

# CONTACT

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



## Br. Massimo Fusarelli:

*"...The biblical exodus of so many refugees fleeing war helps us see with open eyes this fate that affects so many, too many people throughout the world today. Yet, we cannot become accustomed to it and remain indifferent. Let us try to read what is happening in the light of faith and understanding history, not stopping at superficial assessments. I wonder what the Lord wants to tell us through all this. How his "silence" before so much pain challenges and purifies our faith, urging us to listen more intensely to his Word, with the heart and faith of Mary, Virgin of the Yes..."*

1

### INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

Bolivia - Spain- Chile

2

### MIGRATION

Colombia - Mexico -  
USA

3

### HUMAN RIGHTS

Ukraine - Poland



**Animation  
Committee**



**Assembly  
CLAMOR  
Network**



**Franciscan  
Justice and  
Peace Movement**



## JPIC Animation Committee held its annual meeting

The JPIC Animation Committee met in person and virtually on 22 - 25 March. Br Jacek Orzechowski, OFM from the United States, Br Daniel Rodríguez, OFM from El Salvador, and Br Francesco Zecca, OFM and Jaime Campos, OFM took part in person in the General Curia in Rome.

Among the functions of the Animation Committee is to assist the Animator of the JPIC Office in implementing the projects and suggestions proposed by the IJPICC Assembly and approved by the General Definitory (SS 6,1). During our meeting, we discussed and made some decisions on the following topics:

### **1. Shema Meetings**

In collaboration with JPIC Media, the JPIC Animation Committee will join the organisation of three online meetings for dialogue, reflection, prayer and action. With simultaneous translation and parallel rooms per language in zoom. This will allow for sharing among all participants.

3 September: During the Time of Creation

23 September: In preparation for the World Day for Migrants and Refugees

22 October: In preparation for the celebration of the Spirit of Assisi

### **2. Laudato Si' Week**

The JPIC Office, as part of the Laudato Si' Week Committee, together with the Laudato Si' Movement, will collaborate in the organisation of one of the global events on the theme of "ecological education".

### **3. JPIC, Formation and Studies**

The Animation Committee met with Br Darko Tepert, OFM Secretary General for Formation and Studies. From orientation 27 of the General Chapter, a dialogue was initiated to foster collaborative work, enabling the values of JPIC to be more incarnated in the processes of initial and ongoing formation. From this dialogue, two paths emerged for the coming years: formative experiences and a re-evaluation of the theological content of formation from the perspective of integral ecology (for example: the Diploma and Licentiate in Philosophy with a specialisation in integral ecology).

### **4. JPIC, Missions and Evangelisation**

The JPIC Animation Committee participated in the International Council for Missions and Evangelisation meeting. They discussed how JPIC values - the values of the Kingdom - can be more present and at the service of the Missions and Evangelisation. Furthermore, the progress made by the Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean was shared as a meeting point. Finally, some criteria for the creation of the Ratio Evangelizationis were presented.

## **5. Brazil-South Cone Conference**

The JPIC Animation Committee, together with the Vicar General, the Secretary General for Formation and Studies and the Secretary General for Missions and Evangelisation, participated virtually in the meeting of the Brazil-South Cone Conference. This was attended by Ministers Provincial, Secretaries for Formation and Studies, Missions and Evangelisation and JPIC animators from all the entities belonging to the Conference. The guidelines for implementing Orientation 27 and Mandate 28 (JPIC) of the General Chapter 2021 were presented.

## **6. Franciscan Networks, mandate 28 General Chapter 2021**

**Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean:** Br Francesco Zecca, OFM, gave an update. The Conference of Ministers Provincial of Italy and Albania (COMPI) decided to create a fraternity in Taranto (southern Italy) to carry out the project "OIKOS" (Integral Ecology Centre for the Mediterranean). This project will be the "motor" of the network. The projects are currently in progress:

a. Oikos - youth: 6 youth groups have been formed in Taranto, Scutari, Beirut, Cairo, Marrakech, Palma de Majorca.

b. Oikos - Integral Ecology: In October 2022, the third edition of the diploma course will start at the Pontifical Antonianum University (1 year - virtual), with two specialisations: Business and Mediterranean. The aim is to train facilitators who will then be integrated into the various projects of the network. Information will be sent in due course.

c. The proposal on the organisational structure of the network was discussed.

**Franciscan Network for Migrants:** Br Jaime Campos, OFM, presented an update on the organisation: houses of welcome and work teams. The strengthening of the national teams (6 countries) and the new areas that the network has been implementing: advocacy team, section "for migrants," and the training plan for members of the network.

## **7. COP27 - November 2022**

Based on the project presented by the JPIC Office, the decision was taken to carry it forward, in collaboration with Franciscans International, in two phases:

a) Preliminary events: The Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean will organise meetings on climate change in the cities of the "Oikos-Youth" project.

b) Official Event: Br Jacek Orzechowski, OFM, will represent the JPIC Office at the COP27 in collaboration with Franciscans International.

## **8. International JPIC Meetings**

**International JPIC Council 2022:** The possibility of holding the IJPICC meeting towards the end of this year (November) was discussed. Two countries are proposed as possible venues for the meeting. Br Jaime will consult with the friars of these countries to explore the opportunities. The JPIC Animation Committee will meet immediately after the IJPICC in the same city.

