

# CONTACT

QUARTERLY BULLETIN OF JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION, OFM



## Inauguration of the *Laudato Si'* Revolution campaign

The OFM JPIC Office has launched the *Laudato Si'* Revolution campaign on May 24, 2020, the fifth anniversary of the promulgation of the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It's a global campaign of the Franciscans, the aim of which is to encourage and promote integral ecological conversion, i.e., environmental, economic and social ecology. And every single Franciscan is invited to this revolution!

1

### ECOLOGY

Philippines - France -  
South Korea

2

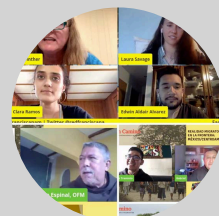
### MIGRATION

Central America - USA

3

### HUMAN RIGHTS

West Papua -  
Franciscans International  
- Philippines



**En Camino...**  
**Testimonies**  
**from Franciscan**  
**Network on**  
**Migration**



**Franciscan**  
**Statement**  
**against Anti-**  
**Terror Bill,**  
**Philippines**



**Special COVID-19**  
**report from the**  
**Brothers around**  
**the world**

# Laudato Si Revolution: a great realization!

*As we continue our journey of Laudato Si' Revolution, may we respond immediately to the need for an integrated way of expressing our preferential option for the poor and protect life in all its forms and differences.*

As *Laudato Si'* celebrates its fifth anniversary this year, our Order launched our very own campaign *Laudato Si'* Revolution. Our humble initiative coincides with Pope Francis' declaration of *Laudato Si'* Jubilee. These mark that the call of the encyclical is constant and challenging even at this point. Its central message in addressing issues of our common home has never been more relevant now in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Laudato Si'* Revolution reminded us that everything is interconnected. Every part of our life is important, and it is valued, and God is neglecting not a single creature. We are now living in a time where many things are endangered. This is being resulted by human negligence. Many lost their natural habitats because of deforestation and mining. It usually happens in the Global South, which is being supported by multinational companies. It increases the extinction of species and threatens the source of

income of indigenous People and their communities.

In Asia, the illegal harvesting of Elephant horns by businesspeople for the use of decorations and Ivory statues leaves in its wake a catalog of cruel animal suffering. In the COVID-19 crisis, this illegal trade has escalated. The source of COVID-19 in a market dedicated to the illicit business of live animal 'products' reflects a broken relationship with other animals and with each other. Instead of valuing its worth and respect for creation in the way humanity is called to do, we failed our commitment to God to live up to that divine image and have become the oppressors of Mother Earth instead of being stewards.

*Laudato Si'* Revolution acknowledges the gift of science to humanity, but also its limits in solving difficult problems and the danger of technology replacing real human relationships. Scientists are usually prudent: they do not assume that their product will be enough and use probabilities rather than truth. However, this pandemic has unveiled that political decision making is overconfident on statistical data, which turns to keep away the structural and individual changes that are necessary to provide life-long change. Science is a crucial element in resolving climate change problems, but climate change is not enough to

effect social change. The use of technologies to conduct virtual gatherings and assemblies during the lockdown satisfies only our human need for communion.

*Laudato Si'* Revolution emphasized the need to take care of and listen to the marginalized and





poorest among the poor in our communities. The pandemic crisis has exposed the rampant inequality and racial discrimination that is showed by those most affected by the virus. While the logic behind is unclear, this worldwide health crisis has highlighted the injustices that are happening in our society. In some parts of the world, in my beloved country, the Philippines, for example, indigenous peoples have few or no access to health care or even basic sanitation and clean water, which leads to illness and death on a massive scale. This is a byproduct of interconnected social and political issues of the worldwide public health condition and not only medical imperatives of epidemiology. An integral approach is really needed to discuss inequality without compromising on the care for our common home. We must address and resolve conflicts of interest immediately rather than avoiding it. We must not forget our brothers and sisters who are vulnerable, especially the least, the lost and the last.

**“This pandemic  
will be a part of  
our future that will  
continue to remind us  
of a great realization...  
ecological conversion.”**

The call of *Laudato Si' Revolution* is to listen to the cry of the earth and the cries of the poor. Are we truly listening to their call, especially in this time of COVID-19 Pandemic crisis? There are people out there who are supporting others through their daily acts of kindness. As Franciscans, we are trying our best to respond to this call with our little way of maximizing our resources to help in the best possible way. But do you think that this expression of compassion is enough? Are we willing to take the risk and care for those in need, especially those in deprived areas of our society? Are we ready to respond to those people who have little or literally no support from their governments? Or we will just allow ourselves to be complacent thinking only our own security? Can we, even in a time of grieving, move our heads and open our eyes to witness the death and suffering of people around the world and

other living creatures? Are we willing to love beyond our capacity and embrace humanity even in these trying times of uncertainty? Are we ready to respond to the imperatives of a post-COVID-19 world? Are we ready to embrace the modern-day lepers of our world today, like what our Seraphic father Francis did?

This pandemic crisis we are facing now will be a part of our future that will continue to remind us of a great realization. It is a realization of ecological conversion. As we continue our *Laudato Si'* Revolution journey, may we respond immediately to the need for an integrated way of expressing our preferential option for the poor and protect life in all its forms and differences. May our *Laudato Si'* Revolution campaign be our great realization to continue protecting our common home. \*



[www.laudatosirevolution.org](http://www.laudatosirevolution.org)



**Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM**

JPIC Animator, San Pedro Bautista Province, Philippines  
JPIC Coordinator, East Asian Conference  
JPIC Animation Committee



### **English**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Message from the Minister General](#)

### **Español**

[Revolución Laudato Si' | Mensaje del Ministro General](#)

### **Italiano**

[Rivoluzione Laudato Si' | Messaggio del Ministro Generale](#)

### **Deutsch**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Nachricht des Generalministers](#)

### **Français**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Message du Ministre Général](#)

### **Hrvatski**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Poruka Generalnog ministra](#)

### **Polski**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Przesłanie Ministra Generalnego](#)

### **Português**

[Revolução Laudato Si' | Mensagem do nosso Ministro Geral](#)

### **한국어**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | 총봉사자의 메시지](#)

### **Tiếng Việt**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | Thông điệp của Tổng Phục vụ](#)

### **عربي**

[Laudato Si' Revolution | رسالة من الرئيس العام .](#)

# Protect Migrants and Refugees during the COVID-19 Pandemic



Slowing the spread of COVID-19 requires that everyone be included in prevention and protection strategies, especially the most vulnerable, including migrants and refugees. This pandemic is a public health crisis that brings home how interconnected we are. It is our collective responsibility to act rapidly and in solidarity.

As grassroots and faith-based organizations and religious leaders from across Central America, Mexico and the United States working to address the root causes of poverty, violence and corruption that force people to leave their homes, we offer this framework for action to protect migrants and refugees and help all of our communities survive this crisis and rebuild with justice and equity.

We demand the rapid, safe and orderly release of as many migrants and asylum seekers from detention as possible:

- ▶ Identify and prioritize the immediate release of those at risk due to underlying medical conditions or age.
- ▶ No migrant should be detained in a facility that is unable to follow required COVID-19 prevention steps.
- ▶ Those managing detention centers must identify, protect and refer those suspected of being ill to specialized health care services...

Read the complete text on [redranciscana.org](https://redranciscana.org): English - Spanish







## Franciscan Network on Migration – USA

The Network organized the first meeting for members of the Franciscan Network on Migration-USA in April. Twenty-nine individuals representing parishes and congregations including friars, sisters and lay workers joined in online. Fr. Julian Jagudilla, OFM, and Fr. Jacek Orzechowski, OFM, provided introductory comments and discussed the history of the Network, Executive Secretary Lori Winther gave an overview of the objectives and activity of the Network, and Russell

Testa discussed recent and proposed advocacy initiatives. Russell provided an update on where we are with the migration situation, specifically the anti-immigration stance of the current US administration, the impact of COVID-19, border issues, and upcoming Supreme Court decisions on DACA and TPS.

During the meeting, questions came up such as “What are we going to do as a Network?” and “What will be our focus?” The RFM has asked all attending to consider the Network’s objectives and program areas over the next weeks and think about what they can contribute to the Network and what they need from the Network in order to forge a path forward together.

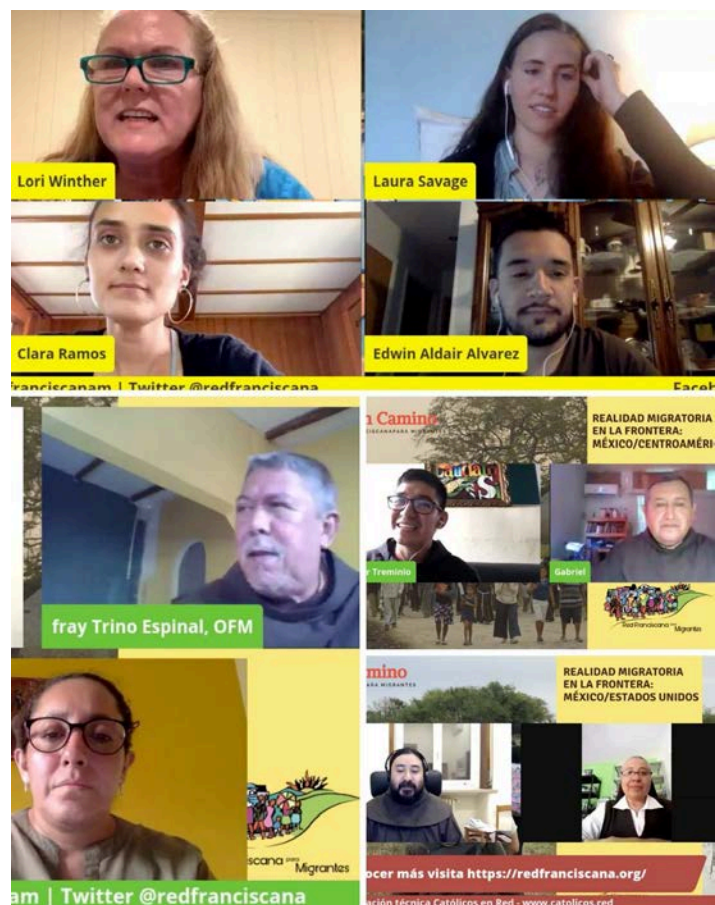
Our next meeting is planned for July 21, 2020. \*

**Lori Winther**  
Executive Secretary  
Franciscan Network on Migration

## En Camino: On the way ... Testimonies from the Franciscan Network on Migration

During the month of June, every Thursday, a series of online interviews were carried out on Facebook with members of the Franciscan Network on Migration (RFM) in collaboration with “*La ventana de pazybien.es*” (The window of pazybien.es). It was an innovative experience where topics on migration were addressed based on the experience and testimony of the guest speakers.

