

Laudato Si'

GLOBAL

OFM

ORDO FRATRUM MINORUM



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Laudato Si'

# GLOBAL OFM

MEETING WITH  
BROTHERS IN  
INITIAL FORMATION

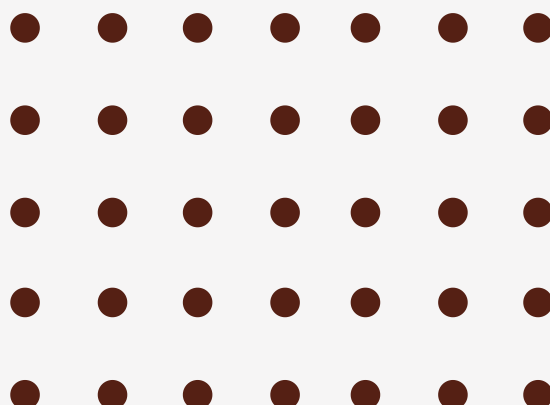


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The General Secretariat for Formation and Studies

The General Office for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation

Roma - 2020



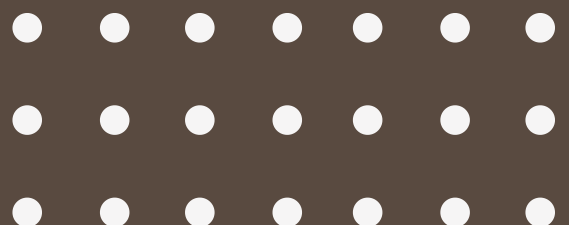
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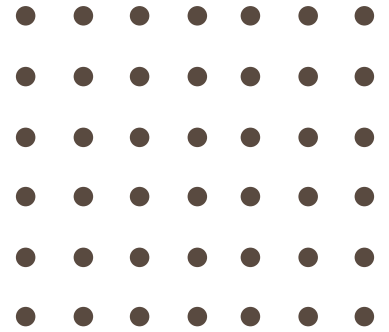
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**Front and back cover photos:**  
Fr. Augusto Luiz Gabriel, OFM







**Fr. Michael Perry, OFM**  
Minister General

## **REFLECTIONS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE “GLOBAL OFM” MEETING**

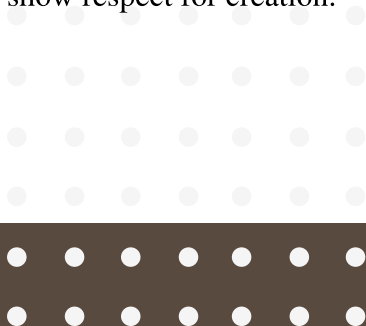
My dear brothers of the Order.

May the Lord give you peace!

We meet amidst a global pandemic where all humanity has had to stop for a moment to protect itself but also to reflect on its own life, on the local and international situations (crises) of the human community and the environment. Here we too are gathered in this virtual space to reflect together as brothers on the vision of the Church expressed in a new and exciting way by Bergoglio of Buenos Aires, now Francis of Rome. Reflecting a little, I have concluded that what Pope Francis proposes to the Church and the world is not something completely new. Especially for those of us who have accepted God’s invitation to follow in the footsteps of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus after the example and vision of Francis of Assisi.

Our meeting today is also a sign of the significant growth that the Order has made since the renewal of our specific charism after the Second Vatican Council. As you will recall, in article two of the General Constitutions, we discover the full scope of an integrated vision of the life and mission proposed to us by St. Francis. I quote this article:

“The friars, as followers of St. Francis, are bound to lead a radically evangelical life, namely: to live in a spirit of prayer and devotion and fraternal fellowship; they are to offer a witness of penance and minority; and, in charity towards all mankind, they are to announce the Gospel throughout the whole world and to preach reconciliation, peace and justice by their deeds; and to show respect for creation.”



These words of the General Constitutions represent a clear understanding and a very demanding commitment for all of us. To allow the double commandment of love of God and love of neighbour (cf. Dt. 6:5; Lev. 19:18; Mt. 19:19, 22:39; Mk. 12:31; Rm. 13:9; Gal. 5:14; etc.) to enter into our minds, hearts and actions. Allowing it transform the way we understand what it means to be a human creature (dependent on God); a member of the human community and the natural world (mutually depending on other people and creation. A member of the Christian community (co-responsible) and a member of the Order (fraternity). In all these areas of our life, we find ourselves involved in a network of relationships. St. Francis called this network of interconnected relationships “fraternity”, which extended outwardly to all human beings and the whole created universe, and inwardly to his understanding of God’s nature as Triune, therefore relational.

