enriched by these cultures.

Chapter II. Sent As Brothers

19. Today greed, racism, oppression and war divide peoples. But the seeds of hope, of new life can be seen in groups which promote solidarity especially on the international level, and in movements which promote human rights, ecumenism, trade unions, unity among youth and practical sharing with people in developing countries.

20. Such solidarity, sharing of life and work, is characteristic of a family, and this is what we humans are, all brothers and sisters, children of the same God in heaven. Jesus became our brother to unite all things in heaven and earth. He invites every person to become part of the family of God. To establish that family is the focus of our efforts.

Chapter III. *Minores* Among the Poor

24. Especially in the Third World most people suffer inhuman poverty: hunger, disease, illiteracy, unemployment and slum living. Immigrants and refugees are left at the margin of society. Millions are politically oppressed, many tortured, even killed. (The Church has a growing list of new martyrs.) Each year thirty million die of hunger. Women are treated like objects and humiliated. The majority of people are excluded from social, economic and political progress. They enjoy little or no justice. No home, no land, no job, no money, no freedom - they are tempted to despair.

25. Also the richer countries in East and West have their poor “marginalized” - immigrants, minority groups, the unemployed, the handicapped and the politically and religiously persecuted. Even among the “haves” an increasing number are lonely, mentally ill, victims of alcohol or other drugs.

26. Sadly, the developed world is marked by consumerism which values persons for what they produce and possess. By means of mass media, consumerism spreads also to

countries in process of development and creates fictitious needs and undermines values.

27. Already in the Old Testament and especially in the New, God's compassion for the poor is explicit. Jesus gave poverty its deepest meaning in his own person: in his birth, life and death on the cross. He identified with the poor (Cf. Matt. 25:40). In word and action he proclaimed the power of being powerless. Far from marginalizing the poor, Jesus put them at the center of his life and ministry. In sending out his apostles, Jesus demanded that they go in poverty (Cf. Lk 10). Mary his mother also lived as one of the poor (Lk 1:46f; 2EpFid 5; UltVol 1; RegNB 9:5).

28. Francis found Christ through the poorest of the poor, the leper. The love of the Father was made real for him through the poor Infant of Bethlehem and the Suffering Servant at Calvary. Francis lived and worked with lepers and the poor to share their "blessedness." He rejoiced in their lowliness and disinterest in power, their tremendous confidence in Providence and their freedom. We Franciscans, too, will find Jesus in being for the poor, with the poor and living as the poor do. Thus, it is through our poverty and minority that we are evangelized and evangelize.

29. Our following of the poor Christ (cf. RegNB 9:1) will lead us to live with the poor as *minores*, living the same life with them, in solidarity with them, little and humble and powerless like them. In this way as we are evangelizing, we are being evangelized by them.

30. We must frankly acknowledge, however, that presently we often live far removed from the poor. Especially in this regard, we must evangelize ourselves again and again. We will truly become poor when we share their anxieties, insecurities and basic needs. As poor brothers among the poor, deprived of power, we will have to trust in the providence of God. Unsure of many things, we will be open to a dialogue of life with the people around us.

31. This vision of necessity changes our Franciscan stance in the world today, as many local Churches in Latin America have done by making a preferential option for the poor.

Therefore the Plenary Council asks the friars:

- 1) to live with the poor, so that we can see history and reality from their point of view.
- 2) to refuse to buy or possess unnecessary goods in order to give prophetic witness against growing consumerism.
- 3) to learn from the poor the spirit of solidarity and authentic fraternity which is frequently difficult for us in our friaries - often larger than needed and too comfortable.
- 4) to conscientize ourselves and people about the unjust system of socio-economic, political and cultural domination of millions of people in the Third World by the super powers and richer countries in East and West, multinationals and transnationals, and to promote a new economic and political order which will bring greater justice to our world.
- 5) to take a prophetic stance against all oppressive, totalitarian regimes.
- 6) to bring the Gospel wherever the poor are organizing in favor of integral liberation - be it popular organizations, labor unions or other social awareness programs designed to lift people to a position where their rights are recognized and understood.

Chapter IV. Instruments of Justice and Peace

32. The previous chapter referred to the injustice the poor suffer in being deprived of basic rights. Along with other human beings, the poor also suffer the injustice that war causes. The contrasts between rich and poor exist in cities and countries, and even between the northern and southern hemispheres.

33. “The arms race, the great crime of our era, is both the result and cause of tensions among our fellow nations,” the Bishops of Latin America declared at Puebla. “Because of it, enormous resources are allotted for arms purchases instead of being used to solve vital problems”. Pope John Paul II at Hiroshima forcefully proclaimed that in our world peace is a vital part of evangelization. “It is only through conscious choice . . . that humanity can survive!”

34. We are conscious of the violence of war. We are not as conscious of the violence that injustice causes. When a child starves to death, that is violence. In Brazil the Church and others are helping to raise consciousness about this kind of violence: the violence of hunger, removal from land, imprisonment, torture and unemployment. The suffering of violence--direct and indirect--is a way of life for many people. To watch your children grow up with no future is violence.

36. To destroy each other - and our planet - cannot be the destiny God intends for the human race. We hear Isaiah, “I will keep my promise of peace forever!” (Is 54:10). Jesus himself promised: “Peace is what I leave with you, it is my peace that I give you” (Jn 14, 27). Confronted by the fact that \$1.44 billion is spent each day on armaments - while 40,000 children starve to death daily - our world must find ways for Isaiah's admonition to be realized, i.e., turn our swords into plowshares (Is 2:4), and use this immense amount of money (\$500 billion per year) for the needs of our human family.

38. Being peacemakers is a vital part of our Franciscan life and our evangelization of the world. The Plenary Council, therefore, calls friars:

- 1) to pray to be men at peace with God and all peoples, to make prayer and fasting part of our efforts for peace, to support movements which seek peace in our society, to be personally involved in such movements.
- 2) to support nonviolent efforts for peace, to offer support to conscientious objectors to war-- especially nuclear war--to stand by those imprisoned for their convictions and efforts in behalf of justice and peace.
- 3) to develop a pedagogy of peace especially for the youth of our schools and seminaries.
- 4) to find ways to eliminate injustices among ourselves and, in spite of our differences, to live in peace together in our friaries as witnesses of the peace of Christ.
- 5) to involve friars full-time for justice and peace where possible and support those friars already engaged in this work in Justice and Peace offices of the Order and Provinces.
- 6) to be a voice for the rights of the unborn, but also for those born but without hope of a future.
- 7) to condemn loudly and clearly the armaments race and all nuclear weapons which have already been produced.

Assisi General Chapter 1985

Our Call to Evangelization

5. The Constitutions and Statutes that have been voted on at this Chapter attempt to bring up to date our common response to our Gospel call. In looking at these and other recent documents, we find that the friars focus on three themes that reoccur constantly.

- 1) the contemplative dimension of our lives;
- 2) option for the poor - justice and peace;
- 3) formation towards a mission spirit (evangelization).

B. Option for the Poor — Justice and Peace

And they must rejoice when they live among people (who are considered to be) of little worth and who are looked down upon, among the poor and powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside. (RegNB 9:2).

23. In speaking of the option for the poor, we realize that the forms and causes of poverty differ from country to country. As “lesser brothers” we want to be with the poor and help them achieve justice.

1. Each province is encouraged to have at least one fraternity inserted in poor areas where friars may identify with the poor, reflect with them in prayer and join with them in their struggle for a better world. We believe the poor can help us in listening to the Word of God.
2. We encourage the Order, and especially the Provinces, to find concrete ways to effect expropriation of properties and possessions to the extent that we might more truly live as *minores*.
3. Each fraternity and each individual friar, in the use of material things, should choose poorer things and refuse to have or to buy superfluous things, in order to provide a prophetic witness contrary to increasing consumerism.
4. Every province should arrive at concrete ways to share its goods with the poor. Special attention should be given to: Franciscan fraternities without sufficient funds for formation and mission needs, family members of friars who are in need, ex-friars.
5. Aware of Francis’ commitment to peace, we Friars Minor of today should strive to develop a positive program for peace, for reconciliation, for a rejection of violence in all its forms; rather we should join with those who oppose the arms race, the sale of arms; we should support nuclear disarmament and the defense of humankind. Every province, every fraternity and single friar, in the most effective ways, should take concrete initiatives, as suggested in the Bahia document, n.38. Since not everyone is inclined to this kind of experience, let us encourage those who can to live it, and others to support it.
6. Each province should have a justice and peace commission. The representatives of each province should form a conference assembly. With the collaboration of all the conferences, the Order should set up adequate structures to develop a valid and concrete program for peace and justice.
7. Each friar and the whole Order should take care to dialogue with the people in developing countries, including those of other faiths and ideologies, in order to promote peace and justice in the world.
8. Peace and justice, applied first and foremost to the internal life of the fraternity, should be an annual theme of attentive discussion in the local chapter. Particular attention must be had for the cases of injustice among the friars, in order to be credible witnesses of Easter peace.
9. Our contemplation, our listening to the Word of God, following the example of St.

Francis, our contact with a world always given to more violence and national wars, and now with the threat of a nuclear holocaust, demands that each one of us be a peacemaker.

As peacemakers:

- we call for justice in order to end violence against the poor, which has its worst form in the death of millions due to malnutrition;
- we insist that every effort be made to end torture perpetuated by totalitarian and oppressive governments and that all human rights be guaranteed, including that of religious freedom;
- we call for a new political and economic order which will correct the grave imbalance existing among nations;
- we extend our campaign against violence to all creation and we work to restore the natural ambience which surrounds us and in which we live, and not continue to destroy it.

Bangalore Plenary Council 1988

Ministers of the Word...Servants of All

II. Option for the Poor - - Justice and Peace

“The Spirit of the Lord has been given to me, for he has anointed me. He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and to the blind new sight, to set the down trodden free, to proclaim the Lord's year of favor” (Lk 4:18-19).

34. The conscientization of the friars on this priority seems to be well underway. The results are still modest but diverse. In different regions of the world, the same terms suggest different realities.

35. The friars are very aware that the question of practical equality of rights and duties among the friars themselves still needs to be resolved. The plenary council discussed how to present to the Church our understanding of the equality of all friars, cleric and lay. In local communities there should be real justice among the friars in sharing domestic chores, returning all resources acquired to the common or provincial fund, more egalitarian living among the friars in the use of goods, in vacations, in sharing leadership, etc. In his opening address the general minister asked whether we respect the lay character of our friars and how we can encourage vocations of those who do not choose an intellectual or professional career.

36. In their attitude toward others, for more and more friars the poor man is not merely a brother, but a preferred brother. To espouse Lady Poverty like Francis and the early friars is not just to practice poverty personally or communally, but also to live with the poor, sharing their destiny and the slow and painful historical process of their liberation. In some of the newer provinces almost all the friars live in such a way. More and more friars have joined in solidarity with people in search of their freedom and liberation.

