

CONTACT

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



The International Council of JPIC meets in Petropolis, Brazil

On Monday, November 21st, the Internacional Council of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (CIJPIC) began its meeting in Petrópolis, Río de Janeiro, Brazil. Franciscan brothers from all continents have come together in order to evaluate the work done in each Conference or region where the Order is present and to draw up lines of action that will accompany the JPIC animators in the following years according to what the General Chapter entrusted to the JPIC general Office.

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2ND DAY JPIC
INTERNATIONAL
COUNCIL

Brazil

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INTEGRAL ECOLOGY
IN THE WYD OF
LISBON 2023

Portugal

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AGREEMENT
USB-RFM

Colombia



**The Inicial
Franciscan
Formation to
the service
of Migrants.
Testimonies**



**Br Taucen
Hotlan Girsang,
OFM, new
Assistant
Director of the
General JPIC
Office**



**Franciscans
COP27**

Strengthening Peace Networks

Br. Daniel Rodriguez Blanco took charge as the new Director of the JPIC Office in the OFM General Curia in Rome, in August 2022 and Br. Taucen Hotlan Girsang joined him in October 2022, as the vice Director.

The climate crisis, various social problems faced by the poor, the difficulties faced by the migrants and refugees around the world, conflicts, and wars in various parts of our world are a matter of concern for JPIC. The urgency of concerted effort to alleviate the suffering of nature, of the poor, of migrants and refugees, as well as of the victims of conflict and war, in a peaceful and non-violent way, is an invitation for all to join and to participate. It calls for the establishment of inter-continental cooperation networks, especially peace networks. In this regard, several initiatives and practical supports from all sides are needed.

Further, peace networks are necessity in order to develop more intense collaboration in Mediterranean, Latin America, Asia, Afrika and all over the world. By working together to help each other, the suffering of some of our brothers and sisters can be alleviated.

The challenges we face today are more complicated than before due to effects of covid 19 disaster. But it is a time of hope to search new opportunities to collaborate and to work together. Of course, some approaches have been implemented such as the application of an integral ecological approach to the problem of environmental crisis, or several collaborations to deal with the problems of migrants and refugees. Moreover, our attention to the poor is never overlooked. As a clear example, after meeting with Pope Francis on 31st October 2022, who recalled “the way of life of the Franciscans is a school of poverty”, Br Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, the Minister General, wrote in his letter an asking to live “a gesture of minority” on the commemoration of the Sixth World Day of The Poor on 10th November 2022.

However, through the evaluation conducted by the friars as the members of International JPIC Council from 20th to 27th November 2022 in Petropolis-Brazil, there is still a need to strengthen the existing approaches in order to achieve the maximum expected results. In the meantime, new efforts and approaches are being pursued. In fact, the enormous problems associated with JPIC cannot, of course, be solved all at once.

A few years ago, during his meeting with the members of the General Assembly of the United Nations Organization on 25th September 2015, Pope Francis stated: “Economic and social exclusion is a complete denial of human fraternity and a grave offense against human rights and the environment. The poorest are those who suffer most from such offenses, for three serious reasons: they are cast off by society, forced to live off what is discarded and suffer unjustly from the abuse of the environment.” Accordingly, these issues are still there. Therefore, we do not give up on such situation. On the contrary, we will work continuously even only taking a small step in earnest, we believe, surely will be the beginning of an overall improvement.

Br. Taucen Girsang, OFM



Pope: Jesus is source of St Francis' unique holiness

Pope Francis receives members of the Ecclesial Coordination for the 800th Anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, who are beginning a three-year period of preparation that will culminate in 2026. In his address, the Holy Father emphasized that Jesus, and faith in Him, was the source of St Francis' life of holiness.

Pope Francis on Monday welcomed members of the group coordinating the 800th anniversary of the death of St Francis of Assisi, which will take place in 2026.

At the beginning of his address, the Holy Father said that when he chose the name “Francis” at the beginning of his pontificate, he recognized that Francis of Assisi was a popular, but also misunderstood, saint. The source of the saint’s devotion to peace, to poverty, to creation was Jesus Christ, and St Francis’ faith in Him. “From this source, [Francis] received an abundance of the Holy Spirit, who urged him to imitate Jesus and follow the Gospel to the letter.”

Franciscan ‘places’

The Pope said that the upcoming anniversary will not be just a ritual commemoration if it is able to understand together both the imitation of Christ and love for the poor. This will be possible, he added, “thanks to the atmosphere that emanates from the different Franciscan ‘places’” that will be at the centre of the celebrations.

The first of these places is Fontecolombo, near the Italian city of Rieti, which is associated both with the Franciscan “Rule” and, along with Greccio, with the Nativity scene. These places call us to “rediscover the

Incarnation of Jesus Christ as the ‘way’ of God.”

The second place, La Verna, recalls the Stigmata received by St Francis, which assimilated the saint “to the crucified Christ,” and allowed him to enter intimately into the “human story, radically marked by pain and suffering.”