**VI Continental JPIC Meeting of the Americas and Intercontinental Asia/Oceania Meeting.** During the International JPIC Council in November 2022, the place and date for each of these meetings will be decided. Therefore, both would be in 2023. It will be opportune to rethink these meetings, their dynamics, scope, means in the post-pandemic.

## **9. International JPIC Course**

We discussed the need to evaluate the format of this course. It was recalled that it began in 2008, and some 450 friars have participated. Therefore, it was agreed to bring this issue to the following International JPIC Council.

**Br. Jaime Campos F., OFM**  
JPIC Office - Rome



# Beatification of Br. Cosmas: a new impetus for the work of the El Salvador JPIC Office

**O**n 22 January last, in the Plaza del Divino Salvador del Mundo in San Salvador, the beatification of four martyrs of the Salvadoran Church took place: Jesuit Father Rutilio Grande and his fellow martyrs Nelson Rutilio Lemus and Manuel Solórzano. Among them, our Franciscan brother Br Cosmas Spessotto, an Italian missionary who gave his life defending the rights of Christ and his Church[1] in the Church of San Juan Nonualco, in the department of La Paz, stands out uniquely. Under the title of martyr for reconciliation and peace, the Franciscan friars of the El Salvador region have asked the Provincial Government to make the recent Blessed the patron of all the JPIC offices of the Province of Central America and Haiti.

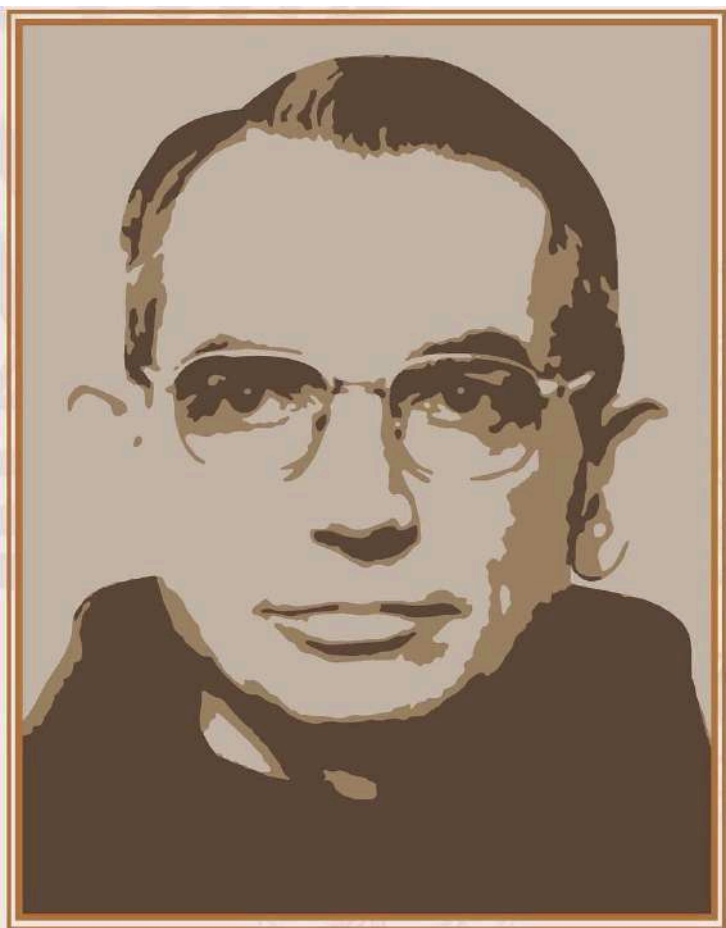
The petition arises from this experience and exemplarity around these values of the Franciscan charism: the defence of life and human dignity in the face of all forms of death and oppression, social resistance based on active non-violence, the sincere search for reconciliation between two armed sides in conflict, concrete solidarity with the pain of an impoverished people and the quest for justice to its ultimate consequences: the total surrender of one's own life.

It is essential to highlight the political and social context., our country is going through, where the government has sold the idea that the Peace Accords have been a deception for decades. These sentiments challenge us to proclaim that our martyrs can help us to recover our memory and hope and not give up the dream of a reconciled and peaceful country, a country as our God wants it: just, fraternal and in solidarity, as Cardinal Gregorio said in his homily at the beatification. The Pope's delegate insisted on recovering the Peace Accords' spirit and the path laid out there.[2]

The four newly proclaimed Blessed Martyrs are a source of historical memory and evangelical inspiration for the entire Franciscan Family, including many non-believers in this country, so that we can continue to build a more just, united and peaceful country.

In his speech at the beatification ceremony, our Minister Provincial, Br Luis Enrique Saldaña, said St Francis called the first martyrs in Morocco true Friars Minor. Today, El Salvador has a true Friar Minor in the person of Br Cosmas Spessotto. Through his intercession, the friars on pilgrimage in these lands offer to be instruments of peace for this Salvadorian society and the world. Still, for this to become a reality in Salvadorian society, justice must be done in the country.