37. A significant number of entities have at least one fraternity inserted in poor areas (among workers, migrants, rural people) or among the marginalized (the unemployed, homeless, drug addicts). Some of the communities provide health centers for alcoholics and drug addicts, hospitality centers for the handicapped, elderly, refugees, homeless,

lepers and ministry to prisoners. Various communities have reexamined and tried to simplify their lifestyle.

38. Here at the plenary council we were moved by the testimony of Guy-Marie Nguyen, provincial of Vietnam. Faced by a new political situation and the loss of their educational and social institutions, the friars made a decision to share the conditions of life and work in the new society. In a spirit of detachment and service, some work in parishes, some in the fields or cooperatives of production, a few in social and educational services. They believe that God is present in the history of their people and that they are called to live with the Church of Vietnam, witnessing Jesus Christ. What they were forced to accept, they now see as a grace.

39. Our OFM International Council for Justice and Peace is trying to formulate a statement on non-violence, taking into consideration the honest struggle of people in many parts of the world to overcome the violence of oppressive governments. An inter-franciscan effort is underway to obtain non-governmental status at the United Nations. In India we are introduced to the religious spirit behind nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and recall the great heritage of Mahatma Gandhi³. Ecology is more and more a concern of the above council and a concern of the friars⁴.

40. Many provinces and conferences, following the recommendations of *Our Call to Evangelization*, have created justice and peace commissions. The Office of Justice and Peace in the general curia fulfills a continual activity of animation and coordination between the provinces and conferences, and the general level of the Order, informing and proposing models and projects in this area. It also cares for coordination, the area of justice and peace with other members of the Franciscan Family and various sectors of the Church.

41. Particular programs on social questions have been set up for friars in ongoing and initial formation. In some entities there is extensive and deep reflection on the causes of poverty and injustice. Some have publications to encourage the search for new ways of changing the systems that produce poverty and oppression.

42. The general constitutions guide us in this option for the poor. "The brothers should remember that the highest poverty takes its origin from Christ and his poor mother. Mindful of the words of the gospel: "Go, sell all that you own and distribute it to the poor, they should be enthusiastic about sharing the lot of the poor" (8:2). "After the example of Christ they should rejoice 'when they live among people who are considered to be of little worth and who are looked down upon . . .' (and) they should give clear witness to these values" (8:3; 66:1; 87:3). We should share what we have with those in need, especially the poor (53; 72:3; 75:1). We should listen to the poor (93:1) and express solidarity with them, in fasting (34:2), in our service and ministries (78:1), in our work of evangelization (97).

³ The Assisi Peace Center promotes peace with government leaders of the world. Friars fast for peace and joined others in doing so before the Assisi Peace Gathering in 1986.

⁴ ² Following a pilgrimage to the land of Francis, Polish friars together with Secular Franciscans who are scientists have started a center for ecology in Poland. India Friar Scaria Varanath challenged the plenary council to a cosmic-centered spirituality drawing from Hindu and Franciscan sources as a remedy to global poisoning of earth, air and water He likens Hindu spirituality to Francis' deep respect for all creation.

43. Similarly, the general constitutions urge us to be promoters of justice and peace, “proclaiming reconciliation, peace and justice” by our deeds (1:2; 68). We should spare ourselves “neither toil nor hardship in building up the reign of the God of peace” (69:2; 85). We should devote ourselves to establishing a society “based on justice, liberation and peace in the risen Christ” (96:2) where “the human dignity and the rights of all are respected and cultivated” (96:3), especially the rights and dignity of the poor (97:2). Our methods should be just (80:2), nonviolent (69:1), seeking to promote between people “the reconciliation that Jesus Christ accomplished by his cross” (33:1; 70; 98:2). We should seek “brotherly relationships with all people” (87:1) and be well disposed toward all other Christians and toward believers of other religions, especially Islam (95).

44. We can challenge ourselves with a number of questions from the Church and from our Franciscan heritage:

- a) In *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* Pope John Paul II insists that even the Church must give not only of her abundance but of her necessities, even to the point of selling superfluous church ornaments and costly furnishings for worship (31). Do we give an example of sharing our resources with the poor?
- b) In the same encyclical Pope John Paul notes “the growing awareness of the solidarity of the poor among themselves, their efforts to support one another and their public demonstrations on the social scene which, without recourse to violence, present their own needs and rights in the face of the inefficiency or corruption of public authorities. . .” (39). As poor men, are we there with them?
- c) Do we share the experience of Francis: “I wish to revere all as my brothers and masters” (cf. AP 38)? How committed are we to be “servants and subjects to every human creature for love of God” (cf. 2EpFid 9:47)?
- d) Do we relate to the poor as Francis did, who in the poor “perceived the face of Christ and, thus, if he was given something necessary for living, when he met them he not only offered it generously to them, but did so as if in fact it belonged to them” (LM 3:7)?
- e) As peacemakers do we make our own the admonition of Francis: “This peace that you announce with the mouth, have it also abundantly in your hearts. Do not provoke anyone to anger or to scandal but let all be drawn to peace, to goodness and to concord by your meekness” (cf. 1Cel 9)?

San Diego General Chapter 1991

The Order and Evangelization Today

II. Concrete Proposals

"Signs of the times" and Evangelization

Conscious of the demands posed to us by our discernment of the signs of the times, we suggest:

23. That the provincial ministers with their assemblies provide a discernment of the provinces' traditional evangelization activities, in light of new challenges, searching for new fields of evangelization and new forms of service, with care to prepare the brothers for this.

24. That in the groups where there are well-defined local cultures, the provincial ministers and their assemblies be attentive to promoting discernment on their evangelization service to these cultures, developing an evangelization project in light of them.

25. That in countries where a special presence of other religions is noted, the provinces concern themselves with reviewing the forms of their interreligious dialogue, seeking new approaches in the spirit of c.16 of the non-papal Rule and the Assisi Peace Reflection Day(s).

26. That the Order's General Definitory encourage and sustain the service of the brothers and their groups in territories where there is a Muslim majority, and in other countries where Muslims have a significant presence, helping them to continue their Gospel testimony in those places, according to St. Francis' example, and that the Commission on Islam be given support.

27. That the Order's mission groups examine particular steps taken and yet to be taken in their option for the poor, in their commitment to a justice-and-peace-based society, and in their respect for creation. This (examination) is especially valid in our search for solutions to problems such as the foreign debt in the poorest countries, the oppression of the weakest among us, violence, the scorning of human life and the indiscriminate wasting of the goods of creation.

28. That the Order's mission groups examine their evangelizing service from the perspective of their collaboration with the women's and men's organizers, particularly when we are serving among ethnic minorities and oppressed majorities. May these same mission groups strengthen more and more their commitment to such sectors.

Assisi General Chapter 1997

Memory to Prophecy

Fraternity and World: The New Situation

Dialogue

7. Noting that “dialogue is the new name for charity” and that religious pluralism, the demands of peace, the interdependence in all areas of social living and of human promotion all demand a dialogue-style in relationships, the General Chapter:

7.1. approves the Service for Dialogue instituted by the General Definitory and structured in three commissions, namely that for ecumenical dialogue, that for interreligious dialogue, and that for dialogue with cultures;

7.2. invites each conference to study the possibility of setting up in its own territory the Service for Dialogue;

7.3. exhorts those Conferences in whose territories there exists a strong Muslim presence to institute a sub-commission for dialogue with Islam;

7.4. recommends in a special way intra-ecclesial dialogue.

For a Culture of Hope and Solidarity

8. In order to be promoters of a new “culture of hope and of solidarity” in this world

which while filled with suffering also allows signs of hope to appear, the General Chapter:

- 8.1. invites the General Definitorium to continue its present level of support for Franciscans International and to take part in the examination for clarifying its structure and status and its relationship with the Order and the whole Franciscan Family;
- 8.2. ratifies the preferential option for the poor and the excluded from today's society and asks the Brothers to share in their life, their story and their hope, in order also to be evangelized by them;
- 8.3. in faithfulness to our identity as Friars Minor and challenged by the inequalities which create an ever-deepening division between rich and poor and lead to exclusion and marginalization, encourages the realization at Conference level and in union with the whole Franciscan Family of a concrete commitment in favor of justice, peace and the safeguarding of creation, a commitment born of our spirituality and constituting the Franciscan contribution to the celebration of the new millennium.
- 8.4. concerned at the situation of so many people who are forced to abandon their own lands, particularly the migrant workers, the refugees, the ethnic minorities, this General Chapter solicits the General Definitorium, through the Office of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in collaboration with all the Conferences and Provinces, to create a network of personnel and resources to intervene in the plight of refugees;
- 8.5. exhorts the General Definitorium and the provincial ministers in the light of the Jubilee Year 2000 to set about providing Brothers to take part in the program prepared by the Custody of the Holy Land.

Biblical Texts

Here are some Bible texts on

Justice

Women

Liberation

Peace

Pardon-reconciliation-mercy

The poor

Sharing-solidarity

Fraternity

Dialogue-ecumenism

Service-Charity

Nature-creation

1. JUSTICE

Exodus 23:6

Deuteronomy 15:7-11; 16:20; 27:19

Leviticus 19:12-18

Job 29:14

Psalms 9:8&16; 11:7; 33:5; 72; 89:14; 103:6; 140:12

Proverbs 21:15; 29:4&7

Jeremiah 9:23-24; 22:15-16; 23:5

Isaiah 1:10-20; 5:23; 10:2; 29:21; 30:18; 32:15-20; 42:4; 61:8

Hosea 12:6

Amos 2:7; 5:12

Malachi 2:17

Matthew 5:20; 23:23; 25:31-46

Luke 3:10-14; 11:42; 18:8

Acts 4:32-37

Romans 3:25-26

2. WOMEN

Judges 4:5

Judith 8:4-8; 9:8-10

Esther 4,12-14; 5,1-3.7-8

Ruth 1:16-18; 2:8-13; 4:9-17

Read together Matthew 16:17 and John 11:27

Mark 14:9

Luke 7:36-50; 10:38-42; 21:1-4

Acts 2:17-18; 21:8-9

Galatians 3:28

3. LIBERATION

Exodus 2:23-25; 3:1-15

Deuteronomy 26:5-11

Psalms 9:3-4; 10:18; 12:5; 74:14; 103:6

Micah 3:4

Baruch 4:21

Luke 4:18
Galatians 5:1 & 13

4. OPPRESSION

Exodus 1:11
Deuteronomy 26:6; 28:33
Nehemiah 9:36-37
Psalms 6:3-10; 17:9-12; 44:22-25; 94:5-6
Jeremiah 50:33
Micah 3:3

5. PEACE

Leviticus 19:1 & 9-18
Psalms 32; 72; 85:9-11; 122:6-8
Isaiah 2:1-5; 9:5-6; 11:1-9; 32:15-20; 52:7; 53:5; 57:19
Proverbs 24:1-4; 22:31
Matthew 5:1-12 & 38-48; 10:5-13 & 34
Luke 10:35; 12:51; 24:36
John 14:23-27; 19:19-23; 20:19 & 21
Romans 12:18; 14:17 & 19
2 Corinthians 3:11
Ephesians 2:11-18; 4:3 & 31-32
Galatians 5:22
Philippians 2:5-11
James 3:13-18