They shared their work experience in the protection, defense and care of migrants: Sr. Isabel Turcios, FMI (Frontera Digna shelter home for migrants, Piedras Negras), Br. Juan de Sagaú, OFM (San Francisco soup kitchen for migrants, Mazatlán), Br. Gabriel Romero (La 72 refuge home for migrants, Tenosique), Betty Calixto (RFM-México / Cholula), Br. Trino Espinal, OFM (RFM-Honduras), Clara Ramos, Laura Savage, Edwin Álvarez (La72 volunteers)



# Jerusalem Statement (2/4)

*The JPIC Coordinators reached an agreement at the ICJPIC 2019 to implement these directives in their Conferences.*

## *Climate Crisis*

We, the members of the ICJPIC are deeply troubled by the ecological disasters we witness all over the world and by their devastating effects on the poor and vulnerable. We recognize that our misguided human actions are destroying the vital climate system of our common home. There is little time left for humanity to change its course, if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences for Earth's community of life. In this existential crisis, we must hear the voices of young people clamoring for climate justice. Therefore, we resolve to:

- ▶ Promote and celebrate the *Season of Creation* in liturgy and through actions of solidarity.
- ▶ Collaborate with the Global Catholic Climate Movement.
- ▶ Engage in the Divestment Movement from the dirty fossil fuel industry and reinvest in clean, renewable energy.
- ▶ Participate in global and local mobilization efforts for climate justice.
- ▶ Raise the awareness and deepen our understanding of the issues discussed in *Laudato Si'*.
- ▶ Collect and share the stories of the best practices around ecological conversion.
- ▶ Promote holistic alternatives to the culture of hyper-consumption.
- ▶ Partner with civil society, government authorities and social entrepreneurs to advocate for climate justice.
- ▶ Plant trees.





# The Coronavirus crisis – a turning point

*God's image changes as we face human misery and the fragility of life. They find the "good" God, empathetic and not punitive, among the poor and the lepers*



**Br. Johannes B. Freyer, OFM**  
Missionszentrale der Franziskarner  
Bonn, Germany

Since the Second World War, no event has caused the world so much unrest, anxiety and conflict as the coronavirus pandemic engulfing all countries. What hardly anyone could conceive has spread across the world like wildfire. A virus makes humanity – who considers itself the superior species – aware of its weakness and pulls people's vulnerability and mortality into the public eye. Nature is now painfully teaching humans that it is stronger than our illusion of limitless possibilities, as well as our belief in eternal progress. Moreover, the virus destroys the "economic dogma" of the necessary progressive increase in profits, with devastating results. It turns out that an economic and progress doctrine has been imposed on a world that is now unable to cope with the virus. The mirage of prosperity stands on shifting sands. In this pandemonium, it seems that systems with a social orientation fare better than those based on neo-liberal theories.

In recent weeks, perhaps extending for months, people around the world have been forced to "fast", whether they like it or not. Restrictions on entry, closure of schools, kindergartens and non-essential businesses. The coronavirus forces people to forego pleasure, consumption and free movement. Instead,

"social distancing" and quarantine are required. Even worse, the virus threatens jobs and increases social injustices worldwide. All this scares many people and destroys trust in politics and institutions. Uncertainty is spreading and the longer the anti-measures take, the more the resistance of those who are only concerned with their own freedom and benefit grows. Scapegoats are sought and old stereotypes resurface. Since there are no easy answers to the complex situation, fake news and conspiracy theories rear their heads again. Unreasonableness connects right-wing populists with left-wing ideologues and religious hardliners. In this situation, we must exercise patience, understanding and truthfulness.

**“It is not in death  
where the hazard lies  
but in the unkindness  
of selfishness.”**

Spiritual orientation can also provide guidance. In this context, we could draw inspiration from those who follow the guidance of Francis and Clare of Assisi. While they lived in another century and faced other crises, social problems, and epidemics, their work may still shape our present actions. According to his own words in the Testament, Francis finds his way out of this personal life crisis because he dared to overcome the "social distancing" towards lepers imposed by society and the church at that time through friendship and solidarity. This was done on medical grounds, i.e. to avoid contagions, but also because lepers were deemed sinners from a theological standpoint. And yet, the noble Clare does not abide by the rules of her class and looks after the poor and socially excluded. The encounter with suffering and misery also poses the question of God and one's own self-image. "Who are you and who am I?" are the existential questions handed down from Francis. In both cases, God's image changes as we face human misery and the fragility of life. They find the "good" God, empathetic and not punitive,





among the poor and the lepers. Both of them were plagued with illnesses and nearing death for most of their lives. This shaped their perception of illness and death. They want sick sisters and brothers to benefit from the greatest possible help and relief at that time. At the same time, they encourage people to accept illness with active patience as part of life, while regarding disease as an opportunity for human growth and maturation. Death is neither kept secret nor suppressed in any way. For them, it is a part of life that instils no fear because it cannot destroy authentic relationships of love and belonging. For it is not in death where the hazard lies but in the unkindness of selfishness. Challenged by crises, diseases, social distance and injustice, as well as driven by a changed image of God, they create a brotherhood lifestyle that stands in stark contrast with the hierarchical society and church. This lifestyle, which is also based on religion – everyone in Jesus Christ as brothers and sisters is a creature of the same God – has a universal character. More importantly, other believers and all creatures are also included. Their experience of poverty, disease and exclusion will help them discover a God who cares about all creatures and fosters life. What is more, the perception that a happy life arises from the gift of the compassionate and sympathetic relationship, and which cannot be acquired through money, property or power, transforms their view of people and the world. Instead of the "Homo Economicus", they focus on the "Homo Fraternus/Sororius", which produces social and economic effects. Instead of inserting themselves in the emerging pre-capitalist monetary economy, they favour manual labour to ensure that the people's economic activity is embedded in social relationships. In doing so, they overcome an economy of profit at the expense of humanity and nature, falling back on a gift economy that defines social, cultural and ethical values in

addition to monetary values. With the human and world view of "Homo Fraternus/Sororius" and a gift economy, they are prepared for unforeseeable crises and able to deal with them in a learning process.

So, what could we learn from our coronavirus crisis, inspired by Francis, Clare and the Franciscan-Clarian tradition? Here are a few suggestions: The "physical distance" that is now necessary should be practised through a responsible "social closeness" to those most affected: the poor, the elderly, the sick and those who are losing their livelihoods as we speak. To maintain the distance necessary for health reasons through new forms of closeness, care and solidarity, we must apply imagination, spontaneous flexibility, intuition and unconventional humanity.

Instead of enabling large companies to pay dividends through tax funds, the aim now is to use funds to save lives, alleviate poverty and preserve jobs. Instead of returning to the "normality" of the profit of the neo-capitalist economy, what we need now is the courageous transformation of the economy into a truly social market economy. The crisis of this pandemic has clearly shown that the previous practice of capitalism cannot withstand such a situation. Apparently, it is time to question the neo-liberal economic system and its dogmas of eternal growth, and to take other structures and mechanisms seriously. We must understand this

**“We should do something more and faster now to protect the balance of nature and thus to preserve creation, our common home.”**

crisis as a mandate to change course, lest we seek to keep on building humanity's future on shifting sand. There are already approaches to this, for example, in a gift economy, in a solidarity economy and many more. Sustainable and future-oriented business is now the order of the day. Likewise, we should do something more and faster now to protect the balance of nature and thus to preserve creation, our



common home. Demands to soften the already insufficient decisions to protect nature must be rejected. We cannot and must not go back to the "let's keep the money flowing" attitude. If so, we would have learned nothing from this crisis. Basic ethical and moral attitudes to shaping coexistence, the economy and dealing with creation must now be discussed and implemented.

This pandemic also entails a questioning of God's image by believers and their religious practice. The theodicy question arises again: why does God allow this? Images of God that are reduced to ideas of omnipotence, perfectionism, immutability or dispassion (*apatheia*), as well as mechanical or causal ideas are rather difficult. In major crises, people guided by the spirituality of Francis and Clare are also open to the God who appears as freedom-loving among the poor, the sick, the marginalised and among those who accept life as a precious gift. This image of God forms a commitment to a better world in which peace, justice and a future-oriented approach to creation are given a chance.