Until it is clear that our human, Christian and Franciscan identity cannot be understood or lived separately from the history of the world and the natural environment, we can never fully appreciate the spiritual journey, the movement of grace that manifested itself in the life of our founder, Francis. His vocational journey is a story of constant conversion: from self-care to love and genuine care for others, especially for the poor and marginalized but also for those who had other religious beliefs (Sultan al-Malik al-Kamel). But think that the process of conversion underway within St. Francis did not end here. The Canticle of the Creatures makes clear that Francis was prompted - or perhaps pulled - by the Spirit of God to extend his understanding of fraternity. To include not only the human community but to expand his horizons to embrace God’s vision of fraternity, which also includes the whole created universe, *Laudato Si’*.

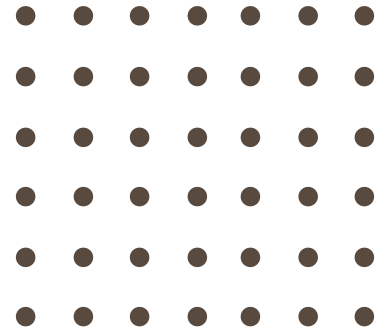
I want to bring a quote from Pope Francis found in the first apostolic letter, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) back to the centre of our reflection today, where Pope Francis speaks of the spiritual unity inherent in the love of God and neighbour:

“An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home, and all of us are brothers and sisters”. [EG 183] (the title of the next encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*).

These central themes are further developed in the text itself, which is at the centre of our discussion today, *Laudato Si’*.

Welcome to the revolution, benvenuti alla rivoluzione! I wish you a good meeting.





**Fr. Cesare Vaiani, OFM**  
General Secretary for Formation and Studies

## JPIC’S PLACE IN FRANCISCAN MISSIONARY FORMATION

The fundamental message of the encyclical *Laudato si’* can be summarised in the expression “integral ecology”. With these two words, Pope Francis invites us to an attitude that does not separate ecological commitment from that for social justice or peace in human relations, because all these aspects are closely connected. We are called to realise that there is a close relationship between the “culture of waste”, which creates polluting material waste, and a social structure that “discards” the weakest people or those who are not economically productive. The proposal of an “integral ecology” recovers the connection between justice, spirituality, peaceful human relations and care of the “common home”.

The expression “integral ecology” unifies in a single term the concepts that we are accustomed to indicating as “justice, peace and integrity of creation”. Attention to this dimension of integral ecology is part of Franciscan identity, and therefore of our formation. It is enough to read art. 1 of our General Constitutions to understand this: it is particularly important because, at the beginning of the Constitutions, it briefly expresses our identity.



The article consists of two paragraphs: let us focus our attention on the second, which says that “the friars are bound to lead a radically evangelical life” and illustrates its characteristics, which are the spirit of prayer and devotion, fraternal communion, the witness of penance and minority, and evangelisation. This last point, which is that of our mission of evangelisation, is described as follows: “in charity towards all mankind, they are to announce the Gospel throughout the whole world and to preach reconciliation, peace and justice by their deeds; and to show respect for creation”.

In the first article of the Constitutions, therefore, importance is also given to reconciliation, peace, justice, and respect for creation: this means that they are truly important for the essential profile of the friar minor. This first article was modified by our General Chapter of 2003. At the end of paragraph 2, which already spoke of “preaching, with deeds, reconciliation, peace and justice” (and stopped here), the expression “showing supreme respect for creation” was added. It was the recognition that care for the common home is an essential part of our charism and that a rigorous description of our identity as Friars Minor cannot fail to speak also of “respect for creation”. The word respect (in Latin *reverentia*) was chosen to express that attitude of minority and universal brotherhood which makes us truly lesser brothers. We can say that our Constitutions anticipated what was strongly affirmed by the Encyclical *Laudato si’*.

The *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* also addresses the theme of justice, peace and integrity of creation several times, for example when it illustrates the fundamental features of the “evangelical vocation of the friar minor” (articles 21. 25. 32. 34). Since I am unable to examine all these texts at this time, I will simply cite Article 86 of the *Ratio*: All the Friars and candidates should be formed to preach peace and justice through their deeds and to overcome evil by doing good (cf. GGCC 68 §1). And they should show feelings of respect for creation in so far as it is a sign of the Creator, inducing others to be constructors of peace and to safeguard creation (cf. GGCC 71).