He also recalled that with the canonisation of Saint Romero and thanks to the Second Vatican Council, we have recognised that martyrdom for the defence of human rights exists. Faith itself helps us see that every human being in this world has the dignity of being a creature made by God. Therefore, defending the dignity of



**BEATO FRAY COSME SPESSOTTO, OFM**

**PRESBITERO Y MÁRTIR**  
**RECUERDO DE SU BEATIFICACIÓN**  
**22-01-2022**



the human being, of what has been created by God, is the responsibility of the Church and every son, every daughter of our good God.[3]

Under the intercession of Br Cosmas, true Friar Minor, Blessed, martyr of reconciliation and peace and patron of the service of the offices of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, we commit ourselves to work for dialogue and concord with civil, social and environmental movements. We reject all violent options of conflict but instead opt for the means of peaceful processes that are within reach of even the weakest.[4]

In this way, the brothers and sisters who make up the JPIC Office in El Salvador are actively committed to defending the rights of Christ, of his Church and of every human being who shares in the profound cries of our country. This becomes concretely real for us in continuing to fight for the Human Right to Water, accessible, clean and abundant; as well as the Right to migrate, as well as to improve living conditions in this country so as not to migrate; the Right to food sovereignty to guarantee food security for the people and the Right to civil liberties and democratic institutions in full force in our country.

May the example of the martyrs of the entire Salvadoran Church, beatified and un-beatified, help us to carry forward this arduous task of establishing the Kingdom of God in history.

**JPIC Office El Salvador**

[1] Testament of Blessed Cosmas Spessotto

[2] “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation” (Rev 7:14). Homily of Cardinal Gregorio Rosa Chávez at the Beatification Mass of four martyrs, 22 January 2022.

[3] Words of gratitude at the Beatification Ceremony by Br Luis Enrique Saldaña, OFM. Saturday, 22nd January 2022.

[4] General Constitutions of the Order of Friars Minor, art. 69, 1.





## Bolivia: reforestation in La Paz, seeds of hope

*"When we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace, the seeds of hope".*

(Professor Wangari Maathai)

Every person is inserted in a habitat that welcomes them and helps them grow. Of course, the first and most natural habitat is the family, which is a fundamental part of our growth and maturity and the people around us. But we are also inserted in that other habitat or common home, which is nature, made up mainly of other living beings. We have something in common with them, but we also have a particular responsibility towards them.

Therefore, we should reflect not only on our impact on the ecology and the conservation of the environment, now and for future generations, but also on the need to ensure our personal growth as a

whole. The person passes, but our environment remains, with all the changes this may entail. All this allows us to conclude that our personal dignity, based on the richness of our rational and free being, brings a mission to ourselves, others, and creation.

Humanity has to take action to reduce environmental problems, especially the one that plays the most vital role in global warming: environmental pollution, which impacts air, water, soil, plants and animals. Therefore, it is essential to develop and promote strategies to minimise the ecological crisis that threatens life itself and the planet's stability.

Trees are a solution to combat environmental problems and enhance the planet's ecological balance. They help counteract many environmental issues such as global warming, erosion, desertification, atmospheric pollution, deforestation, forest fires, etc.

The planet urgently needs trees to produce more oxygen to maintain environmental quality and

ensure the survival of all species. Trees are the planet's lungs, absorbing greenhouse gases and becoming ecosystems for biological diversity.

Within the Movement, the Franciscan spirit led to designing a reforestation project to be implemented in the long term in the town of Copacabana, in the department of La Paz, Bolivia. The aim is to plant 1500 trees of Andean species, making a solid contribution to the town's identity and its origins. Every time planting is carried out within the framework of the project; it is an event. The Franciscan Friars Minor of the community of San Francisco de Copacabana, catechists, ecological volunteers, volunteers from the JPIC La Paz Movement, the Captaincy of the Copacabana naval port, etc., have participated in the activities.

More than 1400 trees ( queñuas, kiswaras, radiata pines and cypress pines) were the leading players in recent changes of mind and heart, and more than 300 seedlings are waiting to grow to have their space and contribute to the care of our common home.

As a faith community, we seek to protect every person's life and dignity, care for the vulnerable, and preserve our common home for our children and future generations. These are new times full of opportunities and responsibilities to make a difference in addressing the impacts these issues present, particularly on those least able to bear the burdens.

The motivation to plant trees will continue with planning future creation care activities throughout the year. This motivation should remain with the members of the Movement throughout their lives. Care for the home is based on a rich heritage of faith, tradition and social teaching that we can draw on to live the Gospel faithfully in our own time and situation.



## Franciscan Justice and Peace Movement





## Spain: energy self-sufficiency for St Francis of Assisi Friary and Parish in Pamplona

**T**he Care for Creation group of the St Francis of Assisi Parish in Pamplona (Navarra) was set up in 2018. We were motivated by the publication of “LAUDATO SI” in 2015; the celebration of the Franciscan Week on the theme in March 2016; the existence of the “Social Reception Group” with a long history and parish dynamism; the previous work carried out by the “Grupo de Decrecimiento”, etc.

Since we started in 2018, there have been many activities carried out. (Earth Day celebrations: vigils, Eucharist, prayers, talks, workshops, film forum, Laudato Si’ week, exhibitions on the Amazon, “A year of life with a tree in the neighbourhood”, a monthly challenge for the “Care of creation”, campaigns to reduce the use of plastic, etc.). One of them is the parish energy self-sufficiency project that we would now like to share. We started it in 2019, but the pandemic hit us, and everything was put on hold until 2021.

