

JPIC Praxis in Initial Formation.
Learning JPIC through contact with the poor and other experiences.

Introduction.

Challenges facing us today.

According to the International Panel on Climate Change, December 2000, with over 2000 scientists, the use of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) is causing global warming and climate change and they predict that if the greenhouse gases are not reduced by 60% now, within the next 100 years they expect the world to have warmed by between 1-5C°. In the last 10,000 years the global temperature has risen by 1C°. If one degree rise has led to some of the most severe and damaging storms ever recorded, to longer and more prolonged droughts, as well as the progressive melting of the Polar ice caps and rising sea levels, what will a 5 C° rise do? The Kyoto protocol has, because of US pressure, only been able to get an agreement to reduce greenhouse gases by 8% on the 1990 levels over the next 10 years!!

At the present rate of warming it is predicted that in 25 years there will be 25 million permanent refugees in Bangladesh alone due to permanent flooding. The UN says there are now 25 million refugees in the world. This ecological nightmare scenario is a sign of the times and is a wake up call to those of us who profess to defend and promote life, to get moving before it is too late. What good will our evangelisation policies, or plans and priorities be, if the people to whom we minister are too busy filling sandbags all day long to keep the floods at bay, or are trying desperately to leave their countries with nowhere to go due to the increasing level of intolerance against refugees and asylum seekers in the world.

We must be able to examine the proverbial “patient” who has many illnesses, but some more serious than others! We need to prepare our friars in formation to examine the signs of the times critically and to be able to work along with others: Franciscans, religious, laity, NGO’s and people of good will. Today the problems, as well as the solutions, need to be looked at globally. For example, what reflection has been done in our houses of formation on climate change? How many of our brothers are aware or care about the threats to life on our planet? War is about to be waged in Iraq, where an estimated two million people, mostly children, have already died due to sanctions and a leader, who is more concerned about survival and power than them. Four million people are HIV positive. The International Debt, the modern day slavery, continues to impoverish. Trafficking in women and children for prostitution is as lucrative and less risky for mafias than drugs. How are our formation programmes dealing with these and other contemporary issues? Is the Iraq crisis being used to help our friars reflect on our role as peacemakers, as reconcilers, as promoters of alternative ways of dealing with conflict; ways that recognizes the dignity of the “enemy”, or are we allowing the media and propaganda machines to weigh our support for military actions?

I was asked to share about what is being done in the Order in concrete ways to form friars in JPIC. It is an impossibility to do this in ten minutes. Our brothers in initial formation are inspired or deflated by what they witness in our provinces and in the Order. We have many fantastic brothers doing incredibly brave, compassionate and wonderful work, that comes under the broad classification of JPIC. In fact, the JPIC Manual gives good examples. This is where I suggest we start. Our brothers need to hear the stories, meet the people and be inspired by the same spirit that inspired them to do what they are doing. How can it be humanly possible for a brother to accompany death row inmates to the gallows, stand beside them and watch them hang, after spending a year helping them prepare for this most despicable and undignified end? He is not a

member of a JPIC commission, but his love for these poor and forgotten foreigners, forced by poverty to be human mules, is a heroic example of the integration of justice, peace and integrity of creation into his life and ministry.

I have had the good fortune to share JPIC ideas and issues with young friars in several provinces. I witness a worrying trend. It seems to me that the further along the formation chain, less interested is manifested in what is happening in the world! This would seem to imply that instead of being formed they are being deformed!! Interesting questions were often asked by aspirants and postulants and sometimes no questions by simply professed. I often hear that the more institutionalised we become the more removed we become from the struggles of ordinary people. ***What can we do to keep the brothers in touch with the real struggles of the majority of humanity and to help them identify with their difficulties and want to commit their lives to supporting them?***

Peter Schorr ofm has given you some theoretical ideas on JPIC and formation. The role of a JPIC animator and that of a formator, with respect to JPIC, is to help integrate JPIC values into the life and ministry of the Order and to prepare candidates for future challenges. I will try to share some examples of how provinces in different parts of the Order are helping friars in initial formation live and promote JPIC values using an article I wrote in the JPIC Manual as a basis for this sharing. I asked my fellow animators in the provinces to send me examples, but you can already guess, the responses to survey type questionnaires are rarely plentiful. Fortunately, I have had the privilege to visit many provinces during the last five years of service in the JPIC office and have witnessed a lot, as well as having lived in El Salvador in an inserted fraternity with friars in initial formation for 10 years.