6. PARDON-RECONCILIATION-MERCY

Ezekiel 11:17-21
Matthew 7:1-5; 18:21-35
Luke 6:27-38; 15:1-10
Romans 5:11
2 Corinthians 5:14-21
Ephesians 2:14-18
Colossians 3:12-17
Philemon 1:18-21
2 Peter 3:8-12

7. THE POOR

Exodus 1:8-14; 22:20-26
Deuteronomy 15:4-11; 24:10-22; 26:5-11
Leviticus 19:9-18; 25:8 & 10 & 23-24 & 35-38 & 42-43
Psalms 9:13-14&19; 12:6; 14:6; 18:28; 22:27; 25:9&16; 35:10; 37:11; 69:-30; 70:6; 72:1-4&12-14; 74:19-20; 76:10; 140:13
Isaiah 1:11-17; 5:1-23; 11:1-9; 58:5-7; 61:1-2
Jeremiah 22:13-18
Amos 2:6-16; 3:14-4:3; 8:4-7
Micah 2:1-5; 3:1-4&9-12; 4:6-7
Zephaniah 3:11-12
Sirach 34:18-22
Mark 10:17-22; 10:23-27

Matthew 10:9-10
Luke 1:46-56; 12:33-34
Acts 2:44-45; 4:32&34-35; 11:27-30
1 Corinthians 1:17-31
2 Corinthians 8:1-15; 9:6-13
Philippians 2:5-9
James 2:1-5; 4:13-5:6

8. SHARING-SOLIDARITY

1 Kings 17:7-16
Isaiah 58:1-12
Mark 12:38-44
Matthew 25:31-46
Luke 1:46-55; 10:25-37; 16:19-31
Acts 4:32 & 34-35
Philippians 2:4-11
Hebrews 13:12-16
James 2:14-18; 5:1-6
Revelation 21:1-6

9. FRATERNITY

Proverbs 3:27-33
Matthew 12:46-49
John 17:1 & 6-11 & 20 & 26
Hebrews 2:10-17
2 Peter 2:12; 3:8-9 & 13-16
1 John 4:4-21

10. DIALOGUE-ECUMENISM

Genesis 17:1-7
Isaiah 54:1-3
Matthew 10:41-45; 18:12-19; 22:1-10
John 17:18-24
Acts 2:1-11
1 Corinthians 12
Ephesians 1:3-14
Colossians 3:12-17
Hebrews 2:8b-12
2 Peter 4:7-11

11. SERVICE-CHARITY

1 Kings 17:7-16
Ecclesiasticus 4:1-10
Matthew 10:35-45
Luke 10:25-37
John 13:1-17 & 34-35; 15:9-17
Romans 12:9-17
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Philippians 2:1-4
1 Peter 4:7-11

1 John 4:7-17

12. NATURE-CREATION

Genesis 1:1-2:3; 9:9-11

Exodus 3:7-10; 15:22-27; 23:10-12

Leviticus 25:1-24

Isaiah 11:1-9; 40:12-31

Daniel 3:57ff

Psalms 8; 19; 24; 104:16-23; 136; 148:1-4 & 7-10

Proverbs 8:22-31

Mark 5:35-41

Matthew 6:26-30

John 9; 12:23-26

Romans 8:18-25

Colossians 1:15-20

Apocalypse 21:1-5; 6:16-21

1. JUSTICE

LP 62

*Heal humanity's ills by concrete interventions" (From the Letter-Message from the Minister Generals of the Franciscan Family on the 8th Centenary of St.Francis' birth)

* Bahia Document, Chap.IV, numbers 32-38

*Mattli, 4 "In the struggle for justice and peace"

2. WOMEN

1 Cel 18 b-d

Little Flowers 15; 16; 19

LM 12:2

LP 101; 107

Legend of St.Clare 5

InterFranciscan Message from Mattli (1982)No.2 "In support of women and against discrimination"

3. PEACE

RnB 22:1-4; 16:6

RB 2:17; 3:10-14

Admonitions 13; 15

Testament 6; 23

1 Cel 23; 37; 40-41; 57

2 Cel 37

LM 6:9; 9:7-9

LP 44; 67

AP 17d; 38c

Little Flowers 21; 24

L3S 26; 58

4. THE POOR

RegNB 5:9-12; 7:1-9 & 13; 8:4 & 12; 9:12; 23:4

RB 5

Test 1-3; 20-22

1 Cel 14-15; 17; 44; 76

2 Cel 5; 8; 37; 81; 83-92; 196

LM 11:2

L3S 37; 40; 55-56

Bahia Document, Chap.III: "Little ones among the poor"

5. PARDON-RECONCILIATION-MERCY

Admonition 27

EpMin 1-11 & 13-17

1EpFid 5.28-29

ExpPat 1 & 7 & 8

1 Cel 23; 89

2 Cel 185b

LM 3:2; 8:1

LP 1; 44; 67
EP 101
L3S 11-12; 26
Little Flowers 21
Mattli, No.5 "Instruments of reconciliation"

6. SHARING-SOLIDARITY

Testament 1-3
2 Cel 175
LM 1:2c-3a
3 Comp 11-12
Bahia 19-23a

7. FRATERNITY

1 Cel 38-39a
2 Cel 175
St.Francis educated in universal Communion and a family spirit (Ministers General, "I have done my part; Christ will teach you the rest" -1981-)
Bahia, Chap.II: "Sent as brothers."

8. DIALOGUE-ECUMENISM

RegNB 14; 16; 22:1-4
RB 12:1
1 Cel 40a & 41b-c; 57
LM 9:7-9
Little Flowers 24
Mattli, No.7: "In dialogue with other religions"

9. SERVICE-CHARITY

Testament 1-3
2 Cel 172; 175; 177
LM 9:1 & 4
3 Comp 11-12
Rule of St. Clare VIII: 12-16

10. NATURE-CREATION

Canticle of Creation
1 Cel 77; 79; 81
2 Cel 165
LP 84; 51

Christian Anthropology

a) Dignity of humanity, image of God

- Divini Redemptoris: 30 and 32-33
- Mater at Magistra: 219-220
- Pacem in Terris: 31; 28-34 and above all 44
- Gaudium et Spes: 31
- Ecclesiam Suam: 19
- Redemptor Hominis
- Christian Liberation and Freedom: 20; 34
- Laborem Exercens: 4-9
- Guidelines: No.31
- Catechism: 355-379; 1700-1709

b) The human person, path of the Church's mission

- Gaudium at Spes: 1 and 3
- Evangelii Nuntiandi: 29; 31; 33; 35; 36; 38
- Redemptor Hominis: 13-14

c) Human longing for freedom

- Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation: 1 and 38

d) Man and woman, persons in solidarity

- Mater et Magistra: 218-219; 59-67
- Pacem in Terris: 31
- Gaudium at Spes: 24-25
- Christian Freedom and Liberation: 73

e) Fundamental equality of every person

- Gaudium et Spes: 24 and 29

f) Primacy of persons over structures

- Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation: 73; 75
- Gaudium et Spes: 31
- Redemptor Hominis: 14
- Reconciliatio et Penitentia: 16

g) Structures of sin

- Gaudium et Spes: 13; 25
- Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation: 75
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 36-37
- Centesimus Annus: 38
- Catechism: 1878-1889

Human Rights

a) Violation of Human Rights

- Gaudium et Spes: 27
- Octogesima Adveniens: 23; cfr.RH:17

- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 15: 26, 33

b) Panorama of fundamental rights

- Pacem in Terris: 143-144:11-34; 75-79
- Gaudium et Spes: 27; 79; 29; 60; 52; 75; 71; 67: 68; 65; 69; 59
- Octogesima Adveniens: 23
- Puebla: 3890-3893
- Redemptor Hominis: 17
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 26; 33-34

c) Human rights, a Gospel demand

- Puebla: Opening address
- Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation: 65

THE COMMON GOOD

- Mater et Magistra: 65; 78-81
- Pacem in Terris: 53-66; 136
- Gaudium et Spes: 26; 74
- Populorum Progressio: 54
- Octogesima Adveniens: 46
- Redemptor Hominis: 17
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 26:33-34
- Centesimus Annus: 9:37-38; 47
- Catechism: 1897-1912

Solidarity and Subsidiarity

a) Definition, co-relation and rationale

- Gaudium et Spes: 32; 80
- Christian Freedom and Liberation: 73
- Catechism: 1883-1884; 1939-1942; 2437-2440

b) Solidarity

- Pius XII, 1952 Christmas Radio Message: 26-27
- Pacem in Terris: 98
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 38-40
- Centesimus Annus: 10c; 33; 41d; 51

c) Subsidiarity

- Quadragesimo Anno: 79-80
- Mater et Magistra: 51-52; 54-55; 57-58
- Pacem in Terris: 140-141
- Laborem Exercens: 17

d) Social participation

- Mater et Magistra: 91-92
- Gaudium et Spes: 31; 55; 59; 63; 68
- Octogesima Adveniens: 22; 24; 46-47
- Christian Freedom: 86; 95
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 45
- Centesimus Annus: 33

- Catechism: 1913-1917

Universal Destiny of Wealth

- Gaudium et Spes: 69-71
- Populorum Progressio: 22-23
- Christian Freedom: 90
- Centesimus Annus: 30-32

Private Property

- Rerum Novarum 3:12-16
- Quadragesimo Anno: 44-52
- Mater et Magistra: 104-121
- Gaudium et Spes: 69-71
- Populorum Progressio: 19; 22-24
- Laborem Exercens: 14
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 28; 42

Public Property

- Rerum Novarum: 23-25
- Quadragesimo Anno: 105-110
- Mater et Magistra: 51-67
- Gaudium et Spes: 70-71
- Populorum Progressio: 23-24; 33-34
- Laborem Exercens: 14
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 15

Work and Salary

a) Reflection on human work

- Rerum Novarum: 32
- Mater et Magistra: 82-103
- Gaudium et Spes: 67
- Laborem Exercens: 1; 3; 4-10; 18-19; 22-27
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 18

b) Personal or family salary?

- Rerum Novarum: 32-33
- Quadragesimo Anno: 71
- Laborem Exercens: 19

c) The salary system: Does it reduce people to marketable items?