We must therefore affirm that justice, peace and integrity of creation are part of a complete Franciscan formation, according to the *Ratio Formationis* of the Order. The article cited speaks of “all the friars and candidates”, and therefore refers to both ongoing and initial formation: no one is excluded. This text, which is from 2003, obviously cannot quote *Laudato si’* but, as we have said for our General Constitutions, in a certain way anticipates it and is perfectly in tune with the concept of integral ecology.



The last Plenary Council of the Order, which took place in Nairobi in 2018, speaks explicitly of the Encyclical *Laudato si'*. It is one of the seven themes identified as fundamental for the Order today and is one of the three operational proposals formulated in the final summary of the document: it is worth reading No. 190, which says:

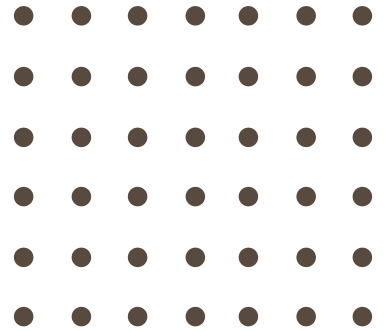
To use means based on Franciscan values in the formation of the Friars Minor, including experiences and real connection with people who suffer. Every Entity of the Order should address the theme of evangelisation in the spirit of *Laudato si'* giving special attention to human ecology in initial and ongoing Formation. In all the entities of the Order, specific actions of integral ecology involving our friars and our institutional activities should be promoted.

It is also for this recommendation of our Order that we wanted to hold this global meeting with the brothers in initial formation.

This first presentation of mine was therefore intended to show that the commitment to justice, peace and integrity of creation is required by the fundamental texts of the Order, starting from the first article of the General Constitutions, passing through the *Ratio Formationis Franciscanae* to the recent Plenary Council of the Order. Now, the following presentations will focus on the *Laudato si'* and the initiatives of the Order since this Encyclical.







**Fr. Rufino Lim, OFM**  
Assistant The General JPIC Office

## HOW WE FRANCISCANS ARE CHALLENGED BY THE ENCYCLICAL LAUDATO SI'

My dear brothers, peace and all good! The Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, by Pope Francis, challenges us Franciscans in many ways. Before elaborating on this, there is something we need to remember. We have experienced many challenges in our Franciscan history, but I think they have played a positive role rather than a negative one. So, rather than ignoring or avoiding challenges, it is very important for us to have an open mind in order understand what those challenges are indicating to us. As friars, we use the perspectives of the Gospels and the life of our Seraphic Father St. Francis to discern what we need to do in our lives as a concrete response to present-day challenges.

As we all know, *Laudato Si'* are the two opening words of the *Canticle of the Creatures* of St. Francis. I think the title of the Encyclical itself shows two aspects of the challenges contained in it. Put simply, the Encyclical says: “This world, created by God, out of His Goodness, is crumbling. In this situation, what do you think we need to do in order to praise the Creator?”

In other words, the first aspect of the challenges is to open our eyes and understand the critical crises that Mother Earth and all of humanity are facing. The second aspect is how we, as Christians and Franciscans who live in this situation, can profess our faith in God the Creator, or how (with St. Francis) we might pray, ‘*Laudato Si'*, mi Signore.’ Behind these two aspects of the challenge, I think Pope Francis asks us, “What do our prayer and our faith mean when the first source of Revelation — that is, our common home — becomes an uninhabitable place, and when the poor, who are the sanctuary of God, weep before the darkness of death?”



I think that this question is at the heart of the challenges that the Encyclical presents to us. How would you answer this question? If you deny the first premise of the question, i.e., if you deny or ignore the fact that our common home and humanity are in serious crisis and that the causes lie with us humans, then your faith may well be fruitless because of its being contaminated with moral insensitivity and ignorance. Reality and faith must never be considered as separate, because humans and Creation are connected as one, so everything is interconnected.