JPIC Formation for formators:

If formators do not agree or support efforts to present JPIC as an integral part of our Franciscan life and mission, our work as JPIC animators is practically impossible. For this reason you, the formators, need to be formed in the JPIC perspective of our charism. I will make a few proposals at the end of this paper to help towards this end.

JPIC in Formation Programmes:

It is important for every Province to have JPIC integrated into every stage of the formation process from the Postulancy to Solemn Profession and then into the ongoing formation programmes. There is a need for a plan or programme. Many Provinces refer to JPIC in their formation statues, but lack a systematic plan that progressively helps friars integrate JPIC into their lives and that prepares them for future ministry. The Bolivarian JPIC commission offers us a draft programme¹ for theoretical formation in JPIC. They use the JPIC resources already available, especially the JPIC Manual, now translated into 10 languages. This and other resources are available on the additional web page of the JPIC Rome office at: www.ofm-jpic.org, the most important of which are: Book of talks given at the International JPIC Congress in Germany, October 2000 (English/Spanish and soon in Italian); the Inter-congregational JPIC Manual, Franciscan nonviolence book (five languages), climate change booklet (12 languages). We will be placing articles and other resources of interest there to help support initial and ongoing formation.

¹Copies of this programme are available in English, Italian and Spanish.

There are a multiplicity of references to Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Ratio Formationis Franciscanae². We need to transform these inspiring sentiments into concrete actions, otherwise we have nothing to offer 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.”

Now let us look at some of these concrete actions taking place in provinces around the world. 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.

I have chosen six subtitles under which I will give concrete examples of lived experiences in the provinces and also make suggestions about what could be done. They are: **Fraternity, Presence, The Voice of the Voiceless, Critical Consciousness, Openness to All, Ongoing Formation**. So as to avoid offense I will generally avoid naming provinces

I. JPIC in Fraternity: (# (RFF 18), # (RFF 21 a), # (RFF 28 b))

1. **Prayer:** to what extent does what happens in the world impinge on our prayer? Our prayer can be spiritualistic or grounded in reality. Our brothers can learn to be contemplatives by reading the signs of the times, not only in the oratory, but in the events of the world. To help in this consider some of the following: prayers of the faithful, special prayer events to commemorate important historic and cultural moments: e.g. International Peace Day, Earth day, migration, etc. Prayer together with members of other religions. Participation in vigils and fasts for peace and human rights e.g. against international debt (Genoa), outside prisons against the death penalty (USA).
2. **House work:** Done by the friars and not just by servants...
3. **Planning processes:** friars³ in initial formation are part of the planning and evaluation of community projects and not just involved in the implementation of plans developed by formators (this is important training to develop a collaborative mentality, essential for a participative church that fully includes the laity). In some provinces friars in initial formation participate in Provincial Chapters. In others friars in initial formation have annual conferences to discuss together the formation process and to make proposals about improving it.
4. **Finances:** Friars assigned to assist the economo of the house, or even invited to be the economo in managing house finances. This helps to give an appreciation of how much is spent and not lose sight of the cost of living, leading to reflection on more simple living. What does the house do with its money? If it is invested in banks what are the ethical implications of these portfolios? Discussion on this can help create an appreciation of the dangers of bad investment policies and how our economic clout as Franciscans can be used for the good by bringing pressure on banks and companies to use ethical standards for their projects.
5. **Employees:** Just wages and fair treatment for employees is a must in all of our houses, particularly in formation houses. Again this is a useful JPIC theme to reflect on with the brothers.
6. **Fair Trade products:** pay just prices for our products. There are many fair trade organizations in the developed world, importing food and other essential goods to help farmers and economies in the developing world. Sometimes these products are a little more expensive, but what we normally pay often does not reflect the real price

² I recommend you read “Justice Peace in the Ratio Formationis Franciscanae”, José Arregui ofm, OFM-JPIC Manual.