- Quadragesimo Anno: 64-68
- Mater et Magistra: 75-77
- Laborem Exercens: 19

d) The practical problem: quantity

- Rerum Novarum: 32
- Quadragesimo Anno: 70-75
- Mater et Magistra: 68; 71

Strikes

- Rerum Novarum: 29
- Quadragesimo Anno: 94
- Gaudium et Spes: 68
- Octogesima Adveniens: 14
- Laborem Exercens: 20

Unions

- Rerum Novarum: 34-40
- Quadragesimo Anno: 34-38; 81-97
- Mater et Magistra: 97-103
- Gaudium et Spes: 68
- Populorum Progressio: 38-39 and Octogesima Adveniens: 14
- Laborem Exercens: 20
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 15

Politics and the Political

- Gaudium et Spes: 73; 76
- Octogesima Adveniens: 3-4; 48-51
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 47-48

Civic and Political Community

a) Characterization

- Gaudium et Spes: 74a

b) Authority

- PT: 46-52
- Gaudium et Spes: 74b-e

c) The Common Good

(already cited)

Political Power

a) The State: political organization

- Mater et Magistra: 20-21; 44; 52-53; 104; 201-202
- Pacem in Terris: 68-69; 72; 75-79; 130-131
- Gaudium et Spes: 73-75
- Octogesima Adveniens: 46

b) Political regimes

- Pacem in Terris: 52; 68; 73
- Gaudium et Spes: 73; 74; 75
- Redemptoris Hominis: 17
- Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: 41

A Christian's Socio-Political Commitment

a) Before *Populorum Progressio* (Duties of workers and management)

- Rerum Novarum: 14-16; Quadragesimo Anno: 50-51; 63-64; 78; 141-142
- Mater et Magistra: 51; 82-84; 91; 122;
- Gaudium et Spes: 65-70

b) After *Populorum Progressio*

- On underdevelopment and development: PP:14; 19-21; 43-51; 56-59; and OA: 24-25; 37; 46-51; SRS: 27-39
- On action in society: PT:146-152; GS:36; 75-76; OA:3-4; 48-51; SRS:47-48
- The political pluralism of Christians: OA: 50-51

c) Motivating Principles of Humanistic Politics

- Truth, Justice, Love, Freedom: PT:35; GS:26c; 27-28; OA:23; 45
- Equality and participation: PT:73; GS:75; OA:24-25; 47
- Liberation: John Paul II's Address at the inauguration of the III CELAM Conference: III:5 and 6; III Bishops' Synod on Justice in the world: 50-51

d) Ideologies and utopias: Octogesima Adveniens:25-37

The International Community

a) Foundations: Gaudium et Spes:84

b) International relations: PT:86-108; 120-125; GS:85-90; PP:78; CA:21; 27; SRS:14; 16; 43; 45

Social Violence

a) Typology of social violence:

- Structural violence
- Revolutionary violence: PT:161-162; PP:30-31; LE:11-13
- Violence in war: PT:109-116; GS:77-82; PP:53; 78; SRS:10; 20; 23-24; 39

b) Active nonviolence: Gaudium et Spes:79; Christian freedom and Liberation: 77-79; Catechism: 2306

Peace

a) The reality of war

PT:109-117; GS:79-80; 82; CA:14b; 17a, b; 19a; Catechism:2307-2317

b) Scandal of the arms race, and disarmament

PT:109-112; GS:81; PP:53; SRS:23-24; CA:28c

c) Ethics of peace

- Peace above all: Pacem in Terris
- Everyone's work for peace: Gaudium et Spes:78-82; Catechism:2302-2305
- Development, the new name for peace: *Populorum Progressio*:76
- Peace, a fruit of justice and solidarity: GS:78; SRS:26; 39; CA:5c; 23c; 29a

Christian Faith and Culture

- Gaudium et Spes: 53-62
- PP:12ff; 40; 41; 42; CA:32ff; 38-41; 50-52

Social Communications Media

- a) Christian stance vis-a-vis the media: OA:20
- Values to follow: *Communio et Progressio* (CP):14-17
- Risks to avoid: CP:58; 80; SRS:22

b) Particular issues

- Information: Communio et Progressio: 33-47; 75-76
- Propaganda: Communio et Progressio: 23; 30; 59-62
- Public opinion: Communio et Progressio: 26-32; 114-125

ECOLOGY

- MM:196-199; OA:21; RH:8 and 15; LE:4; SRS:26; 29;34; CA:37-38
- World Peace Day Message of John Paul II (1-1-1990): Peace with God the Creator, peace with all Creation
- Catechism: 299-301; 307; 339-341; 344; 2415-2418

Option for the Poor – Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation in the General Constitutions

Note: These are a paraphrases (not direct quotes) of the articles of the General Constitutions referring to JPIC.

Chapter I

Art. 1, 2: This is a synthesis of the brother's identity:

Life according to the Gospel

Prayer and devotion

Witness to a life of penance and lowliness

Fraternal life

Love for all

Proclaiming reconciliation, peace and justice by their works.

Art. 3: The friars minor constitute a “fraternity” in which all are brothers, with the same rights and duties; a witness that people are seeking true fraternity and communion, in which nobody is marginalized for any reason.

Art. 4, 1: The brothers, joined as they are to the People of God, should examine the new signs of the times and always relate to a world in continual development.

Art. 7, 3: The brothers should voluntarily serve and obey one another and together search for the signs of the Lord God's will.

Art. 8: Radically living the Gospel, “selling everything,” in order to be a sign of the Father's Providence, able to share the lot of the poor, by making the option, which is above all a personal choice, to follow the example of Jesus and of his Mother. They should be happy to live among the poor, even in new ways.

Chapter II

Art. 27, 1: The brothers' spirit of prayer and devotion should be nourished by being among the simple, to whom the Kingdom of God is revealed, and by conversing with them. Together they can learn sound forms of popular devotion and can acquire the ability to nourish the Christian life in themselves and in others.

Art. 27, 2: Prayer with the people incarnates its reality and becomes a sign and sharing of faith and hope.

Art. 32, 3: Penance is expressed in service of others, especially the lowliest, from whom we receive nothing in exchange. St. Francis expresses it in service to the lepers.

Art. 33: The brother is by vocation a sign and instrument of reconciliation with each of his brothers and with the fraternity. This is a particular “ministry” of his vocation.

Art. 33, 3: Reconciliation has a social aspect.

Art. 34, 2: Fasting means a sharing in Christ's sufferings, present in those who suffer

many hardships.

Chapter III

Art. 39: True fraternity, founded on friendship, is also a means of education towards a cheerful (courteous) acceptance of all people; it becomes a sign of hope and a proclamation of peace and happiness; it is also a means towards an integral Christian and religious human maturity.

Art. 51: Franciscan hospitality is fundamental in the life of the brother.

Art. 52: Fraternal communion within the fraternity gives rise to communion towards all people. Receiving all people kindly and dealing with them gently, whether they be friendly or unfriendly and whether they come to us or we go to them.

Art. 53: As a witness to poverty and charity, the brothers are obliged to alleviate the needs of the Church, help the truly needy and share with the poor what they have from the material goods given to the brotherhood.

Chapter IV

Art. 64: “Minority” (humility), a sign of the following of Christ and of his obedience to the Father’s will, is a witness of joy and a prerequisite to the proclamation of peace.

Art. 66, 2: Humility permits a certain way of sharing so that “the lowliest” do not feel excluded from our brotherhood, which is called to favor those who are deprived of the goods that are the result of social and economic progress.

Art. 67: Humility has a particular prophetic value as a witness to true gospel values and as a condemnation of the world’s false values.

Art. 68, 1: Peace is proclaimed and passed on by doing good; peace is not established through violence.

Art. 68, 2: Another aspect of the proclamation of peace is the non-arousing of anger and of scandal; peace and the works of justice and peace arise from peace of heart.

Art. 69, 1: The work of peace, especially with those who are unjustly deprived of their rights, is born out of a new heart and out of a love for justice and peace. These rights must be defended, not with violent means, but rather with the same means that are at the disposal of the poor.

Art. 69, 2: They should condemn wars and every form of violence with the same means. Peace is built up by speaking out against all violence and every injustice.

Art. 70: This article highlights the liberating aspect of poverty and favors free and just relations among all people, mutual acceptance and reconciliation. Riches and the attachment to the wealthy and powerful are occasions of slavery and are an obstacle to the free and integral living of the life of consecration and mission, proper to our vocation as minors.

Art. 71: God the Creator’s image is present in all of creation. The brother should thus

respect every form of life present in the world, out of respect for God.

Art. 72, 1: The profession of poverty is the fundamental sign of the following of Christ the pilgrim, who walks with us. The detachment of the pilgrim must be reflected in our life and in the things that we use to live and work.

Art. 72, 2: The buildings that we use should be in harmony with the circumstances of poverty in which the brothers live; the same applies to everything we acquire or use.

Art. 72, 3: The brothers should not have the ownership of buildings, but merely that use which is necessary to live and to proclaim the Gospel. The ownership should rather belong to those whom we are called to serve, or to our benefactors, or to the Holy See.

Art. 76: The work of the friars should be considered as “service” and not as a means of self-sufficiency and independence, and even less as an opportunity for control over others. Work is a gift to be shared with those who do not possess it; those who work should share with those who do not work and do not have the means of supporting themselves.

Art. 77, 1, 2: The brother should be qualified for his activity, but the first qualification is that of being a brother, living in fraternity, with the same rights and duties as the others; no work gives particular rights, even less the right of immovability from a particular house.

Art. 78: Work should not separate one from the brothers. It should serve towards a greater solidarity with all in a more appropriate “service” towards the “poor.”

Art. 80, 1, 2: To the extent possible, all brothers must themselves do the housework in the fraternities. When others work for our brotherhood, justice requires that the norms of civil law be observed.

Art. 82, 3: Whatever the brothers receive for their work should not become an occasion for hoarding money: when there is plenty, they should remember that it belongs to the Church and to the poor. We must use it because we are poor and as the poor, not as owners.

Chapter V

Chapter V speaks about our call to evangelization; this is the basis for our fidelity to humility and to poverty. Thus it should be carried out with means that are in harmony with our profession and it should be addressed principally to the poorer areas.

Art. 85: The proclamation of peace is fundamental to our evangelization.

Art. 87, 1: The brothers should not live for themselves alone but for the benefit of others. They should try to have the same brotherly relationships with all people that they develop among themselves.

Art. 87, 3: As a sign of hope, the brothers should establish fraternities in poor areas and among secularized groups of people and consider these fraternities privileged means of proclaiming the gospel.

Art. 91: The brothers should not seek or accept privileges since humility is the basis for their mission in the Church.

Art. 92, 2: The brothers should help willingly in the task of inculturation wherever they live.

Art. 93, 1: True fraternal love demands that the brothers see the poor as their teachers and that they listen to them. Thus, they will be able to maintain a true dialogue with them.

Art. 94: The evangelization of cultures is of the greatest importance and should be nurtured earnestly by the brothers.

Art. 95, 1-3: The ecumenical spirit should be nurtured everywhere. Brothers should look for ways of working together with other Christians, with believers of other religions and especially with Islamic peoples.

Art. 96, 1: Evangelization demands an understanding of the social problems faced by people and families. Such knowledge gives rise to an adequate Christian response.

Art. 96, 2: Issues of justice, freedom and peace are fundamental. The brothers should devote themselves to finding a solution to the serious problems that arise out of violations of justice and freedom. They should work together with those who are involved in restoring justice and peace in the world.

Art. 96, 3: The brothers should work humbly and courageously that human dignity and the rights of all are respected and cultivated in the bosom of the Church and of the Order.