However, the path to a better world demands that we leave this one behind. Moreover, this crisis opens up other paths now. This raises the question of what is really important to us, what is really worth something to us and what does this mean for our future together, our common house? Patience, one of the Franciscan virtues, is required to answer such

questions. Patience is now also in demand from all of us, and that does not only mean passive endurance, bearing the burden, and fearful waiting. Otherwise, the nerves will soon be bare. Patience is also the active force of perseverance and confidence in a difficult time, the end of which is not yet in sight. When combined with trust and faith, patience is the basic attitude that has confidence in life. Those endowed with patience do not simply feel at the mercy of the crises but face the challenges found in dire straits and storms, knowing that crises also offer opportunities to learn and mature. Patience keeps an eye on the glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel and knows that a day will follow every night. Sure, it doesn't just wipe away fear, but it keeps you from depressive paralysis and unnecessary panic. It is the force necessary, perhaps a painful one, to take steps towards the coming summer. Of course, the patience we need now has its price: to adhere to the necessary discipline and show solidarity with the risk groups and the sick, all over the world. With such patience, we will not only overcome this crisis, but hopefully also shape a future that is worth living in for everyone with matured humanity, an increase in knowledge and new skills.\*





## Earth day campaign 2020

**O**n World Earth Day, JPIC Media made a video and an infographic set to promote the "**Sow Hope, Reap Joys**" campaign. We intended to take advantage of this time of confinement as an opportunity to reconnect and feel our Sister Mother Earth and, at the same time, project our future from a new - and necessary - lifestyle. The challenge was: **Do you dare to grow your own food?**

Here we share some photos that have been sent to us. Be ready for harvest!

*JPIC Media-English*







# THE FRANCISCAN EXPERIENCE & RESPONSE: COVID19 & BEYOND

## Video conference of the Order about COVID-19

On 29<sup>th</sup> April the Order held a high-level online consultation on the Order's response and learnings from the global COVID19 crisis. Attendees include the General Minister, Br. Michael Perry, and representatives from *Missionszentrale der Franziskaner*, Franciscans International, Franciscan Mediterranean Network, Franciscan Network on Migration (RFM), representatives from the JPIC Animation Committee and JPIC Conference coordinators.

The participants talked about how the COVID19 pandemic has exacerbated social and economic divisions in society. There is a fear that the pandemic will see more deaths from poverty than from the virus itself. The lockdowns and the economic slowdown have seen a disproportionate loss of income amongst those living at the

peripheries. The immediate need we face is the call for food and safe shelter.

With the growth of “strong man” governments around the world, there is a growing lack of trust in government by those at the margins. Restriction to protect people's health are often viewed as a denying the human rights of people. The lack of consideration of the needs of marginal communities has seen the poor delivery of medical and support services and conflicts with the police. There is an increased feeling amongst marginalized people that they are forgotten and “voiceless”.

Fear of the stranger has grown during this crisis. While borders may have been closed for health reasons there has also been a hardening of heart against non-citizens. This is being expressed in fear of strangers, racism and harsher rhetoric against foreigners, particularly refugees. Migrants are often being told to “go home” and not included in support programs.

Governments are already discussing plans for economic recovery from the pandemic. There is a fear that their economic models are not people focused. Already we are seeing discussions by governments about the weakening of laws in the areas of climate change, environmental protection and workers' rights, to promote economic growth. Who benefits from this notion of economic growth?



There are challenges and opportunities presented to the Order by the pandemic experience.

In the period of lockdown and social isolation people have increasingly turned to support from family and their local community. That support is not only material but spiritual. People are not just sharing food but communal songs, stories and art. There is a renewed sense of belonging to a local community. In lockdowns and social isolation, we are discovering we need each other.

A dramatic drop in pollution in urban areas, caused by the economic slowdown, has opened the eyes of people to the potential of what the world could look like if we acted to care more deeply for the environment.

The online conference had a discernment discussion on how God was calling the Order to respond through these “signs of the times.”

We asked the question: Are the friars prepared to serve with those at the periphery? It was proposed that we need to look to ensure formation experiences lead friars into the life of the marginalized, help them embrace the leper, and see the world through their eyes. In times of struggle we need to have our hearts in the right place to be able to give what little we have to those most in need.

Our Order’s international networks, which provide mutual support and understanding, sharing

of resources and give a voice to those at the peripheries, are a strength of the Order.

Our ministries could be enhanced, at both the global and local level, by increased dialogue and cooperation with those with expertise in community development. Too often we focus just on the immediate material needs of people rather than acting to support community development and resilience.

The call of God to St Francis, “Go rebuild my House”, is God’s call to us today. Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* and social teachings are a prophetic challenge to our Order.

Our Franciscan spirituality, with its focus on fraternity and the environment, does have something to say to the world today. However, they cannot remain ideas! Our spirituality, our development of model of an Economy of Care and the teachings from *Laudato Si’* need to be made concrete in the lives of the friars and the communities in which they serve. \*

**Br. Joe McKay, OFM**  
JPIC Coordinator of SAAOC  
Brisbane , Australia





## Public action against a climate villain corporation in Korea

*"Shareholders of corporates are not the owners of the Earth!"*

Members of Korean Climate Emergency Action (KCEA) and Global Catholic Climate Movement Korea (GCCM Korea) took public action against the biggest steelmaker in Korea, POSCO Co., Ltd. on March 27. KCEA is a coalition of 377 organizations, which cover scientific, educational, political, human rights, feminist, juvenile, environmental, energy transition and civil society, and agricultural cooperatives. And GCCM Korea comprises more than 30 Catholic organizations in Korea. The JPIC Office of the Holy Korean Martyrs Province (Korea) takes part in both alliances. More than 30 members of these coalitions, including Franciscans, gathered in front of the main building of POSCO in Seoul, where its shareholders were having the general assembly. After the press conference on the street, they took a series of actions that demonstrated the catastrophic impacts of the fossil fuel industry on the entire ecosystem and humanity.

**"Shareholders of POSCO are not the owners of the Earth!"** they shouted. The demonstrators strongly demanded the company take responsibility for the climate crisis and take immediate action on it. The corporate's responsibility for the climate crisis is enormous. Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from the top 20 companies in Korea account for 58% of Korea's total emissions. And POSCO is the one that stands out among them. It's been the No.1 domestic GHG emitter for the past eight years. The amount of its emission in 2018 was 73 million tons, which is one-tenth of the total domestic emission. Besides, POSCO ENERGY, a subsidiary of the corporate, is also the eighth in Korea by emitting 11.7 million tons.

It's a corporation primarily based on various fossil fuel industries along with the steel industry, which is already a heavy emissions industry. POSCO ENERGY is the largest privately-owned power generation company in Korea and operates an LNG power plant. And POSCO International is dedicated to the development of natural gas. Also, POSCO ENERGY operates coal power plants in Vietnam, and another subsidiary, POSPOWER, is constructing Korea's largest coal-fired power plant in a rural area. When completed, it will emit an enormous amount of GHG and ultrafine dust of 13 million tons per year.

**"The fast economic growth and profits of the company were achieved at the expense of the climate system."**





As such, the fast economic growth and profits of the company were achieved at the expense of the climate system. When large corporates such as POSCO are left free to thrive on pursuing profits without any regulations, the climate crisis will get inevitably worsened. Moreover, POSCO is notorious for its repression over its laborers' union with secret and illegal strategies to dismantle the union and imprison its members. However, workers' rights, human rights, public health, and the global environment can never be sacrificed for the profits of a private corporation.

On the other hand, many countries are seeking a transition to the alternative socio-economic system to deal with the climate crisis. A road map is being implemented to end the coal-fired power plant industry, and they are looking for ways to curve carbon emissions dramatically. Major polluters in Korea must follow these examples, making righteous transitions from now on.

The Korean Climate Emergency Action will never stop taking public actions to point out environmental crimes of corporations that make profits from burning dirty energy sources, i.e., fossil fuels. \*



**Br. Aloysio Kim, Jonghwa, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Province of Holy Korean Martyrs  
Seoul , South Korea



# Special Talk on Korean Catholic TV, Virus: Counterattack of Nature

*THE most fundamental cause of new viruses is the climate crisis, which is again caused by the economic paradigm based on unlimited and indiscriminative development.*

Br. Aloysio Kim, OFM, JPIC animator of Holy Korean Martyrs Province, took part, along with other experts in medicine and ecology, in a panel discussion on PBS, a Catholic TV channel in Korea on March 29. The title of the program was “*Virus: Counterattack of Nature*.” As a co-executive director of Catholic Climate Action Korea, he contributed with the Catholic perspective on integral ecology as in the papal Encyclical *Laudato Si*. Here is his argument on the epidemic of Coronavirus and climate crisis at the program:

Coronavirus is spreading worldwide. And so is the public fear of its impact. We can see that, in the past few years, infectious diseases caused by new viruses have been prevalent. They have threatened humanity many times, like COVID19, which is causing disastrous socio-economic side effects. Where did they come from? And how were they transmitted to humans? Many experts point out that new viruses are transmitted from wild animals, and that THE most fundamental cause of them is the climate crisis, which is again caused by the economic paradigm based on unlimited and indiscriminative development. Why is that? Any infectious disease would break out due to frequent contact with wild animals that have lost their habitat due to reckless deforestation.



Pope Francis puts so much emphasis on the ‘Common Home’ in *Laudato Si*. God is the Creator and owns the entire ecosystem. Unfortunately, modern civilization after the Industrial Revolution was based on the misunderstanding that this “Ownership” belongs to the human being. Consequently, vast environmental degradation continues to take place, causing a global crisis, which is, in fact, a counterattack of nature. We need to take time to reflect seriously on climate change and counterattacks of viruses. An analysis

of the exact causes of the epidemic and the necessary countermeasures should follow afterward.

According to global statistics, more than 80% of the world population has religions. Pope Francis admits in the Encyclical that the efforts of environmentalists have been made but have failed as the greenhouse gas emission has hardly decreased. This is partly due to the indifference of people of belief and the pressure from the giant fossil fuel industry. We should think of future generations. In order to protect our common home and the next generations that will inherit it as their habitat, we must take immediate action on the climate crisis. We all are responsible for this.