This project wanted to equip the Parish of St Francis of Assisi and the friary of St Francis with a photovoltaic solar plant for collective self-sufficiency, thus reducing the consumption of fossil fuels and increasing the possibility of saving on energy bills.

To this end, municipal grants are available to promote self-supporting photovoltaic installations in the city; grants we have been able to access (€4,000, almost 50% of the project’s total cost) after a great deal of bureaucratic red tape.

The friary is located in the four apartments of the first floor of a 16-storey block of flats, and the parish church is underground. The fraternity, at present, is made up of five friars who live in the three apartments, where Apartment A is directly connected to the Parish, and the fourth apartment D is on loan to the diocesan Caritas for its housing programme for migrant families in vulnerable situations.

The 3.6 kWp solar plant, for collective self-sufficiency, has been installed on the shared terrace. But it is only for the use of the friary, of the building where the five supplies are located. The Parish and the four apartments of the friary benefit from this when it comes to producing energy for self-consumption. This means that we now have production and self-consumption of energy from renewable sources.

**Br Fausto Yudego, OFM**  
JPIC Animator  
Province of Arantzazu





## The Bolivian JPIC Movement “on the move”.

*The Franciscan Justice and Peace Movement announces the activities carried out in all the departments of Bolivia where it is present. In addition, they inform us of the activities coordinated by the National Commission.*

### **Cochabamba**

They have managed the maintenance of the reforestation in the community of Potrereros; they have completed the project to help COVID-19 patients and their families; they have handled the maintenance of the garden of the Fundación Nueva Luz, in Vinto; they are taking steps to install a new garden in the southern area.

### **Santa Cruz**

They are implementing projects to promote the Encyclical Laudato Si’; they participate in the REBOS project in coordination with Dr Geovana Carreño of ICRAF, to carry out the inventory and protection of the Chiquitano dry forest; they coordinate different activities with the Franciscan Family; they actively participated in the Week of Creation, they sent several videos to the national office; they continue with the sale of calendars. They accompanied the indigenous people who marched in defence of their territory.

### **La Paz**

They continue with the care of seedlings and reforestation in the town of Copacabana. They coordinate with the Archbishopric of La Paz and CEPROLAI different awareness-raising activities for the care of the common home. They started implementing the Covid-19 prevention project in the locality of Copacabana. The legal unit continues to attend to some conciliation cases; they continue to coordinate with the ecumenism commission of the Episcopal Conference.





### **Oruro:**

Br. Jorge Delgadillo, OFM, has been absent from Oruro. They are waiting for his return to reorganise the Commission.

### **Potosí**

They elected the new Commission, Br. Enrique Tapia, OFM, is the new president, and they will meet to delegate functions.

### **National Commission**

Holding a series of talks organised in alliance with RUN Bolivia and the Jubilee Foundation on the human rights situation in the country; meetings with the Bella Vista Network and contacts with the UN and Caritas International to follow up on the situation in this Beni municipality; given the emergency caused by the pandemic, some activities were organised to help those affected: In Cochabamba and La Paz, in coordination with RUN-Bolivia, a meeting was held with the governor of Cochabamba to discuss human rights issues and to acknowledge the coordinated work he is doing with the mayor's office, even though they belong to different political parties. In Cochabamba, support continued for the maintenance of the reforestation project in the community of Potreritos; in coordination with RUN-Bolivia, workshops on composting with different groups of women in the southern part of Cochabamba are being held.

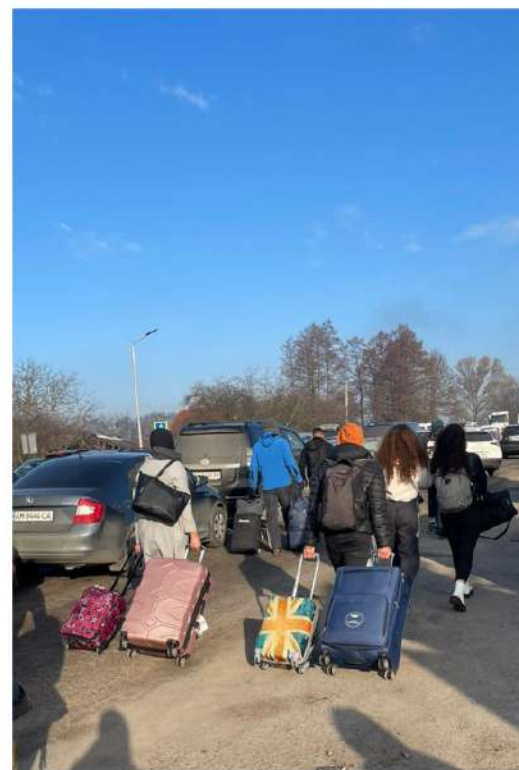
Material for the Day of Honesty was prepared and sent to the departments; interviews were held with the media on the theme of the Day of Honesty; from

1 September to 4 October, the time of creation was celebrated in line with the call of Pope Francis: short videos were made and shared on social networks encouraging people to sign the Pope's petition in view of the COP; we participated in Creation Week in conjunction with JPIC-CBR; coordination and accompaniment of all activities with the Franciscan family; in the Amazon project, a meeting was held with REPAM; talks to the CBR regional offices and a workshop with the inter-congregational that operates in Cochabamba; participation in the forums of the Ecclesial Assembly of Latin America and the Caribbean; we continue in the central office with the development of the "Allies of Hope" project; the baling machine, the forklift and the scales have been purchased with a view to the development of the collection centre.