Art. 97, 1: The brothers should follow the example of St. Francis who was led by the Lord to go among the lepers. Each brother should rediscover his own calling among the lepers of today: the marginalized, the poor and the oppressed, troubled and sick people. They should be happy to live among them and show compassion.

Art. 97, 2: They should take pains that the poor themselves become more conscious of their own human dignity that they may protect it and enhance it.

Art. 98, 1: The brothers should not look down on the rich or the powerful or pass judgment on them. They should humbly suggest to them also the need of conversion and remind them to return all good things to the Lord God who is always present to the poor.

Art. 98, 2: Following the example of St. Francis, the brothers should reach out to people who threaten the life and freedom of others and offer them the good news of reconciliation, conversion and hope of a new life.

Chapter VI

Chapter VI deals with the formation of the brothers. All that has been said about the life and activity of the brothers is taken as the constant orientation for initial and ongoing

formation. A few examples:

Art. 127, 2, 3: The brothers should be prepared to participate actively in society. Formation should foster intimacy with God and loving relationships with human beings and other creatures, as well as a sense of ecclesial communion and apostolic service.

Art. 127, 4: A fundamental principle of formation is the learning and experiencing of the Franciscan way of living the gospel in brotherhood and lowliness, in the practice of poverty and work and in living the vision of mission in our Order.

Art. 128: Franciscan formation should be an integral formation of the whole person. It should take account of the personal and social dimensions of formation.

Art. 129, 1, 2: In the formation process, the particular gifts of each person should be very reverently treated and a sense of responsibility in the use of freedom should be encouraged. Formation should develop a balanced critical sense towards events.

Art. 132: The formation of maturity is necessary for living in brotherhood and for a life of solidarity with the poor.

Art. 153, 2: To experience Franciscan life in greater depth, novices should devote themselves to contemplation, penance, poverty, work and unpretentious service to needy people of our time, either within the friary or outside according to the statutes.

**Justice, Peace and Reverence for Creation
in the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae***

"The following of Jesus Christ, in the way of St. Francis, leads a friar minor to commit himself to the Church, placing himself at the service of the people of our time, as a *messenger of reconciliation and peace*" (RFF 3).

"The friar minor contemplates God's infinite love toward him and is led to search for and find Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, in *history*, in any aspect of life, in the *neighbor*, and in all creation, in a continuous work of discernment to recognize the Spirit's action" (RFF 12b).

"The friar minor stands before the poor and crucified Christ, his Master, constantly affirming his faithfulness to Christ and to the Gospel, to the Church, to the Order and to its mission, to the people of our time" (RFF 15b).

"Fraternity... is an environment of reconciliation and peace in which an encounter with the living and true Christ is possible" (RFF 18).

"The experience of God's fatherhood and of fraternity with Christ leads the friars minor to become brothers of all people and of every creature, in a spirit of littleness, of simplicity, of joy and solidarity" (RFF 21a).

"A friar minor receives all with kindness, without excluding anyone. He loves all people, particularly the poor and weak, whom he serves with a maternal love. He rejects violence, works for justice and peace, and he respects creation" (RFF 21b).

"A friar minor discovers his own littleness and his complete dependence upon God, source of all good, living as a pilgrim and foreigner, *reconciled and at peace*, hospitable, a brother and subject to every creature" (RFF 22b).

"The friars minor follow the example of a St. Francis led by God among the lepers, who chose life and the plight of the poor, identifying himself with them. The friars serve the oppressed, the afflicted and the sick, allowing themselves to be evangelized by the poor" (RFF 25a).

"A friar minor *becomes sensitive to every form of injustice and the dehumanizing structures present in the world, working to eliminate them*. The friar makes an explicit option for the poor, becoming a voice for the voiceless, as an *instrument of justice and peace*, and as Christ's leaven in the world" (RFF 25b).

"Friars minor, disciples of the Lord, announcing his Word, as did the apostles, participate in the Church's evangelizing mission, bringing to everyone they meet along their way the Lord's *peace and goodness*" (RFF 26a).

"A friar minor gives living witness through fraternal communion, a penitent and contemplative life, service in fraternity and in human society, as a *man of peace*, in joy and simplicity of heart" (RFF 28b).

"When it pleases the Lord, the friars minor proclaim the Gospel explicitly by their testimony of word, announcing the entire mystery of Christ, poor and crucified, by preaching penance, *reconciliation and peace* to all people" (RFF 29a).

"Following the Christ who pitched his tent among us, the friars minor are called to live their charism among all people, being attentive to the signs of the times, as *instruments of justice and peace*" (RFF 32a).

"A friar minor takes on a Franciscan vision of the world and people, developing a balanced *critical judgment* of events, and discovering in the world the good that God is doing there." (RFF.32b)

"The friar minor, as a *herald of peace*, carries (that vision) in his heart, suggesting it to others, being ready to *denounce vigorously* all that goes against human dignity and Christian values." (RFF.34b)

"Among the aspects of... Christian... growth, formation gives attention to:

Respect for the Church - world:

- Sense of God's presence in the world;
- Knowledge of the Catholic faith,
- Love of the Catholic Church,
- A missionary and ecumenical spirit;
- *The search for justice and peace*" (RFF 56.2b).

"Among the aspects of Franciscan...growth, formation gives attention to:

Respect for the Church - world:

- Love of the Church,
- Evangelization and mission;
- A prophetic spirit;
- An option for the poor
- *Striving for reconciliation and pardon;*
- *Respect for nature and the environment* (RFF 56.3c).

"Continuing formation occurs in the context of a friar minor's daily life, in prayer and at work, in his relationships both within and beyond the fraternity, and in his relationship with the cultural, social and political world in which he moves" (RFF 5.8).

"The formation fraternity is attentive to the world and to history, to particular social reality, open especially to the poor and marginalized, in harmony with our identity as little ones" (RFF 79).

"The brother under temporary profession should be inserted in and in solidarity with the plight of the world and the problems of his own country, the place where he is called to live out his vocation" (RFF 155).

"In evaluating the readiness of the brother for solemn profession, some of the criteria which should be taken into account are:

- Affective maturity,
- Visible signs of an adequate and mature personal relationship with God in prayer;
- Personal initiative and responsibility for his own religious life;
- Capacity for life and work with the fraternity;
- Capacity to be active and directed to the service of others, *especially those most poor*;
- *A merciful and reconciling spirit*;
- Capacity to take on a definitive commitment, observing the Gospel counsels;
- *Sense of justice, peace and respect for creation*;
- Availability to give witness to and announce the Holy Gospel;
- Sufficient inner freedom and practice of poverty;
- Sense of membership in the fraternity, the province, the Order, and the Church" (RFF 156).

"General formation fosters personal development, supplying some instruments of understanding and analysis which allow for:

- *Having a critical vision of the society and the world*;
- Knowing oneself, knowing and understanding human beings, the stages of their development and their psyche;
- Communicating in the fraternity and in the cultural setting;
- Communicating with persons and groups which speak another language;
- Having the necessary level to access professional and technical formation;
- Being efficient in the work of evangelization, in serving the fraternity and the Order, in a *commitment to transform society in sense of justice, peace and respect for creation*" (RFF 162).

"In exercising the ministry of Charity, the friar minor is to be poor and a servant in the pattern of Christ. He is to be capable of serving freely; know how to share and to be in solidarity; form himself in a sensitivity to the reality that he may see problems and understand their causes; have a capacity to adapt himself constantly to the Church's needs and to those of the historic moment. He is to be a messenger of justice, peace and reconciliation; to serve those who receive charity in such a way that they become the agents of their own human development and liberation" (RFF 180a).

*Characteristics of Franciscan Work
for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (1993)*

Introduction

It is easy to identify serious social and environmental problems on the global and local levels. The violations of human rights, abortion, genocide, abandoned children, armament industries, drugs and environmental pollution are just a few. However, solutions and the resolve to address these problems are difficult to find. The difficulties are compounded by voices from various traditions suggesting or demanding conflicting responses. Some voices are gentle, some violent. Our response needs to be authentic and Franciscan.

“Pace e Bene!” (Peace and All Good!) is a greeting used on all continents by millions of Franciscan men and women since the time of St. Francis to acknowledge peasants, rulers, saints and sinners alike. It has grown to be an unofficial motto of the Franciscan family. Intuitively and simply, “Peace and All Good” expresses the Franciscan approach to life. We ask what our wish and work for “Peace and All Good” mean today?

This document is an attempt of the International Inter-Franciscan Commission for Justice and Peace to write a consensus statement describing what we believe to be important characteristics of Franciscan approaches to work for justice, peace and the respect for creation. We gleaned ideas from many discussions among ourselves and others whom we met in our work. We share with you our ideas in the hope that our comments will stimulate reflection and further discussion.

Peace

Peace comes from the poor God who is revealed in Jesus Christ.

The Saints of Assisi radiated a joyful peace that has been universally recognized. This peace was not the result of their achievements, their physical well-being or security. In a very public manner they chose to move from their protected birthplace, the Commune of Assisi, to the precarious dwellings of the outcast lepers and the poor who were living on the margins of their society.

Their contemporaries recognized the saints' impoverished lifestyles as prophetic commentary on the Gospels and a critique of their society. The implicit social analysis expressed in their way of life was not motivated by humanitarian concerns alone, nor by philosophy nor a condemnation of the “status quo.” Rather they were impressed by God's Incarnation. Jesus Christ, their poor and crucified Lord, was the giver of and reason for their peace. Their attempts to follow literally the Gospel-life of Jesus in utter simplicity became the foundation and rule of their life. Unlike similar “evangelical” or prophetic groups of their day, Francis and Clare were persistent in securing the confirmation and approval of the Universal Church for their personal inspirations and convictions.

Contemplation and experience gave to Francis and Clare images of God, revealed in Jesus who was nonviolent, vulnerable and poor in the stable of Bethlehem; naked and abandoned on the cross; and food in the Eucharist. God's perfect meekness, humility and

poverty gave Francis and Clare the impassioned desire to become “perfect as our Heavenly Father is perfect.”

Poverty is the lamp we use to pass through the portal of faith in order to enter the mystery of God in whom we find true peace (St. Bonaventure). Over the centuries, interpretations of poverty have generated many arguments and reforms within Franciscanism. Most Franciscans see themselves as working on behalf of the poor; many work with and among the poor; and some have become completely identified with the poor in their lifestyle and work. Pursuit of God's “perfection” led Francis to espouse Lady Poverty and to the peace of “perfect joy.” Throughout her life Clare insisted on the absolute necessity and privilege of Perfect Poverty for her company of Poor Ladies.

Goodness

GOD is not only poor but Goodness Itself reflected within creation.

The Franciscan approach to life is marked by a recognition of the importance, beauty and goodness of creation created by a good God for no other reason than love. We share this earth, its resources, our lives and work with all of God's creatures, who are our brothers and sisters. Unlike some who strove to domesticate and dominate nature, the two great saints of Assisi expected to live lightly on our Sister, Mother Earth, being a burden to neither the Earth nor to those who fed and clothed them.