**Br. Aloysio Kim, Jonghwa, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Province of Holy Korean Martyrs  
Seoul , South Korea



# GCCM Korea begins Friday Climate Action

*Now GCCM Korea is beginning Friday Climate Action in Korea. We urge more Franciscans to join this movement and take action every Friday*

The Korean branch of the Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM Korea) comprises more than 30 local Catholic organizations, including the JPIC Commission of the Korean OFM Province, as well as hundreds of individual Catholics. It is taking action within and outside the Church to help keep the average global temperature from rising by a further 0.5°C. GCCM Korea currently has a steering committee that plans its overall strategy and three subcommittees (a training team, media team, and action team).

On Good Friday this year, they held a Friday climate strike in the central square of Seoul. Since no large public gatherings were allowed in the city due to the epidemic, only five members could participate in the demonstration and the associated Way of Cross, which was streamed live on Facebook. Since the theme of the event was “Respect for Life”, the participants prayed for Creation and remembered the victims of COVID-19, their families, and medical staff.

The messages on their signs emphasized how system change is crucial if the climate crisis is to be resolved;

- 1.The National Assembly should pass a resolution on the Declaration of Climate Emergency.

- 2.The National Assembly should enact the “Climate Emergency Act” to achieve zero carbon emissions and bring about climate justice.
- 3.The National Assembly should establish a special committee to respond to the climate crisis.
- 4.The National Assembly should prepare the legal and economic structures needed for a decisive energy transition to a zero carbon emissions society.

The Friday Climate Action will be held every Friday and the action team is planning a variety of different activities such as bicycle marches, green parties at vegan restaurants, peaceful demonstrations in front of a coal-fired power plant, etc. Even if the restrictions due to the epidemic mean that there will be far fewer participants, every Friday there will still be continued in various forms such as individual protests in different localities and various campaigns on social media.

A few years ago, a Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, started a climate protest every Friday, and it became a global youth climate campaign. Now GCCM Korea is beginning Friday Climate Action in Korea. We urge more Franciscans to join this movement and take action every Friday, not only in Korea or Asia and but also around the world. Now is the time to make changes in support of our climate — we need system change, not climate change!

**Br. Aloysio Kim, Jonghwa, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Province of Holy Korean Martyrs  
Seoul, South Korea





## "Le Monde d'Après" ("The World After")

*Fr. Frédéric-Marie, a French friar and a theologian, created a series of videos on the encyclical.*

### What Is It About?

Five years ago, Pope Francis published one of the major texts of his pontificate, the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. [In a March video](#), the pope encouraged parishes and religious communities to participate in "*Laudato Si'* Week" from May 16 -24, a week to reflect on and reexamine our commitment to safeguarding our common home. For this occasion, Fr. Frédéric-Marie Le Méhauté, a theologian and director of Youth Ministry and Vocations in the Province of Blessed John Duns Scotus (France and Belgium) decided to launch a web series entitled, "*Le Monde d'Après*" ("*The World After*").

### Fr. Frédéric-Marie, why create a mini-series around *Laudato Si'*?

In my work and research as a theologian, I was preparing a course on the Theology of Creation with certain lectures dedicated to *Laudato Si'*, which were cancelled because of the COVID-19 crisis. After getting over the initial disappointment, I remained in contact with the young people that I serve. In the course of our conversations, I realized that they did not know about the encyclical. As the last Plenary Council of the Order in Nairobi said, "In some areas the Church is resisting being challenged or entering into dialogue with the Pope's call, showing little or no interest in *Evangelii Gaudium*, *Laudato Si'*, and *Amoris Laetitia*" (§6). So, when I reread *Laudato Si'* in the midst of confinement, the pope's text had a different meaning for me —a prophetic one! Up until then, I had had some good

**"When I reread  
*Laudato Si'* in the midst of  
confinement,  
the pope's text had a  
different meaning for me  
— a prophetic one!"**



conferences about the encyclical, but in what way had it profoundly changed my life? I told myself that I had to create a tool to make the text more accessible to people, in particular those between the ages of 18 and 25.

### **What is the format of this mini-series that you are talking about?**

“*Le Monde d’Après*” is a series of short, thoughtful videos made for the web and published [on the YouTube channel of our Province](#). Each video is between 8-9 minutes and serves to develop a theme of the encyclical through a combination of quotes, reflection, and a touch of humor. I admit that I am doing this just as much to stretch myself and change my own ideas on things. Above all, it is my hope that these videos can help us develop what the pope calls “ecological virtues” and better perceive that our faith in the Triune God nourishes and is nourished by just such a conversion.

### **Who is the intended audience?**

Within the prayer groups and weekend events that are a part of the Youth Ministry and Vocations work of the Province, we have realized that ecology is a major concern for the next generation. I’ve heard many remarks of this kind: “You talk to us about St. Francis, and that’s great. But what about his connection to ecology?” Young people feel that these issues concern their very future, and it’s their hope that we will nurture them. And if this mini-series can speak to people 18-35, then it can speak to anybody!

### **Where did this project start and why this type of format and distribution?**

For many years I have been asking myself about our Franciscan presence on the “digital continent.” However, this particular project came to fruition at the start of confinement, amidst my shock, anger, and deepening of my prayer-life. Confinement was the opportunity to familiarize myself with a video tool that I had already tried to learn, but required too much time to master... suddenly, my schedule was free—the opportunity I had dreamt of! Many parishes or religious communities have likewise benefited from this situation by investing in social networks for prayers, for Masses, and in impressive numbers! But I had a desire to cross the line between faith and practice. For me, this line is particularly tenuous among many Catholics and, in particular, on social networks. These days we have seen beautiful prayers, beautiful images, beautiful pious thoughts. A “Like” here, sometimes a “Share” there... and we have the impression that we are putting our faith into practice! But the world is not going to change with a click on Facebook, not even with a signature on a petition. How can we help return to the concrete, to the real, and get out of virtual relationships? The paradox of the project is that I am using a screen to inspire people to go beyond their screens!

### **Fr. Frédéric-Marie, how do you make the episodes?**

I did not start with a fixed plan. I began with a reflection on the “Canticle of the Creatures,” the title of the encyclical, because there is something specifically Franciscan there that I wanted to share. It’s a Franciscan reading of the text that I propose as well, not simply an analysis of it. Alongside this reflection, I experimented on my own with the computer’s capabilities which gave me other ideas about how to animate the videos. One ultimately called for another. Fr. Alejandro, one of the student friars of the community, has also helped me with the filming, the editing, and ideas... Reflecting on things together is more fruitful and more fun.

### **“*Laudato Si’* Week” is now taking place during the COVID-19 pandemic. How does this inspire you?**

In light of the current crisis, we undoubtedly recognize that *Laudato Si’* ranks among the greatest documents of the “social Magisterium” of the Church. This encyclical tells us that science alone will not save the world, that we need a courageous spiritual and cultural revolution. It offers hope, above all, and opens up a path. Without a radical conversion of our ways of consuming and living, we will continue to be predators of nature and enemies of one another. What this pandemic adds from this point forward is a clear awareness of the urgency of the situation. No longer is it possible to put one’s head in the sand or to preface a discussion of the matter with “Are we really sure...?” No change will be easy, and no one knows today to which side the balance will fall. What is certain is that nothing will change without us. Each person finds themselves with a choice—it is this choice and this engagement that the pope brings to light. The mini-series is my modest contribution to this work of discernment.

**Emilie Rey,**  
Communications Officer  
Franciscans of France-Belgium



# Laudato Si' Revolution launched in the Philippines

On 24 May 2015, Pope Francis signed *Laudato Si'*, the watershed encyclical letter that called our attention to the increasingly precarious state of our common home. Five years on the encyclical appears ever more relevant.

We have a unique opportunity to transform the present groaning into the birth pangs of a new way of living together, bonded together in love, compassion and solidarity, and a more harmonious relationship with the natural world, our common home.

This is the call of the Laudato Si Revolution or the LS Revolution. This anniversary year, we invite everyone to join us in this revolution. We need, above all, “a peoples’ movement” from below, an alliance of all people of goodwill.

The Laudato Si Revolution Campaign was initiated and organized by the Order of Friars Minor - Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office in Rome. The said office invited counterparts in every entity and country. In the Philippines, the OFM-JPIC of the Province of San Pedro Bautista collaborated with the Association of Major Religious Superiors to launch the said campaign.

The launch marked the 5th anniversary of Laudato Si last May 24, 2020, at 8 p.m. It is divided into three parts. The first part is the liturgical celebration of the *Confessio Peccati*, it is the rite of asking forgiveness for all our sins in particular to

mother earth and our irresponsibility of being stewards of the environment. The liturgy garnered a 150 thousand viewership both live and replay. It was followed by the Serata Laudato Si’ Concert, featuring the different talents of the different congregations present in the Philippines including our very own OFM friars and some local singer celebrities. At the end of the concert, the official Laudato Si Revolution Campaign Video was played. The said video featured the introduction of our minister provincial Br. Cielito Almazan, OFM who is also the chairperson of the Association of Major Superiors Men in the Philippines. One of the highlights is our minister general Br. Michael Perry, OFM who explained and synthesize the rationale of the campaign. The last part featured all the congregations' support and efforts to the campaign. The concert and the campaign video received a total of 170 thousand viewership both live and replay.

We are very thankful to all who supported us and participated in the Philippine launch of the Laudato Si Revolution Campaign.

As Pope Francis reminds us, “All of us can cooperate as instruments of God for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, involvements and talents.” (LS, 14)

Join us in caring for our common home. Join us in the #LSRevolution.

**Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM**  
JPIC Animator, San Pedro Bautista Province,  
Philippines  
JPIC Coordinator, East Asia Conference  
JPIC Animation Committee





## The Franciscan Family Statement on Anti-Terror Bill

*And he said to me, “Son of man, these are the men who devise iniquity and who give wicked counsel in this city; who say, ‘The time is not near to build houses; this city is the caldron, and we are the flesh.’ Therefore, prophesy against them, prophesy, O son of man.” (Ezek. 11:2-4)*

Peace to everyone!