Among the permanent activities carried out by the national office in coordination with the departmental offices are: coordination with different national and international related institutions; development of the Honesty Day; updating of Facebook, publication of newsletters; editing, publication and sales of the Latin American Calendar; and participation in the activities programmed by the JPIC-CBR commission for the Creation Week.

**Franciscan Justice and Peace Movement**









# The message of the Minister General for the war in Ukraine

Mexico City, 24 February 2022

To the Provincial Ministers and Custodes  
To all the Brothers and the Poor Clare and Conceptionist Sisters

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!

I arrived here in Mexico City this morning for the celebration of the 25th anniversary of the Province of San Junipero Serra, and as soon as I got off the plane, I received the news of the war that has now broken out in Ukraine, with the invasion that all the press is talking about. I was able to communicate with the Minister Provincial of Ukraine, Brother Danyil Botvina, and he informed me that the friars are well, especially in the friary of Konotop, a city already occupied by the Russians, and that they have remained there with the people, so as not to abandon them, and that they are safe.

For the rest, Br. Danyil shared with me the situation of concern and intense prayer, so that the cessation of the noise of the weapons. Europe has not seen a spectacle like this since way back in 1945. It is something very shocking, which, as Pope Francis said at yesterday's audience, causes anguish and pain.

Prayer, combined with fasting, is the poorest of human resources from a political point of view, but it is the most powerful if we see things from God's perspective. Only He can touch hearts and minds. He can stop the useless and harmful noise of weapons.

Only God can convert our hearts, because we know that the seed of war and violence is within each one of us and not outside of us. Praying and fasting lead us to conversion of heart and life, and bring this land bathed in innocent blood closer to the mercy of the Father. In the Scriptures, the blood is not dried from the earth so that God can hear the voice of His poor and we cannot remain indifferent. Prayer and fasting also brighten our inner gaze, so that we can read the signs of the times and not remain distracted but become witnesses. What happens in a distant place affects us all, and this is true for so many conflicts, especially the forgotten ones.

Now, let us fervently pray for the victims, for the many people who are already fleeing, especially to Poland where our brothers are already organizing themselves to welcome them. Let us pray for our brothers living in Ukraine and for those entrusted to their care.

I am asking all the brothers, every fraternity, all the Poor Clares and all the monasteries to pray daily at this time for peace in Ukraine and for peace wherever it is disturbed. On the 2nd day of March, the Pope is inviting us to a day of prayer and fasting and I am asking all the brothers and sisters who feel this inner inspiration to do the same, for example once a week, to invoke peace. May the Holy Spirit make us intercessors and agents of peace and reconciliation. Let us together entrust this intention to the Immaculate Virgin, the Mother of the Prince of Peace, Jesus Christ our Lord.

I greet you all from my heart, as we invoke together the blessing of St. Francis, who made the proclamation and practice of peace the heart of his and all our evangelical life.

Fraternal greetings  
Your brother and servant

**Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM**  
Minister General  
Prot. 111047





## Together for Ukraine

**O**n Saturday, 26 February 2022, I was with my family to celebrate my nephew's birthday. At a particular moment, I hear my mobile phone ring several times. Unknown caller. I let it go. But then I hear that someone has left me a voice message. So, I listen... and I can't believe it! There, Brother Ayman from the Holy Land asks me for help for students from Israel and Palestine who are fleeing Ukraine and looking for a place to sleep. Sure, we'll do it right away! But how to do this at a distance of almost 400km?

So, I jumped to call the Polish friars of Jaroslaw, who are closer to Ukraine (Province of St Mary of the Angels). After a few minutes, I get the affirmative answer from the guardian, Brother Florencjusz: Of course, let's help them! Afterwards, we exchange many calls (everything happens on WhatsApp between Israel, Poland and Ukraine). Everything seems easy. The friars will come to pick them up, and then they will get places to sleep etc. But no, we find out that the young people are still on Ukrainian territory, they are very close to the border, but there is still some way to go through the checkpoint. Good thing that Ali (one of the students) managed to pass through the border and was the point of reference already in Poland, especially with access to the Internet. The fact is that the other students no longer had network coverage and, therefore, communication with them was impossible.

Brother Ayman also provided us with the contact person from Israel to get the students safely to their homes. Thanks to her, we contacted both Ali and other students and coordinated the help.

At the same time, the friars from Jaroslaw quickly organised themselves and arrived near the border and met Ali. He was our guide, and the waiting time for other fellow escapees began from that moment on. I remember that it was already dark, cold, and so many people were everywhere. The students had been walking for two days and were exhausted. Almost all night, they had to wait for the young students to cross the border, and after a short journey by car, they were finally able to have something to eat, get warm and sleep in the friary of the Friars Minor in Jaroslaw. A few days later, they happily returned to their families. Praise be to God!