Again, the first aspect of the challenge is to open our eyes to the social and ecological crises and sufferings of the Earth and of humankind, and to understand that they are ultimately caused by humans themselves. Do you agree with this premise? Or, do you live in your friary, in the comfort of your daily routine, being content with your version of “business-as-usual”? First of all, have you listened to what scientists have diagnosed as the cause of the COVID-19 pandemic? Do you know about the extreme weather events, desertification, extreme droughts, floods and super typhoons taking place around the world? Just Google the cause and impact of the destruction of the Amazon rainforest or of the wildfires in California and Australia. Or search for how many species on Earth are going extinct each year. It's a matter of simple facts, so no one can deny it. You could also search for the number of environmental activists who were killed around the world in 2019. According to The Guardian newspaper, a record 212 people were killed while safeguarding the land, the environment, and the poor. I personally believe that these are modern prophets and martyrs. But by whom and for what reason have these activists, who work in a spirit of good will, been eliminated?

The Encyclical identifies various ecological crises one by one; for example, the various issues of pollution, water, climate crisis, and biodiversity. It points to the “throwaway culture” and a range of serious structural inequalities as the causes behind these crises. The current crisis cannot be addressed simply by resolving particular issues or inventing some cutting-edge technologies. We must understand structural injustices at various levels, and in particular we should free ourselves from the false belief that ecosystems and human life should be exploited for endless economic growth and economic profit. When the blind greed of Capital is uncontrolled, and the Religion that should raise a prophetic voice is drunk and asleep, eventually God will be alienated along with the Earth and the poor.

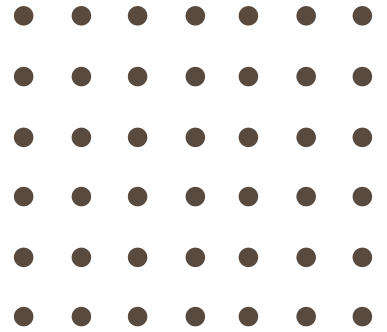


Laudato Si' states that we all breathe one air only, and that the water we all drink is from one source. Equally, the food we eat and the land which gives us this food are also one. We are all interconnected beings living in one common home. We all are one body and one life. And God, the Creator, shines in Creation and sheds His light on us through it. The life of the Earth is our life. The suffering of the Earth is our suffering, and the tears of the marginalized are God's tears and our tears.

The second aspect of the challenge concerns the Church's response. Basing himself on Scripture and Tradition, Pope Francis first explains that integral ecology is based on a Gospel vision, that dialogue at various levels should take place and should include education towards a culture of creation. This will be a major challenge for those who are trapped in a traditional theology of salvation focused only on sacramental celebrations, or for those who subscribe to a theological paradigm that despises the body and the world.

The Pope is calling for a new Christian paradigm to see and act on the mystery of the world in an epoch characterized by ecological crisis. This is what is meant by "ecological conversion"; such as conversion is concerned with social and political dimensions as well as theology. Our conversion can never be confined to the narrow field of personal ethics. My dear brothers, we Franciscans have traditionally been open to the challenges of the Gospel and of the times we live in, and we have grown through these challenges. I hope the same is true of you all today.





**Fr. Siniša Balajić, OFM**  
Vice-Secretary for Formation and Studies

## LAUDATO SI' AND SAINT FRANCIS

The Encyclical “Laudato si” draws some important insights from the life of St. Francis of Assisi. Specifically, we find a strong relationship with his “Canticle of the Creatures”. The present Pope remembers, that St. Francis with his beautiful song “Laudato si’, mi’ Signore”, warned us that our common home is also like a sister, with whom we share our existence, and like a beautiful mother who welcomes us in her arms.

The Encyclical points to a clear relationship between Saint Francis and nature. It underlines what is said about Saint Francis today, that he is known as the protector of nature, of the environment, of creation. But, reading the Writings and Biographies, one notices that Francis did not directly commit himself to save nature and did not make himself its protector. In his time, nature was not in danger; it was not exploited by unbridled and irresponsible progress, as often happens today. Francis, first, loved God. His love for everything that the good God created arises from this love. Everything is the creation of the heavenly Father; everything gives glory to the Father. Therefore, not only the human being but also all creation is “sister, brother, mother”.

In this sense, the Encyclical points out a typical feature of Francis. The novelty that he introduces with his behaviour towards creation is that Francis uses the name of brother and sister for all creation, not only for man or woman; this, no one had ever done before. If it is understandable to call a man or a woman brother or sister, in what sense is this word used for all creation?



Francis lived a cosmic fraternity, assuming a relationship with the characteristics of brother and minor towards the whole cosmos; he insists on the attributes of brotherhood and minority towards the whole of creation. Therefore, concluding one of his prayers, the Salutation of the virtues, he speaks of obedience that places us in a relationship of submission not only to each person but even to animals<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the fraternal and minor relationship, which characterises Francis, becomes a universal attitude which extends to every creature. As the Encyclical says, “He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace”. (LS, 10). “Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity”. (LS, 240).