We, the followers of St. Francis of Assisi, religious and lay, the members of the Franciscan family in the Philippines, express our deep concern over the ever growing suffering of our people due to poverty, lack of opportunities and COVID 19 pandemic, while many of our leaders are busy justifying the passage of the anti-terror bill, which we believe will weaken our rights to redress on behalf of the poor.

While our country continues to agonize because of the pandemic, we are terrified to know that our lawmakers have turned their attention more to the anti-terror bill (House Bill 6875) certified urgent and priority bill by our President Rodrigo Duterte on June 1, 2020, to amend the Republic Act 9372 (Human Security Act of 2007).

As citizens of our country, we expect our government leaders to show more mercy to the poor at this time by providing comprehensive plans and concrete actions for their benefit.

As we see, in this time of emergency, the government up to now has failed on many counts to provide the needed mass testing, to protect the health care providers in the frontline and to ameliorate the worsening condition of the people.

The government has even failed to provide decent accommodations for the many Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) who were put under quarantine upon their return. They buoyed up our economy through their remittances.

Now, after placing the National Capital Region (NCR) in General Community Quarantine (GCQ) from the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), the government’s program has not matched the need for efficient public transport system. How can ordinary Filipinos such as the daily wage earners survive this? Yet the House Bill 6875 is the government’s top priority, which will demand a big budget. It can be better used for the new poor, new unemployed and to buy more new health facilities. An unhealthy population is a threat to economy.

We strongly believe that the Anti-Terror Bill is mercilessly unconstitutional. This is a clear violation of the constitutional mandate that no law shall be enacted depriving any person of life, liberty and property without due process of law.

This proposed Anti-Terror Bill is in essence anti-poor. It condones terror itself. This will not give peace and security to anyone.

We, Filipinos, will not be at peace with the bill, even if some assure us that they will not abuse it. Let us not be naïve. Those in authority devoid of human and spiritual values will abuse their power and extra powers.

We, Franciscans, are lovers of peace. We do not want war. We denounce any form of violence and terrorism. We have a long tradition of non-violence. We believe that peace is the fruit of justice, dialogue and respect for human dignity.

Our seraphic father St. Francis of Assisi on his “Letter to the Rulers” in 1220, eight hundred years ago, said:

“Brother Francis, your little and looked-down-upon servant in the Lord God, wishes health and peace to all mayors and consuls, magistrates and governors throughout the world and to all others to whom these words may come:

Reflect and see that the day of death is approaching. With all possible respect, therefore, I beg you not to forget the Lord because of this world's cares and preoccupations and not to turn away from His commandments.”

Let our government leaders obey God's commands by using its resources and energy to address the most pressing needs of our nation. Many are already terrorized, physically and psychologically. And this House Bill 6875 has terrorized our already terrorized people.

Failure to help the poor population will spell the downfall of everyone; our nation becomes more vulnerable to terrorists and stronger nations. Let us learn from the rise and fall of nations in the ancient past.

Peace be with you, brothers and sisters!

**Inter-Franciscan Ministers' Conference of the Philippines (IFMCP)  
Franciscan Solidarity Movement for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (FSMJPIC)**





# Statement on the human rights impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Geneva - New York, 07.04.2020.

As we, the entire staff of Franciscans International, are confined but healthy in our respective homes in Switzerland, the USA, and France, we are made more aware every day of our privileged situation, despite the unusual and uneasy circumstances in which confinement is putting us.

In the first weeks of this crisis, we were carefully observing not only the development of the situation but also the reaction of the United Nations (UN), other human rights experts, and States. We continue to do so. However, as it has become clear that the epidemic has definitively turned into a pandemic with a terrible death toll and that extraordinary measures will last for months, our Franciscan Sisters and Brothers, colleagues, and friends from various parts of the world are reaching out to share with us the dire situations they are experiencing, confronted with, and witnessing. It is to relay some of these testimonies and stories and to put them in a more global picture that we issue this statement today. From a human rights perspective, the issues raised by the pandemic are manifold and the impacts numerous at various levels.

## **From the failure of States to take the necessary measures to prevent such situations...**

The last months have shown how some States have failed to take timely and necessary measures to protect the health of their populations, thus failing to comply with their international human rights obligations to protect the right to health. According to the UN,<sup>1</sup> this protection shall include prevention, treatment and control of diseases that requires, among others "the creation of a system of urgent medical care in cases of (...) epidemics and similar health hazards, and the provision of disaster relief and humanitarian assistance in emergency situations." Moreover, under international human rights law, the right to life also imposes a duty on States to protect life by taking adequate measures to ensure timely access to essential goods and services such as food and water, and to provide effective emergency health services or shelters.

*You can download and read the full statement of Franciscans International: [HERE](#).*



# Reject Racism, Refuse Injustice and All Forms of Violence against God's People in the Land of Papua.



*Background: In 2017, several JPIC animators in Rome from different Congregations formed a network called the West Papua Network in Rome, responding the call to defend the human rights of the West Papuan people as well as to accompany the indigenous West Papuan people in the promotion of human rights. In 2019, the Network, the JPIC Network in Papua and Franciscans International launched a human rights review "Papua: The Neglected Paradise" in Rome. The publication was presented to the Holy Father, Pope Francis and to the Secretary of State Cardinal Parolin.*

The current on-going discussion on racism in the United States, following the killing of Georg Floyd in May 2020, has strongly resonates in West Papua, Indonesia. The indigenous Papuans have been experiencing similar situation for decades. This issue came up strongly in 2019, where Papuan students were victims of racism slur by the Indonesian security forces in two cities in Java, Indonesia.

In August 2019, a series of racist assaults targeted Papuan students in the Javanese cities of Surabaya and Malang where 43 Papuan students were taken by the Indonesian Police by using excessive force. The incidents triggered mass demonstrations of indigenous Papuans against racial discrimination in all large cities and towns across the Provinces of Papua and West Papua, and the arrest of several Papuan activists. Recently, the Indonesian Public Prosecutor has demanded that the seven Papuan defendants be sentenced to prison for five years to 17 years for treason-related charges after their involvement in protests to denounce racism following the incidents in August 2019.

We, a group of 57 Indigenous Papuan Catholic Priests from the five Dioceses in Papua region and various religious congregations in Papua, consider this decision unfair. We, indigenous Papuan Catholic priests, are becoming increasingly aware that we are living in a racist nation, with many injustices, discrimination, and violence.

For a long time, we followed from behind, we saw people, our parents, our brothers and sisters were oppressed, treated unfairly, and often being called as monkeys. After, experiencing, seeing and hearing it, we **truly feel sad**.

There are two key reasons:

1.First, those who are oppressed and discriminated, who share us their sorrow and sadness, are us and our families. We are born with curly hair by our Black Mama, that make us what we are today. They raise us. They are the ones who bring us to Bishops during our ordination as being one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church.

2.Second, those who are oppressed are God's People. We hope that the Bishops of the Papua Region can voice out the conditions of racism-injustice and acts of violence experienced by the Indigenous Papuans in their own ancestral land

3.d heritage. However, we are still yet to hear this prophetic voice. Therefore, we form a group called **Emmanuel**, gathering Indigenous Catholic Papuan Priests, so that we are able to stand up and speak with them.

On June 8, 2020, we held a Press Conference and urge the following: First, release all human rights activists who were involved in the protest to denounce racism and are currently detained by the Indonesian Government. They fight against racism. They are not actors of racism. Second, we strongly denounce the injustices, discrimination, and acts of racism against the indigenous Papuan who live in their own ancestral land and elsewhere in Indonesia. Third, Papua is not an empty land. The Indonesian government should find a sustainable solution to the on-going conflict in West Papua through genuine, and inclusive dialogue. It should address the root causes of the conflict, namely political integration of Papua to Indonesia; violence and human rights violation since 1969; discrimination and marginalisation of the Indigenous Papuans; the failure of economic, health and educational development policies in Papua.

**Rev. Alberto John Bunay**  
Indigenous Papuan priest,  
Diocese of Jayapura, Papua





# COVID-19 SPECIAL REPORT





## The cry of the poor in times of pandemic in Poland

The rapid development of the pandemic has caused many problems, and as usual, it has affected the weakest, poorest, neediest and sickest. So, after the initial shock, many institutions started to get involved to help those who found themselves in the difficulties created by COVID-19. The new situation strongly challenged us as followers of St. Francis, who espoused Our Lady Poverty and gave us the example to follow by caring for the poor, sick and abandoned.

Friars of the Province of the Assumption of the BVM in Poland responded to this cry in various ways, both spiritually and in practical, direct action. It is difficult now to present all the initiatives because the situation is very dynamic, and every day we need to find the appropriate way to respond to the cry of the poor in times of pandemic. Each day calls us to give an answer that brings above all the ray of hope that all be well!

Right away, we all offered our spiritual support through personal and community prayer. Every day we pray the rosary together for the victims of COVID-19, for doctors and volunteers. Many fraternities have launched online transmissions not only of the liturgy, of prayer, but also of an educational type, even presenting some possible recipes for cooking while we all stay at home (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B49d6lWUElQ>).

All this has been done in record time...Just think about organising video cameras, internet and

other means necessary for good quality transmissions. Thanks to the collaboration with our friends, members of the SFO, volunteers or other pastoral groups we have been able to connect with many people in their homes and offer them our Franciscan support and presence (even if only in digital form).

Another dimension of help is financial support. We have helped hospitals in Tychy, Cieszyn, Mikołów with our own offerings. We have financially helped the cloistered women's communities of contemplative life: Sisters of St. Clare, St. Dominic and St. Charles Borromeo. Apart from that, we have sent money for a parish in Ukraine and northern Italy.