P.S. The evening of 26 February, two days after the start of the war, became the visible sign of Franciscan solidarity and hospitality for my confreres and me. It was a practical lesson in service to our brothers and sisters according to the teaching of Jesus. Another day I found other voice messages on my mobile phone thanking me for the welcome, friendship and collaboration. I also thanked Sister "Network" and Brother "WhatsApp".

**Br. Sergiusz M. Bałdyga OFM**

JPIC Animator

Province of the Assumption of the BVM Katowice, Poland



## Franciscans, following Pope Francis' call, join prayer meeting for peace

*"The world does not need empty words, but convinced witnesses, artisans of Peace open to dialogue without exclusion or manipulation".*

Pope Francis

Welcoming the invitation of Pope Francis to celebrate Ash Wednesday with a day of prayer and fasting for peace, several Church organisations, including CLAR - Latin American Confederation of Religious, Aguapanelazo America, Movimiento Laudato Si' Colombia, Religioso unidos por Colombia, ITVCA - Instituto Teológico de Vida Consagrada de América de, OFM - JPIC, Filocalia, Red de Dibujantes de Latinoamérica, Semillero de Pensamiento Social de la Iglesia, Pax Christi and JCOR - Coalición de Religiosas/os en la ONU por la Justicia Social, joined together to organise, in a synodal and inter-congregational spirit, the prayer meeting, to pray for peace, especially in Ukraine/Russia.

During the meeting, Br. Gustavo Valenzuela, OFM of the Province of St. Francis Solano in Argentina, spoke about how armed conflicts, of

which there are currently 21, are affecting us. He spoke particularly of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has increased due to the new awareness of fraternity that we have developed during the pandemic, which makes us feel that what other peoples are experiencing is our own.

Gustavo's reflection was followed by an act of forgiveness in the face of the pain and suffering that humanity suffers from because of war. We joined in praying, pleading with God with greater intensity to be close to the people, families, and victims of war. Expressing our support for Pope Francis' invitation to us: a true and profound conversion during this time of Lent.

Towards the end of the meeting, we were invited to turn on our cameras. With lighted candles, symbolising the light that, as Christians, we are invited to recognise the light of peace born in the heart, which should illuminate the scenarios of conflict between nations. Then, for a few minutes of silence, God was asked for the gift of peace and the grace to be peacemakers.

Finally, the proposal for Lent "40 days for peace" of the network of cartoonists of Latin America and Aguapanelazo America was shared. It is a daily drawing based on Pope Francis' reflections on peace.



# Facing war: bridges of hope, prayer and solidarity action

*Since the beginning of the war between Russia and Ukraine, according to data from the International Organization for Migration (IOM), more than 3 million people have fled Ukraine seeking refuge in neighboring countries, including Poland, Romania, and Slovakia.*

At the same time, these countries serve as a bridge to connect with other countries in Europe that are aiding in welcoming people who have been forced to flee Ukraine. In the case of Poland, the Franciscan friars in various cities have organized themselves to respond, from our spirituality of welcome, to the various needs that arise, as well as to organize prayer meetings to pray for peace. Here are some of the initiatives that have been developed or are underway in the city of Katowice.

## *Prayer in the spirit of Assisi in Katowice, Poland*

On March 9, 2022, in the Basilica of the Franciscan Friars in Katowice, a prayer in the spirit of Assisi took place. The main intention was to pray together for peace in the world, especially in Ukraine. The friars welcomed the various representatives of other religions (Jews, Muslims, Protestants). The Coadjutor Archbishop of Katowice, Adrian Galbas, prayed with us. After concluding the prayer in the church in the spirit of Assisi, we continued to share in a meeting to strengthen fraternal ties.

## *Humanitarian bridge in Katowice*

The Franciscan fraternity of Katowice has become a place of reference for those who travel to provide humanitarian service in the Ukraine. In the first days of March the Civil Defense volunteers from *Chiaramonte*, Sicily, arrived. They succeeded



in their mission to transport various aids for our Ukrainian neighbors. Before returning to Italy, they returned to stay with the friars, sharing their experience of being close to those who suffer.

Since March 13, the Franciscan fraternity of Katowice has been offering its availability (hospitality, logistics, food, etc.) to the volunteer association of *Galdakaoko* (GBGE), Bilbao, Spain. The friars, together with the volunteers, help to organize the transportation of people from Ukraine to Spain, where they have relatives. At the same time, the fraternity offers rooms to sleep, meals and everything necessary to undertake such a long journey. Above all, they help the mothers with children and the sick. They help to dispose of the gifts that arrive from Spain and deliver them to the needy in the Ukraine. The collaboration has already begun and will last if necessary. Along with the Spanish friars and volunteers, there are also volunteers from the parish Caritas and lay staff from the Franciscan friary in Katowice.

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

# Br. Massimo Fusarelli: *"I would like to renew our solidarity with our brothers in Ukraine with this letter"*



To all the Friars Minor  
To the Poor Clare Sisters  
To the lay Franciscans and friends and benefactors

Rome, 25 March 2022  
Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

May the Lord give you peace!



