

INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING FOR JPIC

JAKARTA - INDONESIA

19-26 JUNE 2014

INTRODUCTION

The fifteenth meeting of the JPIC International Council (ICJPIC) was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, 19-26 June, 2014. Delegates included one representative from each of the thirteen OFM conferences, the JPIC International Animation Committee, and the two friars who work in the Rome JPIC Office. ICJPIC delegates were invited to participate in the last day of the Asia/Oceania continental meeting; the day consisted in a series of presentations on the reality of Asia and Indonesia, and a dialogue with representatives of Franciscans International.

The work of the ICJPIC began with a series of presentations on the reality of each Conference, highlighting the JPIC issues of the regions, including an evaluation of JPIC work in the Conferences since 2009. These were followed by a report from the Rome Office on the accomplishments of the last two years. Formation sessions for the delegates dealt with the role of the conference coordinator and collaboration at all levels, and with a study of the *Lineamenta* for the General Chapter of 2015. Formation sessions continued with overviews on three new documents for our work: *Franciscan Management of Financial Resources*, the *Franciscan Toolkit for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*, and the *European Document on Immigration*. Sessions were then held on each of the three topics chosen for in-depth study at this ICJPIC: lifestyle, mining and eradication of hunger. Delegates heard a presentation on each issue, and participated in a series of small groups and plenary sessions. The goal for each topic was to prepare a short introduction for our JPIC work over the next two years, along with proposals for practical application of each topic.

The first task of the ICJPIC was to evaluate the work of the previous years. It was acknowledged that work has been done to implement the mandates of the last General Chapter for JPIC, as specified in the documents of Tarata and Nairobi, but much remains to be done. Delegates made it clear that we should continue to work on the mandates that came from the last General Chapter. New proposals are a continuation of the work that we are already doing.

During the meeting it also became obvious that the topics raised in the *Lineamenta* for the General Chapter are intimately related to the topics chosen for our ICJPIC. Based on the call of Francis to a life of minority and in the spirit of the *Lineamenta*, ICJPIC delegates made it clear that it is time to move beyond merely EVALUATING our lifestyle and commitment to JPIC, to actually CHANGING our lifestyle and choosing very concrete issues for our work. From many parts of our

OFM world friars are saying that we need to talk less and do more; delegates to the ICJPIC chose to highlight this idea.

The call for a change of lifestyle is related to issues concerning ecology, economics and political commitment. On a personal level we are called to a lifestyle that is sober and sustainable. But personal change is not sufficient. Together, as a community that is present in today's world, we must analyze the situation in which we live and make wise choices that will confront the "structures of sin" that abuse the dignity and human rights of so many of our brothers and sisters, and degrade our Sister Mother Earth.

For this reason, when considering the topic of lifestyle, the ICJPIC delegates also studied the issues of mining and eradication of hunger. Both of these issues deeply affect the lives of the people with whom we work throughout the world, and demand of us a commitment to seek structural solutions to the problems that have arisen in the context of the current economic model. These two issues also remind us that the choices we make in our daily lives have consequences in the lives of millions of people around the world. For example, production of cell phones and computers is based on exploitative practices in various parts of the world. Each of these three topics is developed further in the following three sections of this document.

The ICJPIC delegates found one very practical way to contribute to the discussion and proposals regarding a change in lifestyle. JPIC offers to the Entities of the Order the recently prepared *Franciscan Toolkit on Peacebuilding and Reconciliation* to promote better interpersonal communication among the friars. JPIC animators and other interested friars can be trained in use of this material and use it to address the relational problems raised in the survey that was sent to friars throughout the world.

The ICJPIC also considered the proposals that might be sent to the General Chapter. Since the proposals must be included in the report to be sent by the Rome Office to the Minister General, delegates prepared a list of suggestions, and left the final choice of the proposals in the hands of those in the Rome Office.

Among the topics discussed throughout the ICJPIC was that of cultural diversity, and our brothers from Asia/Oceania helped keep this reality in sight at all times. Delegates were aware that our JPIC documents are culturally limited. Everyone faces this challenge. The ICJPIC invites all who will use this document, and any other JPIC material as well, to keep this issue in mind, and to adapt the materials to use in your own regions and cultures.