We help quarantined priests, and we have also hosted two friars for quarantine in one of our friaries. One of our confreres, Br. Kamil Skibiński from Katowice, serves as a nurse in an old people's home. Due to the fact of COVID-19 and the strict hygienic procedures, he has to work for a whole week and remain locked up in the nursing home. His service is highly appreciated by both the elderly and the nursing home staff, where the risk of infection is very high.

In many friaries, we distribute food for the poor and needy (Tychy, Cieszyn, Katowice, Koszarawa, Kobylin, Gorki Wielkie). There are many cases where we visit convents bringing food and medicine.

One missionary initiative involves Trinidad (Bolivia) where the friars have bought clothing for the protection of the medical service and the fire service.

Br. Mieczysław Wnękowicz from Katowice despite his age (78 years) heard a cry of the poor from prison. So he organised and coordinated a transport full of books for the prisoners. The management of various prisons and reform institutions gratefully welcomed this gesture of sharing and evangelisation in challenging places and in ever more difficult times.

So that the pandemic continues ... we do not stop listening to the cry of the poor and helping the weak, poor, needy and sick.

**Br. Sergiusz M. Bałdyga, OFM**  
JPIC Animator,  
Province of Assumption of the BVM  
Katowice, Poland



# Mexico, the pandemic is an opportunity for us to rediscover ourselves as Humanity

These are opportune times to approach the Face of Christ in the needy, the unprotected, those who have no material security and live in an almost haphazard manner. This experience should make our BEING JPIC sensitive. Although it is healthy and prudent to take shelter in our homes, we should remember that our dedication to God is in spite of any reality and condition, we are called to live the Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the same Gospel that can also be read in the Gospel of Creation.

**Prayer and Action:** one of the main characteristics of Franciscan thought. Our prayer and action must be on the margins, sharing the realities of our peoples during this pandemic that has directly affected the economy and health. Let us think of the elderly man who lacks food, the father of a family who has been sent home without a decent salary, those who are sick because of COVID-19 and those suffering directly from this pandemic: let us listen to the cry of the poor.

Contemplating the Gospel of Creation and listening to the reality of our peoples, we cannot remain insensitive and indifferent in the face of a reality that overwhelms us and highlights the fragility of our globalizing systems.

I share with you my experience of service, in our specific situation. I am part of a fraternity situated in the northeast of Mexico, the city of Monclova, Coahuila, a population of at least 231,107 inhabitants according to the population census of 2015. Unfortunately, COVID-19 was quickly unleashed on the community due to an oversight in the city's main clinic. It began not with the inhabitants but with the medical staff of the clinic, giving rise to a rapid and alarming infection. To date, there are 239 cases and 24 deaths in the population, figures that are considered high for the number of people we have.

Due to this reality, many companies have stopped working, and have sent their workers home with a reduced salary that is difficult to survive with, and the city's economy is in crisis.

In response to this economic and health crisis, we have implemented two initiatives: The delivery of food packages and the production of masks:

1. Working as a team with the Social Ministry of the Vicariate of Our Lady of Guadalupe of the Diocese of Saltillo, where I am an advisor, we took on the task of beginning the delivery of food to the most vulnerable people. To date, about 1,500 food packages have been delivered throughout the



population, especially to the elderly, single mothers, the unemployed and other vulnerable people. When we delivered these food packages, there were not many cases; I would like to share with you two that were very significant:

- a. Single, unemployed mother: she did not know how she was going to feed her children; she did not know where to turn if her neighbours were in similar situations. She put herself in God's hands, asking Him for help, and even while in prayer, we arrived. Of course, she welcomed us with tears in her eyes and a look full of hope. She said: God has never left me; I will never leave God.
- b. Elderly person: we could not meet him, because when we arrived at his house, we were told that the man had gone out to work, without fear of risk, because he depends on his work: if he does not work, he does not eat. He lived in a very humble house, so we left the food package at his home. Later, we heard of the man's gratitude and his surprise at seeing the food on the table in his house.

2. The workshop for making masks. One of the prevention measures that the Government of the State of Coahuila has put in place is the use of masks in public, with a tendency to fine those who do not use them. To date, we have delivered around 500 masks made of resistant and inexpensive material free of charge, as a support to families

This apostolate has borne fruits of sensitivity in the communities, closeness to the most vulnerable. We try to listen to the cry of the poor. There have been countless hands that have joined this project of fraternity, uniting mind, heart and strength in favour of our brothers and sisters suffering the loneliness of their financial situation.

Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord because until now we have done little or nothing.

**Br. Juan Antonio Orozco Alvarado, OFM**  
JPIC Coordinator,

St. Mary of Guadalupe Conference  
Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean

# Where is the Church in the midst of the COVID19 Pandemic crisis in the Philippines?

We are in the middle of responding to the victims of the recent Taal volcanic eruption when the Covid19 Pandemic arrived in the Philippines. Our country is vulnerable to the effects of climate change. We experienced the worst natural disasters and calamities. Not to mention Haiyan and other typhoons that regularly passing to our country. We are also anticipating the big one, a huge area of a fault line in the metropolis that will result in the strongest earthquake that will happen in our history. This catastrophic experience leads us to a quest on responding to the most vulnerable among all the sectors in our society, the poor!

When this pandemic crisis started to aggravate the first group of people who were affected are the homeless and the poor people living in the slums of Metro Manila. On March 16, 2020. President Rodrigo Roa Duterte placed the entire Philippines under the State of Calamity amid the threats posed by COVID-19. He also declared some areas that are greatly affected lockdowns like Metro Manila under strict compliance that nobody can go out, no transportation, no work meaning no income, and no food for the poor.

As a Franciscan fraternity in the Philippines, our province of San Pedro Bautista opened our convents, parishes, and all possible ways and means to help all that are in need. We are one of the religious congregations who immediately responded through our LINGAP FRANSISKANO (Franciscan Aid) program initiated by the JPIC office as our quick response. This initiative challenged us to respond and continue our mission as consecrated people even amid crises. In his World Mission Sunday 2020 message, the Pope said that despite the suffering and challenges posed by COVID-19, the church's "missionary journey" continues. He said that it will "make us experience our human frailty,"

and it will remind us of "our deep desire for life and liberation from evil."

Our responses to the crisis depend on the availability of resources and the initiative of every community. Almost all of the communities-initiated relief and food aid for the poorest among the poor families in their areas. Some communities organized Feeding Programs not only for the poor and homeless but even for students and dormers that were lockdown in Manila. Others are distributing food for the medical and security frontliners. Two of the communities courageously welcome medical doctors and nurses in their convents for temporary shelters, knowing the risk that these people may bring the virus from their workplaces. The brothers were also asked by Caritas Manila to help in distributing food cheques worth 1,000 pesos per poor family. These programs and initiatives will not be successful without the support of all the brothers in the province and their respective communities.



In all of these, Pope Francis reminds us that "our call to mission is the invitation to step out of ourselves for love of God and neighbor, it is the mission that God entrusts to each one of us that leads us from fear and introspection to a renewed realization that we find ourselves precisely when we give ourselves to others."

The Pope is helping us to answer the question where is the church in the midst of this pandemic crisis? "The church is always on the move," he said, it is neither a program nor "an enterprise to be carried out by sheer force of will," but rather follows the prompting of the Holy Spirit "who pushes you and carries you." As Franciscans responding to this pandemic crisis we must always respond to God's call of serving the least, the lost and the last at all times and challenged ourselves like our Seraphic Father Francis would always say: "Brothers let us begin again for until now, we have done little."

**Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM**

JPIC Animator,  
San Pedro Bautista Province, Philippines  
JPIC Coordinator, East Asia Conference  
JPIC Animation Committee





## From the friary of St. Francis to a Covid-19 Hospital in Tortona, Italia

*Stories from the St. Francis of Assisi Province, Assisi, Italy*

Friar Andrea Dovio, a 44 year old priest, serving as Secretary to the Provincial Minister at the Portiuncola in Assisi one day made an extraordinary request to his superior. He asked to go and serve in the fight against the novel Coronavirus in the hotbed of the epidemic in the very north of Italy. He had entered the Friars Minor in Umbria at the age of 32 but before that he had worked as a doctor the San Luigi hospital in Orbassano and he was a specialist in internal medicine. His Provincial, Fr. Claudio Durighetto, reflected deeply in regard to the same. He concluded that whilst as religious our primary role in this emergency was a response by way of prayer and the offer of our life consecrated to the Lord, this also included the duty of charity and with Friar Andrea's competences he could render an important and significant help in the circumstances. Friar Andrea wasted no time. Thanks to the intercession of the bishop of Tortona, Msgnr. Vittoria Viola (a friar originally belonging to the Umbrian Province) he was accepted by Giuseppe Guerra, Commissioner of the hospital there on 3rd April 2020. After a quick course on the use of protective equipment he commenced his work on the 2nd floor department helping to look after 20 patients who were in the recovery phase, having passed from being critical to being no longer in need of oxygen. He worked each day with another volunteer doctor for a 38 hour week which in case of necessity was prolonged. He lived in a small, self-contained

apartment in the local seminary, made available to him by the bishop where he could live alone and avoid possibly dangerous interaction with others.

Friar Andrea was interviewed about his reason for being in Tortona by a local magazine, Il Popolo Tortona. He replied:

"I am here for the love of Jesus Christ, it is from his words and actions that the impulse to serve flows. In this time of a pandemic, like all my brothers I felt the need to rethink my activities in order to help those in need.....the call to place my medical expertise to aid those who were sick was very strong."

He did express his fear about getting the disease, the doubts about going into an area of expertise, infections, which was not his own, and also the worry of going into a situation and environment which was unknown to him, but he is content about having answered the call. He is clear that he is there as a doctor, and does not step into the area of assistance provided by the hospital chaplain. He follows the rule of St Francis, is subject to all creatures for the love of God and confesses himself to be Christian. The patients know he is a friar and he talks with joy about the fact, but that is enough.