Francis' practical theology and spirituality gave him a social analysis that all persons have responsibilities and equal rights before God. Franciscan awareness of the sacred value of the individual flowered in the thinking of John Duns Scotus. Each individual - a plant, a stone, an amoeba - is precious. No creature, no part of creation, can be dismissed as insignificant. Each creature must attain the full measure of its own individuality if the total expression of God's love is to be realized in creation.

Characteristics

The Franciscan movement began with the lives and the treasured stories of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi, which give it permanent inspiration and direction. For centuries, hundreds of thousands of men and women have been guided by the Holy Spirit and inspired by the simple genius and practical theological wisdom of Clare and Francis. Generation after generation, brothers and sisters have developed and popularized the original Franciscan inspiration. This evolution of the spirits of Francis and Clare has had profound humanizing effects within Christianity, Western civilization and other cultures.

Franciscan men and women have a history of responding in practical ways to acute social problems, motivated by beliefs inherited from St. Francis: his conviction about the absolute Goodness of God and creation, the primacy of Love, the Incarnation and its Christocentric implications. The early ban on weapons for members of the Secular Order helped to collapse the feudal system in Europe. Franciscans were responsible for establishing some of the first pharmacies in Europe, initially to meet the needs of infirm pilgrims flooding into Assisi. To protect the poor who were being crippled with huge unjust interest payments on loans, friars in Italy organized the *Mons Pietatis*, a financial society which was the precursor of the modern banking system. Countless Franciscan men and women have opened their homes to homeless young people, giving them the

protection and education not provided by their societies. In countries where the poor could not afford health care, Franciscan women and men responded in practical ways by establishing hospitals and health care systems.

Francis was possessed by a great mission. He was the Herald of God and of God's message of peace. The message of God's love burned so strongly within Francis that it could not be contained. Like the heralds of his day, who preceded their lords announcing their arrival, Francis travelled from village to village proclaiming the Goodness and Peace of God. According to Francis, the Gospel is to be proclaimed primarily by our witness of Gospel life, not only by words. When it is appropriate and we are prompted by the Spirit of God, we take the opportunity to explain to others the reasons for our belief, never becoming argumentative. For Francis the most perfect form of evangelization was martyrdom, in which we are united with Jesus, the perfect Evangelist, giving our lives completely for the Gospel message of God's love.

In such writings as the *Canticle of Creatures* and the *Rule for Hermitages*, as well as in the interaction among the Lesser Brothers, the Poor Ladies and the Penitents, we see that from the very beginning the Franciscan movement combined feminine and masculine energies and talents. Historically and theoretically, Franciscan life implies mutual respect, cooperation and collaboration among men and women.

Francis' Great King was the same, yet very different, God of the Christians of his day. When the Church was waging a Holy Crusade against its enemies, the Saracens, Francis' interpretation of Gospel life and its demands were revolutionary. He was nonviolent, creative and active in his approach to conflict. He was not passive. He took the initiative as an arbitrator and sought opposing parties for dialogue to achieve reconciliation. Francis was quick to dialogue with the wealthy Sultan, who was considered an enemy of Christians, and with the Wolf feared by the people of Gubbio. The friars were instrumental in bringing together the Bishop and Mayor of Assisi, not by shaming them with a public scolding, but by singing the *Canticle of Creatures* to them.

During a period of deep discouragement Francis wrote the *Canticle of Creatures*. At that time he continued to experience perfect joy although he was ill, suffering the physical wounds of Jesus and the psychological discouragement of disappointment in his brothers. His joy in pain was not masochistic but was an honest acknowledgement of his pain and injury, accompanied by the surprising joy of being sustained in that injury. There had to be a grace, or Someone, supporting him in his suffering. Francis' joy came with the recognition that God's Spirit was sustaining him in his most painful situations. The Holy Spirit, the "General Minister," helped Francis to understand rather than be understood, to console rather than be consoled, to love rather than be loved. Franciscan joy is not a naive denial of human suffering and problems. It is a conviction that despite all that is bad in life, God's Spirit is always within us, in others and in Creation. Joy kept Francis from growing bitter in the midst of suffering and disappointment.

Conclusion

St. Francis and St. Clare had ways of gradually modifying and absorbing violence by love. With open eyes and affectionate respect for all classes of people, they chose to be poor among the poor. Rather than dwell on the negative and evil within their societies, they chose in prophetic ways to emphasize the positive with constructive action.

Franciscans have conscious and unconscious traditions of reading signs of the times revealed in the needs of the poor. Responses to these needs have been practical, often small, steps which have helped to unravel oppressive cultural systems.

Today, our collective and personal challenge is to develop these traditional Franciscan charisms according to our particular circumstances and cultures. While addressing the root causes and not merely the symptoms of problems, we must work diligently to devise constructive practical remedies.

With determined education and practice, we must take advantage of new instruments available to us for bringing about "Peace and All Good" within our societies. We hope that our Franciscan formation programs, both initial and continuing, will contain biblical, religious and moral reflections on justice, peace and the integrity of creation, as well as offer familiarity with the social, psychological and political sciences. We urge a more public and collective witness of our work and advocacy on behalf of peacemaking, concern for the poor and the care of creation.

With all people of goodwill, we share an important obligation and challenge to respond to the problems of our planet and its societies. Given our tradition, our numbers, our education, and our moral influence within different societies, does not the international community have a right to expect the Franciscan Family to have considerable positive impact on the world's problems? "From those, to whom much has been given, much will be expected."

The International Inter-Franciscan Commission for Justice And Peace, 1993

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Prayers from Various Faith Traditions

Prayer to Saint Francis

(Pope John Paul II, La Verna, 17-9-1993)

O Saint Francis, stigmatized on La Verna,
the world longs for you
as an icon of Jesus crucified.

It needs your heart, open for God and humanity,
your bare and wounded feet,
your pierced and pleading hands.

It longs for your weak voice,
strong with the power of the Gospel.

O Francis, help the men and women of today
to acknowledge the evil of sin
and to seek cleansing from it in penance.

Help them to free themselves
from the very structures of sin
which oppress society today.

Arouse in the awareness of those who govern
the urgent need for peace between nations and peoples.

Pour into the young your zest for living;
help them balk the snares
of the many cultures of death.

To those who have been offended
by wickedness of every kind,
communicate your joy, O Francis,
in learning to forgive.

To all who are crucified by suffering,
by hunger, by war,
open once again
the door of hope.
Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

(Hermann Schalück)

Today, O God, we pray: send us your Spirit, to be for us a burning and brilliant fire, to illumine our shadows and bring our love once again to life. May the Spirit be for us a breath of sweetness, consoling and soothing our timid agitation about the future. May the Spirit be a strong wind to fill our sails and set a daring course for us, guiding it towards new horizons. May the Spirit be a storm to clear the air, water to make new flowers bloom after the drought. O Lord of our life and of our history, may your Spirit enable us to experience at firsthand how the ancient mission, which you entrusted to us

in truth, is still able to transform the world in these new times.

Prayer to Our Lady of the Portiuncula

(Hermann Schalück)

Mary,
Mother of our Brother and Lord Jesus Christ, poor and crucified,
Mother of our Family, Mother of the poor,
hear the humble and trusting prayer we address to you today.

Many peoples lack material bread and spiritual bread in our day;
the bread of truth and of love is lacking in many minds and hearts;
the bread of the word and the bread of the Lord is lacking among many.

Uproot from the hearts of many men and women the egoism
which impoverishes.

May all the peoples of the world accept the true Light
and walk the paths of Peace and Justice
in mutual respect and in a solidarity
rooted in the humanity of our God.

Our Lady of the Portiuncula,
give light to our hope, purify our hearts,
be with us on the paths of evangelization,
towards a world becoming more just and more free for everyone.
Amen.

To Be Builders of Peace (Paul VI)

Lord, God of peace, you who have created us,
The object of your goodwill, to share your glory,
We bless you and we thank you,
Because you have sent us Jesus, your most beloved Son,
Making Him, in His Paschal Mystery, the artificer of salvation,
The source of all peace, the bond of all fraternity.
We thank you for the desires, endeavours, and the achievements
That the Spirit of Peace has awakened in our time to change
Hate into love, distrust into understanding,
Indifference into solidarity.
Open ever more our spirits and hearts
To the concrete demands of the love for our brothers,
So that we can be ever greater builders of peace.
Remember, Father of mercy, all those afflicted
Who suffer and die in the birth of a more fraternal world.
May all humans, of every race and all languages, come to your Kingdom
Of justice, peace and love. May the earth be full of your glory. Amen.

Let Us Be Brothers, Brothers Without Frontiers (R. Follereau)

O Lord, for the last one hundred years men have fought almost one hundred wars:
Teach your children to love one another. Lord, without your love there is no love.
Make us, each and every day, in joy and in pain,
Brothers without frontiers.
Our hospitals will then be your cathedrals,
Our laboratories will be witnesses to your greatness.
In the hearts of those forgotten at one time, your tents shall be resplendent.
Then, accepting no tyranny other than "that" of your goodness,
Our civilisation, crushed by hatred, violence and money,
Will flourish in peace and justice.
As daybreak becomes dawn and later day, your love wants the children of 2000
To be born in hope, to grow in peace and to arrive, finally, to the light,
Discovering, Lord that you are Life.

Give Us Harmony and Peace (Clement I, Pope)

We implore you, O Lord, not to count the sins of your sons and daughters.
Purify them, rather, with the purity of your truth and straighten our steps
To walk in sanctity of heart and to do that which is beautiful and pleasing to your eyes
And to the eyes of Him who guides us.
Yes, Lord; show us your face in order to offer us the goods of peace,
To protect us with your powerful hand, to free us from all sin
With your sovereign arm and to save us from those who hate us unjustly.
Give us, and to all the inhabitants of the world, harmony and peace
As you did to our ancestors who so humbly invoked you in faith and truth;
Give it also to us who are subject to your name that is powerful and full of all virtues.
You, Lord, have given to our kings and leaders here on earth,
The power of the kingdom through your magnificent and indescribable authority
So that they may recognize your glory and the honour that you have given them.
Given them, Lord, health, peace, harmony and certainty, so that they may exercise
Without obstacles the authority that you have given them.
Direct their will, O Lord, according to that which is beautiful and agreeable to your eyes,
So that by using well, in peace and humility, the power that you gave them,
They may be favourable to you.
To you, who alone can do such good things, and greater still, among us,
We give you thanks through the great Priest and protector of our souls,
Jesus Christ, for whom you should be given thanks and magnificence,
Now and from generation to generation forever and ever. Amen.

Lord, Teach Us (R. Follereau)

Lord; teach us to not love ourselves,
To not love ourselves alone,
To not love only those that we love.
Teach us to think of others, loving first of all those whom nobody loves.

Lord, make us suffer the pain of others.
Give us the grace to understand that at each moment,
While we live a life too full of happiness, protected by you,
There are millions of other humans, who are also your children and our brothers and sisters,
Who die from hunger without deserving so to from hunger,
Who die from the cold without deserving so to die from hunger.
Lord, have pity on all the poor of the world.
Forgive us for having abandoned them, through an irrational fear,
And do not allow us, Lord, to live happily in isolation any more.
Help us feel the anxiety of universal misery and free us from ourselves. So be it.