³ “Friars” will refer to those in initial formation, if not otherwise stated.

and ecological costs. I was impressed by an SFO member in the USA who buys fair trade and organically grown products, even though they are more expensive. She foregoes other non essential luxury products in order to do this. *She has developed an eco-justice consciousness.* The more people purchasing these products, the cheaper they will become and thus affordable to others. It is important to support local products in the developing world. This could lead to a reflection on consumption habits in the fraternity.

7. **Environmental friendly use of resources:** energy, water, transport, etc. Greenhouse gases, produced by an excessive use of fossil fuels, is one of the greatest dangers to life on the planet. Each of us can make a difference. For example friars in Kyoto get 80% of their energy from solar panels (renewable energy). They collect rain water for use in the toilet and the garden, as well as **recycling** chop sticks for paper. Others separate their waste and use organic material for compost heaps
8. **Solidarity with oppressed:** One letter of solidarity written to the relevant authority may not be noticed, but hundreds are. This has been our experience in the JPIC office. For example, an Urgent Action⁴ letter campaign for two of our brothers in Brazil, whose lives were threatened because of their work for the landless were greatly helped by hundreds of letters, mostly from the Franciscan family, from all over the world. Franciscans International has recently promoted a letter campaign in solidarity with Christians in Pakistan, several of whom have been murdered in recent months. As well as helping specific people and causes this action is formative. Friars become aware of issues outside their country and parish. We encourage support for this Inter-Franciscan urgent action network presently being set up. Friars in formation, who have access to email and internet, could contribute to the formation of a viable network of solidarity.
9. **House Chapters:** Include a time on the agenda to reflect on happenings in the world and ask the question what actions can be taken, no matter how small. For example, in the light of a possible war against Iraq, what should our reaction be as Franciscans and what can we practically do to further the culture of Peace and nonviolence? Most House Chapters deal with work related issues and are not sufficiently used as an ongoing formation tool. By dedicating sufficient time to the House Chapter in initial formation, perhaps progress can be made afterwards.
10. **Renting as opposed to owning accommodation:** Renting accommodation gives a lot of flexibility to move according to the changing circumstances. It is much more difficult to leave property we purchase.
11. **Construction:** our buildings should be constructed in accordance with Franciscan criteria.
12. **Vegetable gardens - farms:** Contact with the land is important not only for sharpening our spiritual discernment but to produce food and medicines. Whenever possible friars should learn the use of natural medicines, as well as the promotion and defense of indigenous wisdom, under threat from pharmaceutical Trans National Corporations intent on patenting their curative properties.
13. **Calculate the ecological footprint of the community:** I am sure you will all be shocked by how out of harmony you are with creation. Examine your ecological footprint Cf., <http://www.olywa.net/roundtable/footprint/>, <http://www.ecologicalfootprint.com/>

II. Presence: (# (RFF 22 b), # (RFF 25 a), # (RFF 32 a), # (RFF 155))

⁴ The Ministers General, April 2002, lent their support to the idea of a *Franciscan Urgent Action Network* to help Franciscans in danger and the people they work with. It will be operational very shortly. Every Franciscan and friend of St. Francis is invited to sign on: <http://www.ofm-jpic.org/urgentaction/index.html>

1) **Small inserted fraternities among the poor:** In many provinces, especially in Latin America and the Philippines, this is a common practice during a part of or all of the initial formation program. There are examples at every stage of formation, from postulancy onwards. In some provinces the novices do a second year in another country.