Finally, Assisi itself, where St Francis died and where his earthly remains reside, “reveals the essence of Christianity: the hope of eternal life.”

In the school of the Poverello

Pope Francis insisted that the Little Poor Man of Assisi remains, even now, a mystery. To find an answer to this mystery, he said, “one must put oneself in the school of the Poverello, finding in his evangelical life the way to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.” “In concrete terms, this means listening, walking, and proclaiming to the peripheries.”

Saint Francis, the Pope explained, listened to Jesus speaking to Him, responded generously, and gradually came to understand what the Lord was asking of Him.

The Saint was also a “wayfarer,” who travelled throughout Italy and beyond, drawing close to the people and reducing the distance between the Church and the people. This, the Pope said, is “the style of a Christian community” that wants to draw near to all and not withdraw within itself.

“This teaches us that those who follow St Francis must learn to be steadfast and walking: steadfast in contemplation, in prayer; and then moving forward, walking in witness, witnessing Christ.”

Finally, the Pope said that, in preaching to the peripheries, there is a need not only for justice, but for trust. “Only faith restores the breath of the Spirit to a closed and individualistic world,” he explained. But with this breath, he said, we will be able to face “the great current challenges, such as peace, care for the common home, and a new model of development.”

Living the anniversary fully

Pope Francis concluded his address by encouraging his listeners to live the upcoming Franciscan centenary “to the full,” expressing his hope “that this spiritual and cultural journey may be combined with the Jubilee of 2025, in the conviction that St Francis of Assisi still urges the Church to live its fidelity to Christ and its mission in our time.”



Minister General's letter for the Sixth World Day of the Poor

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 13 November 2022

Rome, 13 November 2022

Dear Brothers,

May the Lord give you peace!

Foreword

World Day of the Poor is back, the sixth desired by Pope Francis, and I would like to bring to our attention the Message that the Pope wrote for the occasion on 13 June on the feast of St Anthony of Padua, brother, and friend of the poor. The invitation is to read it personally and in fraternity, with our laity and co-workers, “to make an examination of conscience, both personal and communitarian, and ask ourselves whether the poverty of Jesus Christ is our faithful companion in life” (Message no. 10).

Access Key: the Franciscan Centenary

We are preparing to open the Franciscan Centenary of 2023-2026, and Pope Francis made it very clear that “the next Franciscan Centenary will be a non-ritual recurrence, only if it can jointly interpret the imitation of Christ and the love for the poor” at the Audience that opened up his Home to 300 representatives of the Franciscan Family on 31 October last. A striking word that warns us against celebrations that are merely commemorative and, if we are not vigilant, too self-celebratory. I highlight a few elements for the upcoming Centenary of the Rule at Fonte Colombo and Christmas at Greccio (1223-2023).

Francis says in the Later Rule: “Let the brothers not make anything their own, neither house, nor place, nor anything at all. As pilgrims and strangers in this world, serving the Lord in poverty and humility, let them go seeking alms with confidence, and they should not be ashamed because, for our sakes, our Lord made Himself poor in this world”. (Ch. VI, 1-3). And in the Earlier Rule, he urges: “They must rejoice when they live among people considered of little value and looked down upon, among the poor and the powerless, the sick and the lepers, and the beggars by the wayside”. (Ch. IX, 2).

Faced with these words of the Rule, the marrow of the Gospel, I ask myself with you:

- How do they resonate in us today, and what do they stir in the memory of our vocation? What does “appropriating nothing” mean for me and for us today?
- What experience do we have of them, and at the same time, how far away do we feel from them?
- Are we aware of the conditions of the discarded in today’s society? Have we taken any steps towards the real poor, sharing time, energy, and closeness with them?

On 29 November 1223, Honorius III finally approved the Rule and less than a month later, Francis went up to Greccio to celebrate a very special Christmas. He wants to see with his own eyes the poverty in which the Lord Jesus wanted to be born and in which he always comes to us “under the appearance of bread” (LOrd II, 27) in the Eucharist and in the person of the poor. Francis knows that “Jesus Christ [...] became poor for you” (2 Cor 8:9), that is, small and “lesser” for us.

Making truth in our lifestyle

In the light of the Incarnation, World Day of the Poor provokes us again to examine our lifestyle as friars and minors: the Constitutions tell us that “in the use of clothing and footwear the friars should be mindful of poverty and humility and avoid anything that has the appearance of vanity”(48 §2), as the Rule says.[1] Living by appearances does not pay; a unified and true life does.

The Constitutions add: “The friars are to recall that the highest poverty has its source in Christ and his poor Mother; mindful of the words of the Gospel, “Go, sell all that you own and distribute the money to the poor”, they are to seek to share the lot of the poor”. (GC 8 §2), “They ought to give clear evidence of all these things in an individual and communal manner as well as in new ways”.(GC 8 §3), learning to share the goods entrusted to us for the benefit of the poor (cf. GC 72 §3).