He is thankful for the Provincial Minister's decision to allow him to serve in this way and expresses his gratitude to his professional colleagues in the hospital who welcomed him so generously and cordially and who show daily an example of their professionalism and dedication.

**Br. Eunan McMullan, OFM**

JPIC Animator,  
Province of St. Francis of Assisi – Assisi

# Activities of the friars for the COVID19 emergency in **Guinea-Bissau**

Dear JPIC brethren, from Guinea Bissau, I want to share with you some initiatives that have been carried out and are still ongoing in the Franciscan Mission and Parish of Quinhamel, 30 km from the capital.

For the Coronavirus emergency, which broke out here in March 2020, the Franciscan Catholic Mission used some Diocesan Caritas funds for:

- ▶ Promoting the initiative of young volunteers, both from the church and other religious denominations, to do prevention activities throughout the parish by going door to door;
- ▶ 30 villages have been covered, and the initiative continues.
- ▶ Using a chlorine solution to teach correct hand sanitisation technique to people. In addition, we distributed chlorine for sanitisation to entire villages and retail markets;
- ▶ explaining how to avoid contagion and what to do in case of sick people with suspected symptoms of infection;
- ▶ Covering entire villages with posters and photocopies with images that are understandable to many illiterate people;
- ▶ Bought and distributed rice, cooking oil, soap and sugar for some poor families;
- ▶ Paid medicines to some sick and poor people;
- ▶ Provided sanitising chlorine to the Regional Health Directorate for the health centres in the region, and to the police for public transport passenger checkpoints.

With donations from other entities we have:

- ▶ Purchased and distributed bins and buckets with handwashing taps;
- ▶ Cleaned up garbage and sanitised the Quinhamel market;
- ▶ Provided other Civil Society associations in our area with masks, alcohol gels, posters and flyers to cover the region.

We are currently doing a broader census of people suffering from hunger to distribute promises of aid that have been made to us from many quarters.



The parish priest (Brother Michael Daniels) has promoted these initiatives in the name of the Franciscan Mission in Quinhamel.

**Br. Michael Daniels, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Custody of St. Francis of Assisi  
Quinhamel, Guinea Bissau



# Solidarity amidst the COVID-19 Outbreak in Indonesia

Started to spread from Wuhan, China, the Covid19 virus has now infected millions of people throughout the world. Worldometers' data retrieved on Wednesday, May 6, 2020 (at 3:23 pm West Indonesian Time) showed the increasing total number of corona positive, reaching 3,741,276. Indonesia has no exception in the number of infected people covering 12,438 victims by Wednesday, May 6, 2020.

Amidst this worries and fears, JPIC-OFM Indonesia showed solidarity and empathy towards this global pandemic. Accordingly, in commemorating World Health Day 2020 on Tuesday, April 7, JPIC-OFM Indonesia managed to give away free masks to fellow citizen of Jakarta. This action was held in Letjend. Soeprapto St., Central Jakarta, in which Br. Alsis Goa, OFM, the director of JPIC-OFM Indonesia and the staff participated. This action was meant to show solidarity as well as health campaign amid the virus' rapid spread. This action focused on those people in need, online taxi-bike drivers, taxi drivers, children, and the passers-by. This campaign was evaluated to be successful in dealing with the lack of masker supply nowadays. JPIC-OFM also shipped masks for those people living in rural areas of Indonesia; approximately 1,000 masks were delivered across the country.

JPIC-OFM Indonesia also handed over Personal-Protective Equipment (PPE) to the medical personnel working tirelessly in treating the corona positive patients. This PPE specially intended for those medical personnel working in hospitals and clinics in rural areas where shortage of supporting facilities occurs. The PPE includes medical/surgical gowns, surgical masks, hand sanitizer, medical facial shields, foot and head coveralls, and medical gloves. These PPE were shipped to some hospitals and clinics in Flores, Kalimantan (Borneo), and Sumatra.

JPIC-OFM Indonesia also distributed food, such as rice, instant noodles, eggs, and cooking oil to those most vulnerable Jakarta's citizens. There are about 200 food packages delivered. Those most



vulnerable citizens are those who live below poverty line as classified by the government.

This is our small story on helping our neighbors impacted by this global pandemic. This action was also meant to show our effort in helping the government to stop the virus' spread. God bless us all.

**Br. Alsis Goa Wonga, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
St. Michael Archangel Province  
Jakarta, Indonesia



## From Morocco - Covid-19

In Morocco, the Coronavirus forced the country to declare lockdown from 20 March. This has led to the suspension of all activities; it has changed the way we live and the way people welcome us. A very strange, surreal feeling: forced to stay at home because of the danger of infection. What to do? How to organise ourselves? Lent and Easter in this unexpected newness helped us to enter more into a state of prayer, in which we humbly ask the Lord how to continue to be signs of His presence. Even for the Moroccans, it was not an easy time because they had to go through Ramadan, the holy month of fasting, without being able to go to the mosque for prayer and without being able to meet in the evening, brightening up the streets of every neighbourhood that were so deserted.

The State and the associations mobilised to meet the economic and social needs of their citizens; we continue to do what the Lord asks us to do: to listen and live Christian charity. The fraternities in Tangier, Tetuan and Marrakech had to deal differently, with the help given to migrants living in Morocco in the hope of reaching Europe because of Covid 19. They organised themselves to meet those who needed help directly in the various neighbourhoods or to meet individuals in the parish who were receiving financial support for a few weeks. The Tetuan fraternity also made hundreds of masks which were then distributed to migrants and some local associations.

The presence of sub-Saharan university students is another distinctive feature of the Church in Morocco. The friars have tried to support these young people through social networks, continuing to nourish their prayers, to accompany them on their spiritual journey, and to help them materially where this need manifested itself. Many missionary friars serve as chaplains in prisons throughout the year to meet foreign Christian prisoners. At this time, however, when one cannot go to the prison, some of us have experienced the welcome given to a small number in the friary in Meknes or the diocesan house in Rabat. Released men who have served their sentence but still cannot fully enjoy their freedom because of this pandemic. It seemed to us a great grace to be able to put the Gospel into practice, thanks to their presence.

It is the Gospel itself that asks us, as does our Rule of Life, to incarnate the presence of Jesus where we are. So, then, a further possible testimony is given by the very fact that we did not leave to do so, but that we remained. We live as foreigners in Morocco, and many times people still see us only in this perspective. The Coronavirus and the consequent health emergency have shown the Moroccans and us that we are part of that Church that wants to serve in generosity and is not a foreigner among the people it seeks to love.

**Br. Natale Fiumanó, OFM**

JPIC animator

Custody of Protomartyrs, Morocco



# Stories from Great Britain and Canada

Br. Kieran Fitzsimmons, OFM, JPIC Animator of the Immaculate Conception Custody in Great Britain, and Br. Pierre Brunette, OFM, JIPC Animator of the Holy Spirit Province in Canada, have shared some stories about the activities of the friars as well.

## Pastoral Support On-line

The Immaculate Conception Custody is shrinking in terms of numbers of friars, friaries and aging. They are reduced to four friaries. However, the brothers are quite active in helping out the needy, communicating with parishioners during the lockdown in various modes, e.g., online prayer services, online masses, posting sermons and spiritual guides, etc. Some friars are also continuously helping out refugees, homeless people and others in need. Stratford Friary provides sandwiches for the homeless on weekdays.

## Charity and Solidarity on Wheels

Other than live streaming of online masses and prayer services, the Holy Spirit Province in Canada has ongoing initiatives that bring food to the needy that engage a few friars in the Province, in collaboration with other social movements. On a parish level ("Faith and Food Supper"), or a social level ("Café partage"). This form of aid has a double goal: bring food to the needy and the people who cannot leave their home, and also encourage initiatives of solidarity and partnership. For those who cannot leave their homes, nor follow broadcasts on TV, there still is a distribution of Communion without physical contact, between doors or on porches, and respectful of the safety requirements. Charity on wheels means that the needy have to be visited on their grounds.

## Our experience in Haiti

*There is no doubt that fraternity comes to life through concrete deeds, such as the fraternal gesture of our brothers in different countries, and our Poor Clare sisters who have written or telephoned, to ask how things are in Haiti; for this reason we share from our own experience something of what has been happening in this part of the island of Hispaniola.*

This year we did not celebrate the National Flag Day of Haiti (18 of May 2020) in the same way as other years due to the critical situation on the economic, political and social levels. Some of the groups opposing the government took advantage of the day to burn tyres in the streets to show their rejection of the present administration.

As in all countries the Haitian government decreed a time of quarantine which was respected only by those who have the resources to shop for foodstuffs each week, because for the majority of the people this was impossible. The majority of the ordinary people continue in the streets without adequate protection. The institutions which have been totally shut down are the schools and the airport, the remainder function under certain conditions. The latest report from the Ministry of Public Health states that up to now (21 of May 2020) there are 734 confirmed cases of COVID-19; 688 active cases; 21 persons have recovered and 25 have died.

**Br. Celso Toc, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Franciscan Foundation "La Santa Cruz" Haiti

# "La Casa Fraterna" in **Argentina** opens its doors amid the COVID-19



For ten years, we laypeople have lived a path of discipleship with the Franciscan Brothers in the San Francisco Convent, Province of Salta, Argentina. The fraternity carries out the service of taking care of the people's pain, especially the poorest.

The "*Casa Fraterna* (Fraternal Home)" project seeks to help families in vulnerable situations, offering them a particular space where they can feel like home. Its objective is to provide them a place of support and welcome that is close to hospitals or health institutes where they can get medical treatment and rehabilitation.