**W**e continue to follow with pain and anguish the events that have engulfed Ukraine. The world of information provides us with constant updates on the evolution of events. Still, we receive first-hand news from our brothers and sisters who live in that land, tormented by a conflict that Pope Francis described as inhuman and sacrilegious. From them, we hear of the suffering of the population and the great efforts being made to alleviate it. Our friars in Ukraine have all remained in the same places where they live. They are close to the people, especially the elderly and the sick, who cannot escape. They share their fate with serenity, and until today, thank God, they have not suffered any physical or material consequences from the conflict.

At the same time, our attention is drawn to our brothers and sisters in neighbouring countries and beyond who are showing great generosity and involvement. They are taking in refugees and providing assistance to their brothers and sisters who have remained in Ukraine as far as possible in this very bitter phase of the war. So let us continue to pray and fast. Let us continue to ask forgiveness for the violence that is once again sweeping across Europe, after the tragedies of the 20th century, not

least the war in the Balkans at the end of the last century. And for the many wars going on in the world today.

The biblical exodus of so many refugees fleeing war helps us see with open eyes this fate that affects so many, too many people throughout the world today. Yet, we cannot become accustomed to it and remain indifferent. Let us try to read what is happening in the light of faith and understanding history, not stopping at





superficial assessments. I wonder what the Lord wants to tell us through all this. How his "silence" before so much pain challenges and purifies our faith, urging us to listen more intensely to his Word, with the heart and faith of Mary, Virgin of the Yes.

I would like to renew our solidarity with our brothers in Ukraine with this letter. The great generosity that is coming from the Order and so many small and major benefactors will help us in the future. However, none of us knows how long this emergency and the many needs of a destroyed country will last. Through the OFM Fraternitas Foundation, we are continuing the solidarity collection for Ukraine, which you can continue to promote and share as indicated on the Order's website ([www.ofm.org](http://www.ofm.org)).

Through the Curia Development Office, we approve well-targeted projects led by the brothers of St Michael's Province and the All-Saints Greek Catholic Foundation. In this way, we ensure all donors that the funds are put to good use, identifying the various needs and critical issues to be addressed each time. Therefore, I warmly renew my appeal to support the current solidarity initiatives and those we will face in the long term. This is a time for generosity, for opening our hearts and our homes and friaries to welcome and share.

As Easter approaches, the feeling of hope cannot but grow in the hearts of each and every one of us. We hope that this Calvary to which the Ukrainian people are subjected, which indirectly involves all men and women of faith throughout the world, may soon end and lead to a time of peace. A time of rebirth and redemption for all humanity, in which we can truly say that we are all Brothers and Sisters (Fratelli Tutti)!

With this wish, I greet and bless each and every one of you in the name of St Francis.

Your brother and servant,

**Br Massimo Fusarelli, ofm**  
Minister General

Prot. 111146





## Assembly of the Latin American and Caribbean Ecclesial Network on Migration, Displacement, Refuge and Human Trafficking

*From 14 to 18 February, the organisations that are part of the CLAMOR Network, including the Franciscan Network for Migrants, met in Bogotá.*

**D**elegates from the 35 organisations that are part of this network participated in the 2022 General Assembly, which aimed to renew and approve the Identity, Vision, Mission and Structure of the Network, approve the statutes and appoint the members of the working commissions.

CLAMOR Network is attached to the Latin American Episcopal Council, CELAM. It coordinates the pastoral work of Catholic Church organisations in Latin America and the Caribbean that welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants, displaced persons, refugees and victims of trafficking. It is based on the Spirituality of Communion, being signs of hope and witnesses of a missionary, synodal and outgoing Church that walks with the impoverished and excluded.

### ***The working commissions were constituted as follows:***

Elvy Monzant of Caritas Venezuela was re-elected as Executive Secretary of the Network.

– The Commission for Reflection and Formation will be coordinated by Gerardo Cruz, from the Mexican Institute of Christian Social Doctrine -IMDOSOC-.

– The Commission for the Organisation of Services will be coordinated by Sr Roselei Bertoldo, from the Un Grito por la Vida Network – Brazil.



- The Advocacy Commission will have Fr Luis Carlos Aguilar from Caritas Costa Rica as its focal point.
- The Communications Commission will be coordinated by María Eva Lobo of Clamor Communications and Caritas Venezuela.
- The Ethics Committee will have Cristina Pancho from Caritas Ecuador as liaison.
- The Animation Team will be formed by Sister Leda Reis, from the Scalabrinian Mission of Ecuador and Sister María Victoria Acevedo, from the Sisters of St John the Evangelist.

**The Franciscan Network for Migrants**, an initiative that has been promoted by the General Curia JPIC Office since 2019 and an active member of the CLAMOR Network, was represented by Br Jaime Campos OFM, Director of the Office and Br Juan Rendón, OFM, member of the Steering Committee and part of the Franciscan Network for Migrants – Colombia team. As part of the working commissions of the CLAMOR Network, Ana V. López, Communications director of the RFM, joined the Communication Commission and Br Juan Rendón, OFM, joined the Advocacy Commission.