It follows then that creation can never be treated as an object, which is only used, consumed and discarded. God’s creation, like man and woman, cannot be scrap, because scrap degrades the quality of life in general, human relationships and world fraternity. In fact, according to the Encyclical, Saint Francis “opposes” the style of discarding, with a different kind, that of welcoming. He has a style that welcomes everyone as brother and sister in a single fraternity or an undivided family. Remember that Pope Francis, during the lock-down for the pandemic, in a deserted St Peter’s Square, said that we are all “in the same boat” and that, to save the boat, we must all commit ourselves or we will all die).

Therefore, the harmony that St Francis lived with all creatures is also interpreted as a healing of the original harmonious relationship between God, human beings and nature that was ruptured from the beginning, according to the first pages of Genesis (cf. Gen 3:17-19). The Encyclical states: “The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures”. Therefore, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach”. (LS, 49).

This relationship between God, man and creation creates the true sense of integral ecology. Integral means that it is a fundamental but also complex relationship. Because of this necessity and complexity, the Pope calls for the creation of an interdisciplinary network to address the current ecological problem in the right way. It cannot be limited to a single level, perhaps only the technical-scientific one. The perspective of integral ecology concerns all levels, from the theoretical to the social, organisational, relational and design levels. Ecology is integral because it involves not only the natural environment but also human society, the economy and politics, which are closely connected.

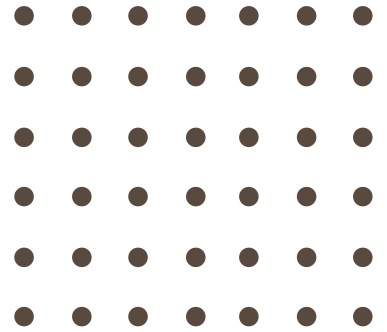




This is precisely what Francis perceived in his Canticum. The first part of this text praises God for the creatures. But, he then adds a verse that speaks of “those who forgive for your love” and those who “sustain infirmity and tribulation”. In other words, humanity reconciled in justice and peace. Finally, he comes to praise God even for death. This is a genuinely integral vision: there is creation, but there is also humanity with its history of division and reconciliation, suffering and peace, and there is even death. Francis of Assisi had well understood this interweaving of different levels that Pope Francis expresses with the term *integral ecology*.

Finally, his love for creation is practical, essential and fraternal, not theoretical. Our choices and our lifestyle, both with man and nature, should also be like this: not only idealistic or romantic but capable of practical choices.





**Fr. Jaime Campos F., OFM**  
Director The General JPIC Office

## **CURRENT ORDER INITIATIVES: LAUDATO SI' REVOLUTION**

Dear Brothers, I send my fraternal greetings of peace and good. I am very happy about this online meeting because we have the presence of so many brothers who are in initial formation in the Order. I appreciate your participation in this first GLOBAL OFM.

On this occasion, we invited you to reflect on JPIC and how these values are part of our identity, as Brother Cesare said at the beginning of this presentation. As we celebrate five years since the publication of the Encyclical Laudato Si', we wanted to emphasise the importance of the Encyclical on the care of the common home which is summarised in the expression "integral ecology". Brother Cesare, in his address, said that our general constitutions anticipated what was firmly stated in the Encyclical Laudato Si'.

On the other hand, the Plenary Council of the Order, held in Nairobi in 2018, chose specific themes to revitalise our life as brothers and minors, such as i) fraternal life, deepening our charismatic identity; ii) a preferential option for the young and iii) the care of the common home. These three choices of the Plenary Council can be taken together for the life of the brothers in Initial Formation. They are young, are building their identity through Franciscan charism and are urgently called upon to address the socio-environmental problems that have increased during the COVID19 pandemic.



Since the publication of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* in 2015, the JPIC Office has promoted various initiatives on a theoretical and practical level. Many formation activities have been carried out in different provinces of the Order: courses, workshops, seminars, etc., as well as practical ventures carried out in parishes, schools, cultural centres, higher education centres, among others, together with the Franciscan Family, the local Church and other Church and civil society organisations. Today I want to present a special initiative for *Laudato Si'*.