Some Advantages:

- v Contact with the poor and their struggles.
- v Friars must learn to combine in a supervised and healthy way prayer, fraternity, studies, pastoral work and outside jobs. In a more institutionalized setting much of this is ignored until the friar is assigned to a community in the province and then often must face the crisis alone.
- v It is easier to establish the vocational motivation in a small group; get to know the candidates and help them with a more personalized formation process.
- v Small fraternities among the people keep the brothers in touch with the daily struggles of the people and our lifestyle has a better chance of being evaluated from their perspective. Who we live among and who our friends are determine to a large extent our options and how we read the signs of the times.
- v Personal and fraternal plans can be developed and evaluated with greater ease.
- v Can be partially or completely independent from the provincial economy, which usually has to totally finance other formation houses.
- v An opportunity to experience the day-to-day struggles of the people, develop a pastoral sense, thus giving their theological and academic reflections a more realistic and practical slant.

Some Disadvantages:

- v Unsupervised or unaccompanied small fraternities are a recipe for disaster.
- v Pastoral and work pressures can take from academic endeavor. (although the head of the theology faculty in El Salvador said that those living in inserted fraternities did as well academically as those religious who had no other responsibility than to study).
- v It is often perceived as no more than “an experience” for friars in initial formation only.
- v “You can bring the horse to water, but you cannot make him drink.” Insertion of itself is useless unless there is an openness on the part of the friar to learn. Once solemnly professed many friars refuse to consider insertion.

III. The Voice of the Voiceless (# (RFF 25 b), # (RFF 34 b))

- v **Learn to lobby for the poor:** At present in Geneva there are five young interns gaining invaluable experience in Human Rights work and the learning about the mechanisms of the United Nations. Why not send some of our young friars there as well? Many young people are engaged in Ecological initiatives as I personally experienced at the climate change conference in Bonn. One of our senior friars recently spent a month with one of the Senators in the US Senate learning about how to influence the decision making process in favour of the poor. The Trans National Corporations (TNC) are there in strength with millions of dollars to promote weapons, drugs, cigarettes and favourable trading arrangements with the South and restrictive mechanisms competitive goods.
- v **Invite Guests to share about their lives and work:**
 1. Friars who have particular pastoral experiences with the poor
 2. Laity and others who can give practical advice on a whole range of issues: e.g. how to live in harmony with creation, reduce the ecological footprint by reducing consumption patterns, improve recycling, etc.,

3. The poor who are struggling for their rights and dignity – members of popular organizations, housing committees, land groups, migrants, refugees, HIV/AIDS sufferers, prostitutes, etc.
 4. Visiting missionaries.
 5. Politicians and social scientists to help understand social and political realities.
 6. JPIC commission members on their work and when they attend congresses etc.
- v **Provincial JPIC commissions:** Encourage the brothers to join the provincial JPIC commission and/or inter-Franciscan/congregational commissions. Unfortunately, some province commissions depend on friars in initial formation for their existence. This is a good sign for the future, but a bad sign as to how seriously the province take JPIC animation.
 - v **Support good organizations:** Friars in many provinces directly and indirectly support organizations that work for human rights, i.e., Amnesty International, etc. Some join local branches of the organization. They also participate in and support local community organizations both religious and civil, who work for better conditions for all. Instead of promoting parallel organizations in solidarity with those already struggling for justice, peace and the caring of creation, the friars can work as one of the people rather than assuming leadership positions.

IV. Critical Consciousness (# (RFF 32 b), # (RFF 79), # (RFF 162))

- v In some provinces the friars set aside some 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 **Studies related to JPIC areas and issues:** In general post graduate studies are done in philosophy and theology. Some brothers have studied law, sociology, economics, natural sciences, planning, ecology, human rights, politics, social teaching of the Church, etc, but they are in the minority. Hopefully, in the future provinces will encourage a broader field for study and investigation. Brothers with competence in the natural and social sciences can help orient our mission objectives and strategies.