## Animation meeting at the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference

*The brothers working in the animation services of the General Curia travelled to Colombia to participate in the meeting of Ministers Provincial and Custodes of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference.*

To renew our mission and embrace our future as brothers and minors, the Animation Offices of the General Curia: the General Secretariat for Formation and Studies, the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation and the Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC), have proposed to deepen our collaborative work both within the Curia and in the service we offer to the Entities of the Order.

For this reason, we participated in the meeting of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference, which brought together the Ministers Provincial of Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and the Custos of Venezuela. In addition, the Provincial Secretaries for Formation and Studies, for the Missions and Evangelisation and the JPIC Animators of the seven Franciscan entities that make up the Conference (CFB) joined in this meeting.

During the meeting, the action plans of each Animation Office were presented in line with the final document of the General Chapter 2021 and the Guidelines for the six years 2021-2027. We then took time to get to know the plans and projects of each Entity in the area of formation, evangelisation and JPIC. It was a valuable time of listening and learning about the opportunities and needs of each Entity.

During the second day of the meeting, work was done in groups by area to establish joint plans and programmes between the three areas of animation. Once the proposals of each region were set, they were shared to discern the form of collaboration between the Conference's entities. Towards the end of the day, five joint proposals were established between the GSFS, GSME and JPIC to Alirio Urbina, OFM, President of the Bolivarian Franciscan Conference, so that they may be revised and approved in view of a Conference plan that includes the dimensions already mentioned in harmony with the directives of the current six-year period.





## A friar from Brazil as a volunteer at La 72

*We had the pleasure of interviewing him to find out more about him and what motivated him to volunteer at the shelter.*

**B**r. Flavio Lorrane Clementino de Almeida, from the region of Pernambuco, in the north-east of Brazil, arrived at La 72, Home - Refuge for Migrants, on the 31st of January. Br. Lorrane, 28 years old, is in the process of formation as a Franciscan in the Franciscan Province of St. Anthony in Brazil. Last December, he graduated in Theology, with research on communication as an instrument of care for the common home, *Laudato Si'*. He also worked with homeless people, social movements, migrants and the LGBTI community. For some time now, he has accompanied the Migrant Pastoral Ministry of the Archdiocese of Fortaleza, Brazil.

A member of the JPIC Commission of his Province, he arrived in Tenosique for his year of Franciscan experience in La 72. Here is an extract of the conversation we had with Br. Lorrane.

### ***Why were you interested in coming to La 72?***

The first time I got to know La 72 was in a report four years ago, on the JPIC website, about the work that is done here, especially for the LGBTI community in Tenosique, and that it is one of the first shelters in Mexico to welcome people from the community. Then, on the website of La 72, in 2018, with the RFM, I found out more about La 72 and that it had more activities.

### ***You mentioned that you worked with migrants and the LGBTI community. How did you do this?***

Through social networks. In the Province, I worked in Communication with the Santo Antônio Web Radio, and I was a member of JPIC Media. That's why I want to study Journalism, I would like to return to Brazil at the end of the volunteering and start my studies, but it could be in another place.

La 72 comprises different areas: Humanitarian Assistance, Human Rights, Structural Change, Vulnerable Groups, and now the Communication area has been launched. From what you mentioned, your previous knowledge would be of great help to us in managing the new area. **Although I have to ask, would you like to volunteer there, or are you open to any other?**

I am open to the various opportunities, but communication is better because it is an area I have



already worked in, and I know about it. I would like to create simple communication in the networks so that people from outside, the followers, understand how La 72 works and become volunteers one day. I have experience in my Province where our goal is to show our work. In La 72, it is different; I need to adapt and know the needs of the house to contribute as much as possible.

### ***Now that you are a volunteer at La 72, how do you feel?***

It's all different because, as a friar, I have a different life. I already have an established routine, and now I have to devote myself to the care of migrants. So I came to help in any way I could, both as a friar and as a volunteer.

I feel good; it's the first time I've left my country, and I'm in the process of adaptation. Now I don't have much to do because I'm arriving, so I want to be involved and have specific activities. I have already spoken to some fellow migrants who speak Portuguese, my language.

### ***What are your expectations of being at La 72, or what do you hope to take away?***

I hope to return more human and also take the opportunity to learn to speak Spanish. To get to know a new culture, that which encompasses everything, to start eating differently. I hope that this life experience will be helpful for my mission as a friar in Brazil. Before I had worked indirectly with migrants through the Migrant Pastoral Ministry that meets in our friary, our house, I had the opportunity to be with our migrant and refugee brothers and sisters. In Fortaleza, there is a migrant house, there are many Venezuelans, but it is not ours; it belongs to the Archdiocese.

If you want to know more about the volunteering process in some of the Houses or Teams attached to the Franciscan Network for Migrants, you can visit our dedicated website:

<https://redfranciscana.org/en/>

**Vianey Martínez**  
Franciscan Migrant Network





# International days – April to June, 2022

<b>April 22</b>	International Mother Earth Day
<b>May 1</b>	International Laborer's Day
<b>May 12</b>	World Fair Trade Day
<b>May 22</b>	International Day for Biological Diversity
<b>May 22-29</b>	Laudato Si'. Week
<b>June 5</b>	World Environment Day
<b>June 8</b>	World Ocean Day
<b>June 12</b>	World Day against Child Labor
<b>June 17</b>	World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought



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