He Was in the Middle of the Street

(M. Quoist)

He was in the middle of the street,
Staggering, and singing at the top of his lungs in the husky voice of a drunk.
People turned round and stopped, amused.
A policeman came silently from behind,
Grabbed him brutally by the shoulder, and took him to the police station.
He was still singing,
And people laughing.

I did not laugh, Lord.
I thought of his wife who would wait in vain for him that night.
I thought of all the other drunks of the town,
 those of the pubs and the bars,
 those of living-rooms and cocktail parties.
I thought of their home-coming, at night;
 of the frightened youngsters,
 the empty wallets,
 the blows,
 the cries,
 the tears,
I thought of the children who would be born of drunken embraces.

Now you have spread your night over the city, Lord,
And while tragedies unfold,
The men who have
 justified alcohol,
 produced alcohol,
 sold alcohol,
That same night sleep in peace.
I think of all those men, and I pity them;
 they have produced and sold misery,
 they have produced and sold sin.
I think of all the others, the crowd of others who work
 to destroy and not to build,
 to stupefy and not to uplift,
 to debase and not to ennoble.

I think especially, Lord, of the many men who work for war,
 who, to feed a family, have to work to destroy others,
 who, to live, must manufacture death.
 I don't ask you to keep them all from their work – that is not possible,
 But, Lord,
 may they question it,
 may their sleep be uneasy,
 may they fight in this world of disorder,
 may they act as leaven,
 may they be redeemers.
 By all the wounded in soul and body, victims of the work of their brothers,
 By all the dead for whom thousands of men have conscientiously manufactured death,
 By that drunk, grotesque clown in the middle of the street,
 By the humiliation and tears of his wife,
 By the fear and cries of his children,
 Lord, have pity on me, too often slumbering.
 Lord, have pity also on the miserable men who are completely
 asleep and collaborate in a world where brothers kill each
 other to earn their bread.

To Follow the Poor God As a Poor Person (Ch. De Foucauld)

Lord Jesus, how can he become poor immediately, he who loving you with his whole heart is unable to accept being richer than his Beloved Good?

Lord Jesus, how can he become poor immediately, he that thinks that all that is done to one of these is done to you; or that which is not done for them is not done for you; relieve all those miseries that closely surround him?

How can he be made poor immediately, he who accepts in faith your words: "If you wish to be perfect, sell all that you possess and give it to the poor". "Blessed are the poor because he who wishes to lose all his goods for my sake, will receive here below a hundredfold and, in heaven, life eternal", and so many other things?

My God, I do not know how it is possible for some souls to see you poor and yet tranquilly remain rich; to see themselves as greater than their Master, greater than their Beloved Good and not want, in so far as it depends on them, to be like you in everything, especially in your humiliation. I desire with all my heart that they would love you, O God, but I believe there is something lacking in their love. Consequently, in so far as it affects me, I cannot conceive love apart from need, of the imperious need for conformity, for resemblance, and above all the desire to share all the sufferings, the difficulties, the hopes of life.

To be rich, in my vanity, to live comfortably with my goods, when you have been poor, have lived in dire straits, straining under hard work: no, I would not be able, my God, to love in that way.

It is not right that the servant be greater than his Master, or that the wife be rich when the Spouse is poor, especially when he is poor voluntarily.

I judge nobody, my God; the others are your servants and my brothers and I can do nothing except love them, do good to them and pray for them; but it is impossible for me to understand love without the search for similarity and without the need to share all crosses.

Listen To My Voice (John Paul II)

Creator of nature and humanity
Of truth and of beauty, I raise a prayer:
LISTEN TO MY VOICE
Because it is the voice of the victims of all wars
And of the violence between individuals and nations;
LISTEN TO MY VOICE,
Because it is the voice of all children who suffer and will suffer
Each time that peoples put their confidence
In arms and in war;
LISTEN TO MY VOICE
When I ask you to pour into the hearts of all human beings
The wisdom of peace, the power of justice and the joy of friendship;
LISTEN TO MY VOICE,
Because I speak in the name of the multitudes of each country
And of each period of history that do not want war
And are disposed to walk the path of peace;
LISTEN TO MY VOICE
And give us the capacity and the strength
To be able to respond to hatred with love,
To injustice with a complete dedication to justice,
To need with our own involvement,
To war with peace.
O GOD, LISTEN TO MY VOICE
And give to the world for all times your peace.

The Prince of Peace (JOHN XXIII)

The Prince of peace distances from the hearts of men
All that which can put peace in danger
And transforms them into witnesses of truth, of justice and of fraternal love.
Enlighten those responsible for the nations so that,
Together with the preoccupation for the well-being of their citizens
They guarantee and defend the great gift of peace;
Inflame the will of all to overcome the barriers that divide,
Make the bonds of mutual love grow,
To understand others, to pardon those who have caused offence;
In virtue of your action, all peoples of the earth come closer
And the much-desired peace flourishes and reigns in them always.

Give Me the Strength Not to Confront (Jewish prayer)

O Lord,
Preserve my lips
From speaking evil,
Trickery and fraud.

Give me the strength
To not confront
Those who insult me.
Let it give me pleasure
To fulfil the precepts
And understand
Your laws fully.
Do not let me be proud.
Annul
The perverse projects
Of those that wish to do me harm.
Give me wisdom
Patience and intelligence
The means of subsistence
Piety and mercy.
O You, who have established
The harmony of creation,
Give peace to humanity and to Israel.

Help Us to Construct a Culture Without Violence

(John Paul II)

O God and Lord of all things, You have desired that all your children, united in the Spirit, should live and grow together by accepting each other in harmony and peace. Our hearts are full of affliction because our human egoism and our greed have impeded the realization of your designs in our times.

We recognize that peace is a gift from you. We know also that our collaboration, as your instruments, requires that we administer with wisdom the resources of the earth for the genuine progress of all peoples. This wisdom demands a respect and deep reverence for life, a lively consideration of human dignity and of the sacredness of the conscience of each person, and a continual struggle against all forms of discrimination, in law and in life.

We commit ourselves, in conjunction with all our brothers and sisters, to the development of a deeper knowledge of your presence and action in history, a more efficient practice of truth and responsibility, a continuous search for freedom from all forms of oppression and for fraternity through the abolition of all barriers, to justice and to the fulness of life for all. Make us capable, Lord, to live and grow in an active cooperation with one and other in the common effort to build a culture without violence, a world community that will not place its security in the construction of ever more destructive arms but in mutual confidence and diligent work for a better future for all your children in a world civilisation made up of love, truth and peace.

Lord, I Would So Much Like

(R. Follereau)

Lord, I would so much like to help others to live,
 All others, my brothers,
 Who mourn and suffer
 Without knowing why,
 Awaiting death that makes them free.
 To work so that all can eat,
 To eat to continue working,
 And, finally, old age and death.
 No! This is not the Peace that you promised!
 Lord, I would so much like to help others to live...
 Without insulting alms
 Of a sterile feeling.
 To prevent the poor dying is good.
 But if it is to leave them to die from hunger
 During their whole life,
 To make of their life a death without end,
 I make myself an accomplice of their assassination,
 Because I hold on to the superfluous that helps them to live.
 To divide amicably the wealth of the world
 Is to participate in your creation.
 Lord, I would like so much to help others,
 All others, my brothers,
 That struggle and debate in a vacuum.
 That lacerate and step on each other in order to accumulate,
 Greedily,
 With hearts bound, conscience compromised,
 A little of that miserable money
 That cause so many destinies to rot;
 Or in order to "gain" -as is said-
 Some minute of inexistent time
 In Paradise:
 No! This is not the Peace you promised!
 Lord, I would like so much to help others,
 All others, my brothers,
 That hesitate in the loneliness...
 Allow me to consecrate my life
 To trying to free them
 From their haste, in order to reach you,
 From their turmoil, in order to listen to you,
 From their wealth, in order to grasp you,
 From their empty vanity,
 In order to know the Peace you have promised,
 If this be your will.

I Believe in Peace (Bo_e Vuleta, Croatia)

I believe in peace:
Not dictated
But permitted;
Not obligated
But offered;
Not commanded
But granted;
Not an external obligation
But an inner decision;
Completed never
But built forever;
Not proscribed
But proclaimed;
Without seasonal harvest
But with fruits gathered in hope.

I believe in peace:
Not won by power
But sought and celebrated in prayer.

Prayers of Different Religions
(World Day of Prayer for Peace, Assisi, October 1986)

Buddhist Prayer for Peace

Excerpts from the dedication chapter of “Engaging in the Ways of the Bodhisattva” by the eighth century Buddhist saint and scholar, Shantideva:

Through the virtue of this effort to enter
Into the ways leading to enlightenment,
May all living beings
Come to engage in those conducts.

May all beings everywhere
Plagued with sufferings of body and mind
Obtain an ocean of happiness and joy
By virtue of my merits.

For as long as they remain in cyclic existence
May their (mundane) happiness never decline,
And may all of them uninterruptedly receive
Waves of joy from Bodhisattvas.

May those with cold find warmth,
And may those oppressed with heat be cooled
By the boundless waters that pour forth
From the great clouds of the Bodhisattva (merits).

May all animals be free from fear
Of being eaten by one another;
May the hungry ghosts be as happy
As the men of the Northern continent.

May the blind see forms,
May the deaf hear sounds
And just as it was with Mayadevi,
May pregnant women give birth without any pain.

May the naked find clothing,
The hungry find food:
May the forlorn find new hope,
Constant happiness and prosperity.

May all who are sick and ill
Quickly be freed from their illness,
And may every disease in the world
Never occur again.

May the frightened cease to be afraid
And those bound be free;
May the powerless find power,
And may people think of befriending one another.

May all travellers find happiness
Everywhere they go,
And without any effort may they accomplish
Whatever they set out to do.

May those who sail in ships and boats
Obtain whatever they wish for,
And having safely returned to the shore
May they joyfully reunite with their relatives.

May the troubled wanderers who have lost their way
Meet with fellow travellers,
And without any fear of thieves and tigers
May their going be easy without any fatigue.

May those who find themselves in trackless, fearful wildernesses,
The children, the aged, the unprotected,
Those stupefied and insane
Be guarded by beneficent celestials.

May pregnant woman give birth without any pain.
Just like the treasury of space,
And without (it being the source of) dispute or harm
May they always enjoy it as they wish.

May all embodied creatures
Uninterruptedly hear
The sound of Dharma issuing from birds and trees,
Beams of light and even space itself.

May celestial grace bring timely rains
So that harvests may be bountiful.

May kings act in accordance with Dharma
And the people of the world always prosper.

May no living creature ever suffer,
Commit evil or fall ill:
May no one be afraid or belittled,
Or their minds ever be depressed.

May beings not experience the misery of lower realms
And may they never know any hardships;
with a physical form superior to the gods

May they swiftly attain Buddhahood.