V. Openness to all and rejection of violence (# (RFF 21 b))

- v **Pastoral experiences**
 - **at home:** during “class time” and “summer holidays”. Most provinces encourage some type of pastoral activities:
 1. In church related activities: social ministries of a parish, visiting sick, drug addicts, elderly, prisoners, caring for handicapped and other minority groups.
 2. With other churches, religions and NGO’s.
 - **abroad or mission areas in the Province:** Time is taken off from studies or other activities at home. (service year/Franciscan year). Friars go to another province or mission territory to live closer to the poor. Usually, if they are simply professed the brothers stay in one of the formation houses of the host province. (it is important these experiences be

accompanied, planned beforehand and evaluated afterwards.) Another advantage is that this can help build tolerance for other cultures and prepare brothers for future international fraternities.

- v **Nonviolence:** There is a need to learn how to resolve conflict in accordance with the principles of nonviolence. This can be learned by participating in guided workshops. The JPIC office has just published a book on Franciscan Nonviolence⁵. We are familiar with anti-globalisation protests, often portrayed by the media as violent, or rather highlighting the violent minority, ignoring the many people who use active nonviolence as a way to get their point across. Many nonviolent movements are looking for people to support their initiatives; e.g., Nonviolent Peaceforce⁶ have asked for four Franciscans. They will be trained in practical nonviolence and serve as peacemakers. How many of us have ever learned practical nonviolent strategies to resolve conflict?
- v Some Brothers **refuse to do military service** and, if they do not accept an alternative service, do time in prison. It is their way of saying no to militarism, continuing Francis' nonviolent tradition of undermining the crusades.
- v **Sharing Living Space with the Poor** The brothers offer hospitality to people suffering from AIDS, refugees, and other marginal groups. In the past, some have openly declared their houses to be sanctuaries for both political and economic asylum seekers. Others 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. Others have opened their houses to help NGO's involved in human rights and promotion work.

VI. Ongoing Formation (# (RFF 58))

- v **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 for all the brothers. Some provinces have taken this decision at their Provincial Chapter. All the friars are invited. In most cases, the local promoters participate. In some provinces, these gatherings are organized in conjunction with the Franciscan Family.
- v Some friars representing their fraternities **join local community organizations that struggle for the betterment of their areas.** In general, they avoid assuming leadership roles.

Conclusion:

Jose Rodriguez Carballo ofm, Secretary for Formation and Studies, in an address to the JPIC animators of the Order at the International Congress, Vossenack, Germany stated: "My presence here wishes to be a sign of collaboration between the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies and the Office of Justice and Peace in Rome. It wishes to be, above all, the expression of a deep conviction that I have had for some time. ***Formation cannot go without this constitutive aspect of the Franciscan charism –Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) –*** nor can this essential aspect of our form of life enter into the concrete life of the friars apart from formation. ***Collaboration is not only convenient, it is necessary.***"

⁵ consult web page for a copy: <http://www.ofm-jpic.org/resources/nonviolence/Nonviolence%20book.pdf>

⁶ see web page for information: <http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/>

To help this process I present you with a proposal (annex) to help integrate JPIC into the formation programmes over the next three years. Please give it your consideration and hopefully, it can be the basis of a concrete proposal from this assembly.

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17/10/2002

JPIC and Formation – a Proposal.

Incorporate JPIC into the formation programmes of each Province

Stage 1: (year 1)

Proposal: The formators in each province attend a JPIC seminar.

Objectives:

1. Learn about the JPIC dimension of our charism
2. Become familiar with the resource material available.
3. Start to develop an outline of a JPIC programme in order to integrate it into the overall formation programme.

Responsible: Secretary for Formation and Studies and JPIC provincial animator.

Stage 2. (year 2)

Proposal: Secretaries for Formation and JPIC animators of each Conference meet.