During the International Council for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation, held in the city of Jerusalem in 2019, the JPIC coordinators of the Order's Conferences decided to celebrate this fifth anniversary of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* in a particular way. Thus, the global campaign "*Laudato Si'* Revolution" was born which began on 24 May this year and is aimed at all people with a Franciscan heart.

A week before the launch of our campaign, we were pleasantly surprised by the announcement of Pope Francis during the Angelus on Sunday 17 May, when he proclaimed a special celebratory year for the Fifth Anniversary of the Encyclical. We feel we are on the right path in communion with the whole Church and with the Magisterium of Pope Francis.

The objective of the *Laudato Si'* Revolution stems from listening to the results of the Plenary Council of the Order, in particular number 154. As individuals, fraternities, entities and as an international order, we feel strongly challenged to make a clear and radical option in the direction of the ways of living indicated by *Laudato Si'*.

So the *Laudato Si'* Revolution aims to encourage and promote an integral ecological conversion, that is, an environmental, economic and social ecology. The human and social dimensions are at the heart of our campaign because we want the values of social and ecological justice, care and respect for creation and intergenerational solidarity to be part of our daily life.

We hope that all the brothers of the Order will be involved in this campaign. We have created a website: [www.laudatosirevolution.org](http://www.laudatosirevolution.org) available in Spanish, English, Italian and Portuguese. On this site, you can find information on the various initiatives that have been taking place around the world in recent months. There are also formation themes, online courses, examples of good practice, stories of change, liturgical aids and regional initiatives, such as the JPIC union of the Franciscan Families of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean or the Franciscan / Jesuit Coalition for the *Laudato Si'* Revolution which will be presented on 30 September.

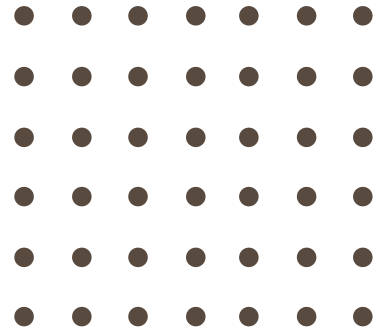


From the JPIC Office in Rome, we hope that many brothers in initial formation will be interested in reading and living Laudato Si. The Plenary Council of the Order at number 159 says “We address ourselves especially to the young — because they look towards the future, they are more capable of change and are more open to the catechetical teaching of Laudato si’”. That is why we suggested holding this meeting to the friars of the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies. We know that during the formation process dreams, hopes, and utopias present themselves more strongly, and I ask you not to abandon them. The Order feeds on the life of all the brothers and through them serves the Church.

We are grateful to all the friars in initial formation who are involved in the Laudato Si’ Revolution, especially those who are doing so through JPIC Media, because they have allowed the message of Laudato Si’ to be more strongly present in the media. At the same time, I invite those who have not yet heard about this campaign to visit the website [www.laudatosirevolution.org](http://www.laudatosirevolution.org) and ask the JPIC animator for more information about their entity.

To conclude my presentation, and on behalf of the JPIC Office and all the JPIC animators of the Order, I would like to thank the brothers of the Fraternity of the General Curia who readily agreed to participate in this meeting. The contributions of Br. Michael, Minister General, Br. Cesare and Br. Siniša of the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies; those who made simultaneous translation possible: Br. Caoimhín for English, Br. Valmir for Portuguese and Br. Salvador for Spanish; and the moderator of this meeting: Br. Giovanni. Finally, thanks to the two brothers who will share their testimony as JPIC Animators, Br. Rodrigo from Brazil and Br. Angelito from the Philippines.





**Fr. Angelito Cortez ., OFM**  
Member of The Animation Committee JPIC

## JPIC WITNESS IN THE PHILIPPINES

Peace and all good my dear brothers! Warm Greetings from Manila, Philippines. I am Brother Angelito Andig Cortez, OFM. The current Provincial JPIC Animator of the Franciscan Province of San Pedro Bautista, the National Coordinator of the JPIC Commission of the Major Superiors in the Philippines, the OFM East Asian Conference JPIC Animator and a member of the Animation Committee of the JPIC General Curia Office of the Order. With my current works and ministries, I can say that JPIC is my passion and my life. As I look back and trace where did I started to embrace JPIC? The only answer I can give is I owe it to my formation. I am really blessed and fortunate with the formation program my province gave me.