For as long as space endures
And for as long as living beings remain,
Until then may I too abide
To dispel the misery of the world.

May all the pains of living creatures
Ripen (solely) upon myself,
And through the might of the Bodhisattva Sangha
May all beings experience happiness.

Hindu Prayer for Peace

A. Prayers from the Upanishads

May God protect us; may He nourish us. May we work together with energy. May our studies be fruitful. May we love each other and live in peace.

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

Be united; speak in harmony; let our minds apprehend alike. Common be the end of our assembly. Common be our resolution; common be our deliberations. Alike be our feelings towards our fellow beings. United be our hearts. Common be our intentions; Perfect be our unity for peace.

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

May we hear with our ears what is auspicious. May we see with our eyes what is auspicious. May we sing the glory of God and enjoy a long and healthy life.

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

Oh God, lead us from the unreal to the Real.

Oh God, lead us from darkness to light.

Oh God, lead us from death to immortality.

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

B. A Prayer for Peace

Let there be peace in the heavens; peace in the sky and on the earth;
Peace in waters; Peace in herbs and plants; Peace on all gods; Peace unto all beings.

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

C. Response from the Congregation

Peace, peace, peace unto all.

D. *A Commitment to peace*

We affirm our commitment to establish justice and peace through the common effort of all religions of the world.

We, representatives of religions assembled here, pray to God for justice between man and man through our common effort, and we also pray for love and peace among all nations.

Hymns from the Vedas

May Almighty God, the Friend of all, be for our peace. May the Divine Judge be the Bestower of peace on us. May the Supreme Controller of all be the Granter of peace to us. May the Lord of all power and richness, the Master of all great beings, be for our peace. May the Omnipresent God of unfathomable prowess be the Donor of peace to us.

Oh Lord God Almighty, may there be peace in the celestial regions. May there be peace on earth. May the waters be appeasing. May herbs be wholesome, and may trees and plants bring peace to all. May all beneficent beings bring peace to us. May Thy Vedic Law propagate peace all through the world. May all things be a source of peace to us, and let Thy Peace Itself bestow peace on all and may that peace come to me also.

The Muslim Prayer for Peace

The Muslim prayer is taken entirely from the Holy Qur'an. The first part is the Fatihah, the opening chapter of the Qur'an, recited in Arabic by all the Muslims present. The Second part consists of selected passages of the Qur'an recited by a Reader.

Part One: The Fatihah

In the name of God, the Mercy-giving, the Merciful!
Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe,
the Mercy-giving, the Merciful!
Ruler on the Day for Repayment!
You do we worship and You do we call on for help.
Guide us along the Straight Road,
the road of those whom you have favored,
with whom You are not angry,
nor who are lost!

Part Two: Recitation of verses from the Qur'an

Say ye: "We believe in God, and the revelation given to us, and that given to all Prophets from their Lord: we make no difference between one and other of them: and we bow to God in Islam."

(Sura II, v. 136)

O mankind! reverence Your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person, created of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered like seeds countless men and women; Reverence God through Whom ye demand your mutual rights, and reverence the wombs that bore you: for God ever watches over you.

(Sura IV, v. 1)

O ye who believe! When we go abroad in the cause of God, investigate carefully, and say not to any one who offers you a salutation: "Thou art none of a Believer!" Coveting the perishable goods of this life: with God are profits and spoils abundant. Even thus were ye yourselves before, till God conferred on you His favors: therefore carefully investigate. For God is well aware of all that ye do. (Sura IV, v.94)

But if the enemy incline towards peace, to thou (also) incline towards peace, and trust in God: for He is the One that heareth and knoweth (All things). (Sura VIII, v. 61)

And the servants of (God) Most Gracious are those who walk on the earth in humility, and when the ignorant address them, they say, "Peace!" (Sura XXV, v.63)

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honored of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).

(Sura XLIX, v. 13)

The Traditionalist African Prayer for Peace

Almighty God,
The Great Thumb we cannot evade to tie any knot;
The Roaring Thunder that splits mighty trees;
The All-seeing Lord up on high who sees even the footprints of an antelope on a rockmass here on earth;
You are the one who does not hesitate to respond to our call;
You are the cornerstone of peace.

We call upon you all today for one main reason. Our world is devoid of peace. We are surrounded by constant wars and contentions. We need peace. This has prompted the Holy Father to invite all religions of the world to come together to pray for peace.

We pray therefore for world peace. Let peace reign in the Vatican. Grant peace to Africa. Grant peace to individuals, to homes and

families, and extend the same to all corners of the world.

We pray for long life, wisdom, peace, prudence and courage for His Holiness Pope John Paul II and his advisers. Shower blessings on them.

Accursed be all wicked persons who frustrate this laudable effort made to achieve peace.

May your blessings be manifold upon all those who support and strive for peace.

Finally, to you we pray but in few words. You protected and brought us safely here; do bring us safely back home.

Let all the evil ancestors and spirits receive their drink and flee to their doom.

But you, the good spirits and ancestors whom we have called, receive our drinks, bless us abundantly, and grant us Peace.

The Jewish Prayer for Peace

Our God in heaven, the Lord of Peace will have compassion and mercy upon us and upon all the peoples of the earth who implore his mercy and his compassion, asking for peace, seeking peace.

Our God in Heaven, give us the strength to act, to work and to live until the spirit from above manifests itself upon us, and the desert becomes a vineyard, and the vineyard is seen as a forest.

Justice will have a home in the desert and charity will have a dwelling in the vineyard. The action of justice will produce peace, and the work of justice will yield tranquillity and security forever. And my people will be surrounded by peace, in safe dwellings, and in places of repose undisturbed.

And so, O Lord our God and God of our fathers, bring to fulfilment for us and for all the world the promise you made through the prophet Micah: “ It shall come to pass in the latter days that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains, and shall be raised up above the hills; and peoples shall flow to it, and many nations shall come, and say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob, that he may teach us his ways and we may walk in his paths'. For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. He shall judge between many peoples, and shall decide for strong nations afar off, and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more; but they shall

sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree, and none shall make them afraid; for the mouth of the Lord of hosts has spoken.“

O Lord in heaven, give peace to the earth, give wellbeing to the world, establish tranquillity in our dwellings.

And let us say Amen!

Navajo Chant (evening prayer):

All is beautiful before me,
All is beautiful behind me,
All is beautiful below me,
All is beautiful above me,
All is beautiful around me.

This covers it all,
The skies and the Most High Power Whose Ways Are Beautiful.
All is beautiful...

This covers it all,
The Mountains and the Most High Power Whose Ways Are Beautiful.
All is beautiful...

This covers it all,
The Water and the Most High Power Whose Ways Are Beautiful.
All is beautiful...

This covers it all,
The darkness and the Most High Power Whose Ways Are Beautiful.
All is beautiful...

This covers it all,
The dawn and the Most High Power Whose Ways Are Beautiful.
All is beautiful...

All is beautiful before me,
All is beautiful behind me,
All is beautiful below me,
All is beautiful above me,
All is beautiful around me.

NAVAJO: *Diyin nihi hóló* (God is with us)

Prayer of a Raped Woman

Hava's Entreaty

That night, in the camp when seven men were raping me,
I asked You, to spit out from my womb the seed of this dog race.
Why haven't you heard me, Lord? I have done nothing to You.

I asked You
to free me at least for a moment from the watchful eyes of my torturers,
so that I could tear my womb with my nails.
Why haven't you heard me, Lord? I have done nothing to You.

I turned away my head from water.
I turned away my head from bread,
so that death could have pity on my prayers.
How shall death have pity on me, while all is in your hands, Almighty?

I asked those, who raped me,
those, who butchered my mother,
those, who burnt my house,
I entreated them in Your name, that I would pardon them all,
if they would only kill me, if they would only quarter me.
They did not listen. But they offered me an apple.
Day after day they were feeling, how their fruit was developing.

That morning, when the baby moved first in me,
I pleaded with You,
that my husband Alija would never return from the battlefield.
You haven't heard me, Lord.
You ordered that I be accompanied to the hospital,
that four doctors pin my hands and feet
lest I suffocate this child with my thighs.
More than seeing the sun,
I would have liked to see that child dead,
or that the child would have seen his mother dead.
Why haven't you heard me, my good Lord?
I have done nothing to You, as this little poor innocent did not.

Give me strength, my merciful Lord, that I may bring up this child,
whom nobody except You would keep.
And give the child enough grace to live with people and their truths.
This is what his unhappy mother Hava begs you.

Enes Kicevi

Prayer Service

- Introduction

I'll start from the proposition that the friars are always busy, involved and therefore caught for time. This is what often makes JPIC work difficult. There are so many other commissions, responsibilities and demands on their time. As JPIC promoters we have to be realistic and not allow ourselves to be easily frustrated. We need to be creative and imaginative in looking for ways to conscientize the friars on JPIC issues and present them with possibilities for involvement and encourage them to find ways through what they are already doing to be involved.

Instead of always organizing alternative activities, we should take advantage of what situations and commitments the friars already have. The friars always pray or at least they should.

With this in mind we suggest that JPIC commissions and promoters design prayer services which can be easily used or adapted to the particular circumstances of our fraternities.

The following prayer service could be used during the six weeks of Lent. Instead of the Breviary this prayer format could be used as an alternative once a week. If the friars are uncomfortable about changing the format, some of the ideas could be incorporated into the traditional prayer – morning or evening.

We suggest a specific ecological theme or one that helps the friars reflect on their reality. For example: water, violence, rubbish, poverty, wealth, education, street children, prostitution, landless, unemployed, etc.

The format of the prayer service might be as follows:

- Theme: “Water”

Introduction: This could be embellished in a level and informalized way, what difficulties exist in the country or region. For example: this is what might help in El Salvador:

The Lenten Liturgy invites us to reflection the themes of water and desert.

These themes make sense in El Salvador where half the population (45.2%) does not have running water. Those who have the service realize how fortunate they are. Even the water company admits serious contamination. The rivers, lakes and wells are also contaminated. Only 5% of the 360 rivers of El Salvador have clean waterbeds. The wells of the capital San Salvador are being reduced by 1 meter every year.

After Haiti, El Salvador is the most deforested country in Latin America. Only 12% of the country is wooded due to the indiscriminate cutting down of trees and the building of commercial centers, factories and leasing natural reserves like the El Crisfio’s are in danger of destruction. It is feared that before the 2010 El Salvador could have the desert in Central America.

- Psalm 137 (136)

- Biblical Reading Ez 36:24-27

- Questions for reflection

Who is responsible for the contamination of the water?

Should we remain silent?

What can we do to preserve the water in our fraternity?

Who is responsible for the destruction of the forests?

How do we care for the plants and tress on our properties?

- Universal Prayer: Spontaneous

- **Our Father**

- **Final Prayer**

- **Song**

If the friars wish to maintain the format of the Divine Office, they could reflect on the theme after the reading and answer the questions. The Universal Prayers could be spontaneous related to the theme.

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