Delegates to the ICJPIC were unanimous in their thanks for the hospitality and care provided by the host province, Indonesia. As one friar put it, "from the moment I stepped off the plane..." our Indonesian brothers were there to help us. In the course of our meetings, Adrianus Sunarko, the provincial, and Paskalis Syukur, bishop of Bogor, took time to celebrate Mass with us. The JPIC Office of the province made all logistical arrangements. The sisters at the retreat house where we met were also extremely welcoming. The "reality visits" that our brothers prepared helped us to

understand better some of the challenges of work in Indonesia. Finally, the friars of Indonesia showed us how JPIC can truly become a transverse element of our life and ministry. We thank them for their example and for all of their hard work.

LIFESTYLE

To change our manner of living is more than simply a matter of bettering our own personal lifestyle and living a life of greater personal sanctity. Our call to be men who live by principles of peace, justice and the integrity of creation, means developing a consciousness that there are consequences to the choices we make regarding lifestyle that affect our fellow men and women, the communities of which we are part, and the very earth and its environment.

Pope John Paul II prophetically called us to engage in a threefold conversion in our manner of life; a conversion that is spiritual, a conversion that is human and a conversion that is ecological. More recently, the message of Pope Francis has challenged us to embrace such conversions in our manner of living so that we move:

From

Self-Absorption, that perceives the personal needs of each individual friar as paramount;

Social Indifference, that is heedless of the social struggles in which so many men and women in the world are engaged;

Selfishness, that considers the goods entrusted to us to be ours alone, solely for our own enjoyment;

Close Mindedness, that creates detachment from individuals and communities around us.

To

Minority, a humility and openness of spirit that makes one sensitive to the cries for peace and justice;

Preferential Option for the Poor, that identifies with the 'widow, the orphan and the stranger' and struggles with them in solidarity;

Ethical Use of Resources, that uses the gifts received for the common good in the spirit of the Poverello;

Dialogue, that opens us open to engagement, relationship and genuine compassion with the 'other'.

These are all issues explored and put before us in the *Lineamenta* of the 2015 General Chapter. We commend these issues for consideration, a consideration sensitive to the principles of Franciscan life that underlie our work in justice, peace and the integrity of creation. It gives us a helpful model for changing our lifestyle as Franciscans.

In particular, the International Council of JPIC suggests these possible concrete actions in relation to matters of our lifestyle, to be adapted according to circumstances:

1. Developing a consciousness of the consequences of our lifestyle choices. In particular:
 - a. Reviewing our manner of living when it fuels the adverse consequences of mining around the world.
 - b. Reflecting on how what we eat and what we throw away contributes to the experiences of hunger.
2. Embracing the principles that have been proposed in the document '*Care of Creation in the Daily Life of the Friar Minor*'. Some instances would be:
 - a. Assessing the environmental footprint of each household and exploring means to reduce it.
 - b. Adopting the use of the Three R's: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.
 - c. Reflecting on our use of resources, such as transport, energy, food and issues of waste disposal.
3. Becoming aware of our own habits of consumption and their consequences. This can be done by:
 - a. Purchasing products that are local, organic and of 'fair trade'.
 - b. Altering our consumerist habits and reducing our purchases generally.
4. Working towards a more just and ethical administration of our resources. This would include:
 - a. Adopting the principles set forth in the document *Franciscan Management of Financial Resources*.
 - b. Sharing the resources which have been given to us, even our own houses.
5. Embracing a lifestyle of active non-violence. This can be promoted through:
 - a. Making use of the *Franciscan Toolkit for Peacebuilding and Reconciliation*.
 - b. Adopting practices of reconciliation and peace at all levels of our lives.
6. At the Entity level, creating fraternities that embody in their lifestyle the principles of JPIC through strengthening a spirit of minority, by manual work, by friary gardening, etc.

MINING

Environmental Justice was a mandate of the General Chapters in both 2003 and 2009. Building on this mandate, the JPIC Office in Rome, together with the JPIC Animation Committee of the Order, has become increasingly involved in the consequences of mining. The decision to make mining a priority for JPIC work arises from visits made to OFM entities throughout the world.

The current socio-economic model has yielded consequences around the world which are destructive to the human person, to social relationships and to the environment. It is based on unlimited growth and has led to an increasing gap between the rich and the poor, to over-exploitation of natural resources and to rampant consumerism. Recent pontiffs have spoken out against this reality, which they have described as “structural sin.”