Objectives:

1. Share outlines of JPIC formation programmes.
2. Draw up a common proposal for the entities of the Provinces of the Conference.

Responsible: Conference Secretaries for Formation and Studies and for JPIC.

Stage 3. (year 3)

Proposal: Publish JPIC formation programmes.

Objective: In the light of this publication, each province reworks its programme.

Responsible: Secretariat for Formation and Studies and JPIC office, Rome

Stage 4. (ongoing)

- a) **Proposal:** At least every three years Formators participate in a seminar and/or set time aside at other seminars.

Objective: Familiarization with JPIC resource material and ideas.

Responsible: Secretary for Formation and Studies and JPIC animator.

- b) **Proposal:** Every six years the JPIC programme is revised.

Objective: renewal of the programme

Responsible: Secretary for Formation and Studies.

**Curriculum for JPIC Themes.
A Draft Proposal for the Conferences
by
Bolivarian Conference**

Postulancy

- v Critical socio-political history of the country
- v Critical analysis method to analyse the reality
- v Politics (models, parties and movements)
- v Economics (models). Neo-liberalism
- v Ideology

Noviciate

The Franciscan vision of JPIC:

- v Franciscan presence in the world
- v Minority, option for the poor and peace building
- v JPIC in evangelisation and formation
- v Contemplation: union with God and work for JPIC
- v JPIC in the Ratio formationis Franciscanae

Francis and his praxis:

- v Francis a man at peace and a peacemaker (Adm. 13 and 15; letter to the Authorities of the Peoples: 3 Comp 58).
- v Instrument of Peace (Mirror of Perfection, 101; Leg. of Perugia, 84)
- v Proclamation of peace and good
- v Rule of the Order
- v Documents of the Order and of the Franciscan Family on JPIC
- v OFM General Chapter (1997).
- v Ministers General and the Franciscan Family (19/4/1981)
- v Plenary Council, Bahia: “The gospel challenges us”, 1983.
- v OFM General Chapter 1985.
- v Pope John Paul’s meeting in Assisi “Spirit of Assisi”, 26-27 October, 1986
- v Ministers General and the Franciscan Family: “the Spirit of Assisi”. (164/87)
- v OFM General Constitutions, Chapter VI (Art. 64-82)

Philosophy

Social Teaching of the Church: Documents:

- v Rerum Novarum (León XIII, 1891).
- v Mater et Magistra (Juan XXIII, 1961).
- v Pacem in terris (Juan XXIII, 1963).
- v Gaudium et Spes (Vatican II, 1965).
- v Populorum Progressio (Paul VI, 1967).
- v Laborem exercens (John Paul II, 1981).
- v Sollicitudo rei socialis (John Paul I I, 1987).
- v Centessimus annus (John Paul II, 1991).

- v Medellín (1968) y Puebla (1979).

Themes with specific interest:

- v **Peacemakers:** Biblical and Franciscan fundamentals.
- v **Justice:** Biblical and Franciscan fundamentals.
- v **Integrity of Creation:** Ecological Justice, Biodiversity, Climate Change, water...
- v **Life:** Abortion, death penalty, euthanasia,...
- v **Human Rights:** individual and collective, national and international
- v **Active Nonviolence.**
- v **Women:** Machismo

Theology:

JPIC Structures in the Order: JPIC office, Conference and Province (Rome, New York, Geneva).

JPIC and different ministries:

- v In daily life
- v In mission “Ad Gentes”.
- v In parroquial ministry.
- v In the ministry of the word.
- v In education.
- v In formation.

Ethics and Bio-ethics.

Ecumenism.

Enculturation and inter-culturation. Cultures.

Bibliography:

- v Writings and Biographies of Francis
- v Rule, Constitutions and General Statutes.
- v JPIC Manual “Instruments of Peace – a Franciscan Resource Book”
- v Indicated Documents.
- v Vossenack Book.
- v Climate change book