Even when the situation of the pandemic and the lockdown began to get complicated, there was still a need for close families with independent work such as masonry and gardening. So, a solidarity network was set up. A fund was raised. Non-perishable food and *milanesas* (Argentinian breaded steaks) were purchased. Then, we put them together in aid-bags that are for two weeks.

In the "*Casa Fraterna*," we also provided accommodation to families who were stranded in Salta for their regular medical treatments. We also began to serve complete meals for the children of the Little House of Bethlehem once a week.

We want to take up the words of Pope Francis to reflect on the meaning of our project. He affirms that "Any form of our love, solidarity, sharing is only a reflection of the charity that is God. He tirelessly pours his love upon us, and we are called to witness this love in the world. Only if we remain in His Love, will we know how to understand and love those who live next to us."

**Daniela Garbesi**  
San Francisco Cultural Complex







### *A story from Brazil*

## "Brother, do you want to know the name society has for me or how you call me?"

Previously there was a crisis of food, now it is the pandemic. This was the discovery of the **Franciscan Service of Solidarity (SEFRAS)** as it began a process of restructuring in order to serve the most vulnerable people when COVID-19 arrived in Brasil.

In existence for the past 20 years, SEFRAS is the major expression of social work of the Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brasil and it is present in the largest cities of the country, such as Sao Pablo and Rio de Janeiro. Since the arrival of the pandemic there has been a sustained effort to ensure that its services are effective, as the people helped by SEFRAS are those most exposed to the effects of Covid.

Among the initiatives undertaken it is worth mentioning the **Franciscan Shop**, which prepares and distributes hot meals for the homeless and unemployed in the city of Sao Pablo. This work was later extended to Rio de Janeiro. In the past three months more than 200,000 meals have been distributed and 40,000 food parcels to the most vulnerable families, with the participation of hundreds of volunteers, donors, benefactors and staff.

Nevertheless, even though the figures are impressive due to the size of the demand, I would like to emphasize that as well as the food it gives out, **Acción Franciscana** tries to bring a sense of dignity and a sense of their own worth to these people through a more humane and fraternal contact.

In this regard I share a true story which moved all the fraternity of SEFRAS and which certainly reflects the quality of our Franciscan action, based on our care and defense of the most poor and vulnerable.

### **"For society my name is garbage"**

Rio de Janeiro, 13 of June, Feast of Saint Anthony, in sweltering heat: While we were organizing things to serve lunch to the homeless brothers I heard someone call out my name in the distance. A man approached saying in a loud voice: "Fray Diego, I came here to give you this". I recognized the face. Immediately I asked his name. He replied: "Fray, do you want the name society gives me or your name for me?" I replied that I did remember him, all I needed was his name. He answered with emotion: "Fray Diego, for society my name is garbage, but for you my name is Marcos da Silva."







His strong words reflected his hurt and were deeply moving. Just then I remembered knowing him in San Pablo.. I asked what was he doing in Río de Janeiro. Proudly he replied: “Fray, when I heard that you had come to Rio, I decided to come to find you and give you this present”. From the old torn backpack he took a picture of Our Lady of Aparecida, patron of Brasil and gave it to me. Deeply touched and without words to respond I became aware that this was a profound encounter, with something of the divine about it. “Fray, do you remember the times we chatted there in San Pablo? When you and the other friars said you liked walking, as I did, and we agreed to walk together one day to Aparecida? You do, and when I heard that you had come to Rio, I decided to come and thank you for all you did for me, for the conversations we had and for the times you stopped to talk with me in the queue for lunch. I took 8 days to cover the 430 km, but now I feel fulfilled because I walked to meet you.”

He began to cry and gave me a big hug. I, not knowing what to think or say, felt a lump in my throat and a big urge to cry.

I told him we were delighted to meet him again and to see that he was well. “Do you like how I look, Fray? I was in need of a good clean-up after all those days walking. Last night I cut my hair and had a shave so as to be able to meet you once more”. After this I told him that lunch would now be ready. He declined and said he needed to head off again for Sao Pablo. I said goodbye without knowing how to return his great gesture of affection. Suddenly I felt very insignificant in the presence of the nobility of this man.

After this encounter I was left thinking how people’s lives may be profoundly changed when they receive a little real attention. More than ever I became aware that the **Franciscan Shop** doesn’t merely distribute hot meals. I understood that lack of respect, affection and empathy may be more distressing than lack of food.

We all have profound needs: some for bread, others for love and others for love. May the Lord help us learn from this pandemic that when we share the bread of life and food nobody remains hungry, and that all are satisfied.

**Br. Diego Atalino de Melo, OFM**

JPIC Animator

Province of Immaculate Conception of Brasil







## An evening of many blessings in the life of some families in **Guatemala** affected by the lack of employment and by two hurricanes

It was an evening of blessings thanks to **María José Caffaro**, a benefactor from Guatemala City who contacted our Franciscan friary and asked us to distribute foodstuffs to people who were affected by unemployment caused by the pandemic and by two hurricanes which battered our part of Central America in the first week of June.

The recipients were women, young people and children who were sorely in need of the most basics for subsistence. “Father, my children are hungry,” some of them were saying to me. They were just a few families among the thousands of people who have lost their jobs. We are in the third month of the pandemic and the hopes of many have been dented. Guatemala has a population of 17 million and is the most densely populated country in Central America. In spite of this the epidemic has been controlled, thanks to the immediate measures taken by the government. We are in June and the frontiers have been closed since the middle of March. We don’t know yet how long more we will have to wait before being freed from lockdown.

Due to the presence of our Province, **Immaculate Conception of New York** and the help of benefactors from the USA and Guatemala, hundreds of children who study in our orphanage of **Valle de los Ángeles** have received food and through the social media their teachers have been able to send them subject material and study guides. There still is a small number whom we cannot reach because of the shortage of resources, but we are doing all we can.

While lockdown continues we will continue to do the best we can. Please pray for the people of Guatemala and the world that the COVID 19 pandemic may disappear and that things may return to normal.

**Br. Joaquín Mejía, OFM**

# USA, Franciscan parish community at an epicenter of the COVID-19 crisis

St. Camillus parish in Silver Spring, Maryland, staffed by Franciscan friars, is the largest and most diverse parish in the archdiocese of Washington. It is also located in the area that has the highest number of COVID-19 cases in the entire Washington metropolitan region.

St. Camillus Church is nationally recognized as [a model for intercultural parishes](#). It is a spiritual home to a large Latino, French-speaking African, African American, Bangla, English-speaking Caucasian, and many other communities. Many Catholic communities around the globe have learned to become virtual with prayer and worship during this crisis, but St. Camillus has maintained [a particular commitment to staying active through service and action](#) just as before the pandemic.

[Saint Francis International School](#) (SFIS), the parochial school at St. Camillus, [did what the vast majority of Catholic schools did across the United States](#). Under the leadership of Toby Harkleroad, Principal of that school who is also a Secular Franciscan, the parochial school has converted to be a full-fledged distance learning school for its student body of 443 children age three through 8th grade. Within weeks, the school guaranteed that every student from first grade up had access to a computer at home and teachers were providing online instruction even down to the three-year-olds in Pre-K (<https://bit.ly/3hwHBYv>).

As the faculty and staff took on the herculean effort of transforming, the school's nutrition program worked with young Franciscan Postulants in their

first year of formation who live on the parish's property to start delivering food to kids in the surrounding neighborhoods. On March 17, they distributed 381 meals and by May 25 they had given out 35,874 meals (<https://bit.ly/2XZJrcJ>).

In its persistence to serve the community around the parish's outreach office in the heart of Langley Park neighborhood (which the Washington Post described as "catastrophic" due to COVID-19), SFIS convinced a more affluent parish to send volunteers to help prepare meals convinced the county executive's office to reach out to Jose Andres' World Central Kitchen program, convinced the National Guard to help hand out meals, and convinced the local councilmember to bring thousands of boxes of produce into the neighborhood each week (<https://bit.ly/3e4GvB8>).

Meanwhile, [the parish food pantry program](#), which had been faithfully distributing food for the needy out of the friary's basement on Fridays and Saturdays for years became a designated hub for the regional food bank and increased capacity. With the school physically closed, the parish loaned the gym out to the county's gang prevention network to use as a base for distributing food and the science room was loaned out to a group of young Latinas who created an ad hoc mutual aid group.

Despite a massive decrease in Sunday collections due to the state-wide stay-at-home order, the parish raised over \$75,000 money for the St. Francis Emergency Assistance Fund to support those facing potential eviction due to the financial effects of the COVID-19 crisis. The parish stayed committed to its annual commitment to participate in Bread for the World's Offering of letters in support of hunger relief.

Both the parish and the school have had numerous members struggle with the effects of the coronavirus. Three parents at SFIS have died due to COVID-19 and at least two parishioners have been lost. The parish's first Franciscan pastor, [Fr. Martin Bednar](#), passed away from COVID-19 in a nursing home in New York State.

Despite all of the struggles, the reduced income, and the uncertainty, this Catholic community continues to be open and vibrant despite the fact that church doors have been closed for 10 weeks.

**Toby Harkleroad, OFS**

Principal of St. Francis International School  
St. Camillus parish, Maryland, USA

(one of the attached photos shows three Franciscans Postulants harvesting organic lettuce grown at St. Francis International School and then given to the people in the local immigrant community that need food)





# International days – July to September, 2019

July 17	World Day for International Justice
August 9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People
August 23	International Day of the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
August 29	International Day against Nuclear Tests
September 1	World Day for the Care of Creation
September 1 ~ October 4	<b>Season of Creation</b>
September 16	International Day for Preservation of the Ozone Layer

## Agenda

**July 4 & 11**  
**July 6 – 7**

Livestream interview on climate crisis  
Meeting for the Franciscan Mediterranean  
Network

**September 1**  
**September 5**

Beginning of **Season of Creation**  
Webinar in English on the “Eco-Pastoral”  
project and the eco-village movement



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