This reality is intimately tied to the question of lifestyle. Consumerism has given birth to patterns of extraction which create manifold problems in many sites where the friars are present. Almost without exception, JPIC animators have spoken about difficulties in their regions regarding mining; some entities, like the provinces of Central America, Indonesia, and the Brazilian Conference, are extremely active in this area. The problems created go beyond the simple extraction of minerals. They encompass environmental damage done by slag and open cut mining, the threat to food security through loss of arable land and the spread of toxins, the abuse of human rights as people are dispossessed of land and unjustly deprived of the proceeds of mining, and the economic exploitation of poorer nations by developed countries and multinational corporations. Friars at the grassroots have reported firsthand on human rights abuses, violence, corruption and the environmental degradation they have witnessed.

Our decision to make mining a priority was reinforced at the recent Asia/Oceania continental meeting and at our International Council meeting. Report after report spoke about the consequences of mining.

Delegates at the ICJPIC affirmed our previous efforts regarding mining and agreed that the issue should remain a priority for our work. They also suggested that mining be treated in relation to the other two major topics of this ICJPIC: Lifestyle and Eradication of Hunger. In their deliberations they offered the following proposals for our work in the area of mining:

1. Accompany persons and peoples negatively affected by extractive industries and the social movements that support and defend those so affected, by means of:

- promoting networks of solidarity;
- building bridges between the grassroots and international institutions working on advocacy.

2. Raise awareness among friars and others with whom we are associated regarding the consequences of our consumption/lifestyle and the realities of the extractive industry, by means of:

- deepening our reflection on this issue from the biblical and theological perspective, and from that of our Franciscan spirituality;
- promoting twinning relationships between provinces, parishes and schools;

- promoting the three R's (reduce, reuse, recycle) as a way to decrease the environmental impact of the use of minerals and as a way to encourage a change of lifestyle;

- developing prayer services on this theme.

3. Increase collaboration on issues of mining with:

- the Franciscan Family, especially with Romans VI (group of JPIC directors of the Family);

- Franciscans International, especially in regard to the UPR (Universal Periodic Review);

- JPIC promoters of other religious congregations;

- the Holy See, particularly the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace;

- local Churches;

- other Christian churches

- social movements.

ERADICATION OF HUNGER

Moved by the work of the *International Religious Congregations at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations* (ICR at FAO), the ICJPIC delegates in Jakarta reflected on Eradication of Hunger. ICR at FAO is a group of about 20 congregations that in collaboration with Civil Society, is dedicated to advocacy at FAO. The major issues they deal with are food sovereignty, better food and agriculture policies, land grabbing, malnutrition, eradication of hunger and reduction of poverty.

Francis of Assisi, a prophet of his times, advocated strongly in favor of the poor. He adopted a lifestyle of simplicity and poverty and, by living among the poor, helped to create the possibility of a better life for them. Thaddée Matura in his text *Poverty and the Poor in the Message and Life of Francis of Assisi* said, "When considering what Francis says about it in his writings, one is struck by a paradox. According to him, poverty is at the same time both a good, an ideal that he embraces by following Christ, and an evil that he wants to address by seeking to relieve those who are affected by it."

Franciscans around the world have done wonderful work by answering the call to help the poor and many have worked to alleviate hunger by creating soup kitchens and helping the poor in their immediate needs. However, as the problem of poverty and hunger in the world is becoming more and more complex, our answer to it needs to address not only the necessities of life but also the causes of poverty and hunger at a structural level.

Having reflected on how JPIC animators should address this issue and on what approach or methodology should be used to work on the matter of eradication of hunger, the ICJPIC came up with the following proposals:

1. The Office in Rome should provide animators with basic information on these issues;
2. At all levels we need to integrate the issue of the eradication of hunger into the topic of our lifestyle, especially in relation to consumerism;
3. The Conferences should continue collaborative activities with FI and FAO as well as with other religious and social movements;
4. The animators should raise awareness among the friars and our associates about eradication of hunger and poverty both in rural and urban areas;
5. Animators should encourage better policies of consumption through discussion with guardians, bursars and shoppers. This policy could include the purchase of local food and products, giving special consideration to organic products and goods obtained through “fair trade”, the wastage of food and packaging.
6. Animators should help develop a richer understanding of the fasts set forth in the Rule by encouraging among friars and fraternities practices of solidarity where money saved can be used to combat hunger.
7. JPIC should model changes in our consumerist lifestyle by adopting responsible choices in our JPIC meetings: by using alternative means of communication, not using plastic, imported products, etc.