I believe that formation is not only a requirement that we need to fulfill in order for us to become Franciscans. Formation is a journey that we discover our limitations and giftedness. Formation is the time where we dig into our inner self to discover our God given talents and acknowledge our weaknesses for us to strive more and be the best that we can be. Formation is an opportunity for us to be molded to be like Christ through the inspiration of our Seraphic Father Francis of Assisi. Our formation program aided us with JPIC opportunities.

It is integrated in our initial formation program from Aspirancy to Post-Novitiate. The program provides us activities and conferences that helps us to understand our society and its economic, political and cultural dynamics. It also introduces us to have an understanding of the third world poverty and dependence. It allows us to encounter Christ in the different faces of people we journeyed with as we go for apostolates, dialogue and immersions. It allows us to have a grasp of what is happening to the world, our society and to the people around us specially the poor and the marginalized.



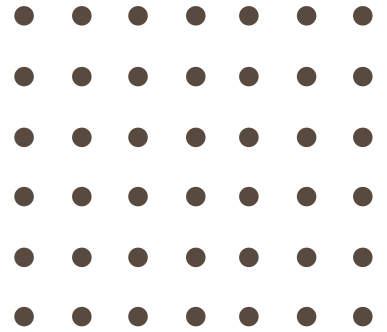


One of the most significant experience that I had that our formation gave me is the unique set up of our Post-Novitiate Program. After temporary profession, we are assigned to small communities in the urban poor areas of Metro Manila, the capital city. During these years of our theological studies, we do not stay in the seminary but we are living with the poor. With this kind of set up we are not just exposed with the poor, but we are with them in all their triumphs and struggles. We stay in a small house where we can have enough space to pray, eat and study.

We also need to travel every day to go to school back and forth and experience the typical life outside that the poor do every day. For me, this is the most precious part of my formation years that challenged me to become a Franciscan, a minor that is relevant to respond to the imperatives of the world. This experience also boasted me to bring all my rich learnings and realizations that I learned from all the people specially the poor and the marginalized that becomes my real life formators. This experience also inspired me to cultivate the spirituality of JPIC that is already present from the first phase of my formation until I reached Solemn Profession and until the present days that JPIC is my main ministry. I am very much thankful for this remarkable opportunity that inspired me to become the friar that I am today. Franciscan Life is hard but beautiful. JPIC is challenging yet fulfilling.

Our Life as friars is not meaningful without nourishing our JPIC spirituality. JPIC is in our DNA as friars. In this time of pandemic crisis, we witnessed a lot of violations and devastations against Humanity, Mother Earth and all that has life. As Friars Minor of this modern times, we are called to be friars for Justice, friars who are channel of Peace and friars who are stewards of our common home. We are called to be more relevant with our witnessing and life as Franciscans bringing all the JPIC values and virtues to the world. Thank you and may the Lord give you peace!





**Fr. Rodrigo Peret, OFM**  
JPIC Animator

## JPIC WITNESS IN BRAZIL

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are dimensions of the Franciscan charism and therefore, a way of life and mission. They are transverse dimensions of our *forma vitae*. So, they must be lived in our daily life regarding the person himself, prayer, fraternity, formation, finances, vows, missions, as well as society, creation and God. Francis lived a life of openness towards reconciliation, peace, justice and care for creation.

In this sense, I want to emphasise the importance of experiences during the formation process. The significance of lived and reflected experiences takes us beyond educating for life but allows the person to live by educating himself. This, I believe, is at the heart of formation.

It is important to stress that it is not a matter of pragmatism. It is about considering the lived, the experienced, to produce meaning and to bring contextual reflections, about the person himself, about the environment in which he lives and learns. To consider where an integral and embodied spirituality comes from, bearing in mind our *forma vitae*.

I will now try to point out some experiences.

In the Province of Santo Antonio, in the friary of El Salvador, we have headquarters of the Movement of People Without Fixed Abode. And in the city of Fortaleza, the Association for Recycling. The friars are a fraternal presence, and they feel the challenges of the social and environmental crisis together in a tangible way.



In the Province of St. Francis, in the south of Brazil, they live in an urban suburb of Porto Alegre and work in the Centre for the Promotion of Children and Adolescents.

In the Province of the Immaculate, in southeast Brazil, postulants and their teachers have a month-long experience at SEFRAS (Franciscan Solidarity Service). During the first few days, they reflect on the social, political and economic context. Afterwards, they will experience working with children and adolescents, the elderly, immigrants and refugees, people on the streets and people with HIV/AIDS.

It is important to stress that both the Provinces and the Custodies offer opportunities for the friars to undertake the year of Franciscan experience in fraternities living out social and environmental commitments. In the case of the Custody of the Sacred Heart, we have two brothers in temporary profession, one is now having a missionary experience with immigrants, and the other is working in SEFRAS, following the COVID19 emergency.

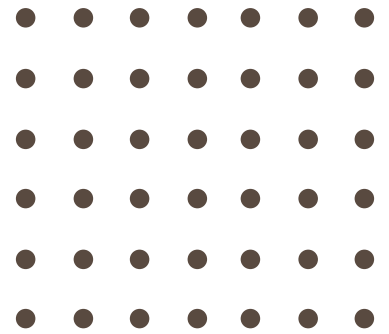
Initiatives have grown a lot during initial formation, in social media, as in the Province of Santo Antonio, the production of live streams on the themes of the Laudato Si' and care of the Common Home, the production of Podcasts on the Santo Antonio Web Radio, as well as topics on daily programmes. These are initiatives of the friars in temporary profession. Another example is JPIC media.

In recent years, with the social and political context in Brazil, the participation of friars in initial formation, in social movements and the defence of democracy, in favour of life, has grown. Another important aspect is the growing number of brothers in initial formation who are members of the JPIC groups of the provinces and custodies in our Brazilian conference.

I end with a thought from Laudato Si':

“We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality: “Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism”. Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth” (LS 92).





**Fr. Michael Perry, OFM**  
Minister General

## CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

Brothers, we have been blessed by God and blessed by each other during this brief time of reflection together. We are also blessed by Pope Francis, a man who demonstrates a very clear understanding of the spiritual vision of St. Francis of Assisi.

From the very beginning of his service as Bishop of Rome, Pope Francis demonstrated with word and action his commitment to living the radical call of the Gospel. He sought to engage with the reality of the suffering of the world, the suffering of the planet, inviting the Church and the whole world to join him on this pilgrimage. He challenges us to embrace a vision that is all-encompassing, that promotes the building of bridges and not walls, abandoning everything that leads us to death rather than life. An approach requiring a radical restructuring of the values that guide and, to some extent, determine how we respond to God's call to reach out in love to the whole of humanity and the created universe. (Or perhaps, in the light of the natural sciences, we should speak of “polyverses” located in billions of galaxies yet to be explored).

It is appropriate that we have paid particular attention to the three areas of our Franciscan life that help us to structure our way of seeing, judging and acting as Friars Minor in today's world. I speak of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation; Formation and Studies; and Mission and Evangelisation, which was included in the presentation on Formation. In the sixth chapter of *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis invites us to enter into a process of formation, education, conversion, acceptance of a new ecological spirituality. One that is holistic, integral and has the potential for a radical transformation of our way of life, of caring for one another and of our common home (cf. LS 215, 220).



The consequences of this revolution, of this process of conversion, have, according to Pope Francis, a direct impact on the quality of our human and spiritual life and on the path we will travel together on this fragile planet in danger. “The human person grows more, matures more and is sanctified more to the extent that he or she enters into relationships, going out from themselves to live in communion with God, with others and with all creatures. In this way, they make their own that trinitarian dynamism which God imprinted in them when they were created. “Everything is interconnected, and this invites us to develop a spirituality of that global solidarity which flows from the mystery of the Trinity.” (LS 240).

I want to conclude with a reflection by a British journalist who has written extensively on Pope Francis. His name is Austin Ivereigh. *Laudato Si'* is apocalyptic both because it unmask the truth about what we hold sacred. Because it exposes human impotence in resolving the crisis by our own means ... the encyclical asks us to choose a new path, which depends on an “ecological conversion”. Our crises - ecological and political, human and natural - are interconnected in a profound disease that requires a new way of thinking and living. The competitive behaviours that have fuelled human progress are no longer strategies that can help us. A solution to the destruction of the environment can no longer be conjured up like a rabbit from the hat of the technological mastery that caused the crisis. Only a metanoia, a new heart, that leads to a new way of seeing - the overall picture effect - can now save us”.

May the speculations about life after the new Coronavirus pandemic come true. That we will never be the same as before as individuals, as members of human society, as guardians of our common home and as disciples of the risen Lord Jesus. May our hearts be transformed, and we can become instruments of God’s love and solidarity in this world (LS 246), submissive and at the service of all living creatures (RnB 16).

Brothers, let us begin...