Poverty is not an ideology! It has the face of the poor and, for us, that of minors: we witness that there are brothers and fraternities in the Order who encounter the poor and learn to become minors. At the same time, we recognise with humility that we are also far from them, so much so that we often become unrecognisable as brothers and minors. We often look for ways to be meaningful in this time: certainly, listening to the Gospel and meeting the Lord Jesus are at the centre. What is the way? An incarnated spirituality that accompanies us in bridging the distance from the poor. How many there are! How many are generated today by the economic system and also by war – our masters. Let us not be afraid to meet them, and let us allow ourselves to be approached. Let us listen to them with sincere charity and respect, learning willingly from them, as from everyone (cf. GC 93). “The poor are subjects that help free us from the bonds of restlessness and superficiality”. (Message no. 8). Is this not the experience of St Francis? From the leper to San Damiano.

I ask myself with you:

- Do we perceive a link between “pausing” in contemplation and prayer and then moving on, walking in witness to Christ?
- Can we “do many things” for the poor and defend their rights without rolling up our sleeves and involving ourselves directly with them as minors, overcoming indifference towards the poor and questioning how we live? (cf. Message No. 8).
- Can we try to review lifestyles that we now take for granted or unavoidable due to supposed needs of various kinds that make us “greater” rather than “lesser”? Do we measure ourselves against the standard of living of the people where we live, especially in this time of widespread economic crisis? How can we jointly oversee the style of our buildings, the things we use, easy access to certain goods and guarantees, the pretence that nothing is lacking, our employees, our work – not only pastoral work – for all the friars as an ordinary means of livelihood?
- What is our relationship with money? Does it dazzle us? Do we depend on it? Do we keep it for ourselves? Do we still learn to rely on Providence and give back to the poor?

I offer these questions with trepidation, which I feel are first and foremost addressed to me and which I know are not easy. It is not an exam to be answered. Instead, it is a reminder of our way of life; it is a word to shake us out of a certain resigned laxity and sloth; it is a reminder of the beauty of our life that, I am sure, at least once grasped and ignited each of us. Well, it is still possible, even now, to live as brothers and minors. Let us dare more!

A gesture of minority

Like last year, I ask each one, at least with another brother or more than one, to make a gesture of minority, of entrustment to Providence, of service and sharing with the poor. This will be the best preparation for the Centenary of the Rule and Christmas at Greccio. Let us ask together, with unceasing invocation of the Spirit of the Lord, Minister General of the Order, to blow with power to rekindle among us today the flame of the charism, grasped again by Christ, touched by the lives



of many, capable of mutual care among us brothers. Whoever wants to, please tell me the gesture made, in writing (mingen@ofm.org). It will be a testimony, a sharing of goods that I will make known.

Dear brothers, let us make ourselves worthy of the blessing of the little ones and the humble, and from being lesser, we will, in turn, become a blessing for many. May Our Lady, the poor Mother of our fraternity, keep us faithful to the Gospel, and may St Francis accompany us on this journey.

With my fraternal and affectionate greetings.

Br Massimo Fusarelli, ofm
Minister General and Servant



The International Council of JPIC meets in Petrópolis, Brazil

On Monday, November 21st, the Internacional Council of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (CIJPIC) began its meeting in Petrópolis, Río de Janeiro, Brazil. Franciscan brothers from all continents have come together in order to evaluate the work done in each Conference or region where the Order is present and to draw up lines of action that will accompany the JPIC animators in the following years according to what the General Chapter entrusted to the JPIC general Office.

Br. Paulo Roberto Pereira, OFM, Minister Provincial of the Immaculate Conception Province, addressed the participants of the Council to welcome them and remind them of the importance of JPIC work for the Order and in the world.

The main speaker of the morning was Leonardo

Boff who was in charge of presenting the current world context. For him, we live in a historical moment of special significance and great risks to human life. The magisterium of Pope Francis and the legacy of St. Francis of Assisi offer opportunities for the salvation of planet earth.

In the afternoon, Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, Director of the JPIC General Office, offered a few welcoming words and presented the program of the week with the logic that accompanies it. He then opened a personal space for the brothers to read in their own language the Message sent by Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, in which he asked the JPIC animators to be attentive to the signs of the times marked by wars and conflicts in so many parts of the world, as well as the climate crisis. He recalled that we can find answers in our Franciscan tradition but without falling into self-referentiality.

This first day concluded with a Eucharist presided by the Minister Provincial at the Sacred Heart parish of Petrópolis, which is the fraternity where the meeting is taking place.





Second day of the International Council of JPIC in Petropolis, Brazil

The second day of the International Council of JPIC that is taking place from November 20th to 27th in the hill town of Petropolis, Río de Janeiro, Brazil, was marked by the presentation of the Animators' reports from every Franciscan Conference in the world including the Holy Land.

The reports focused on regional contexts. In them were presented the realities of pain and suffering that both the poor and Mother Earth continue to go through as a result of the desire for domination and exploitation. The speakers shared the responses that their entities offer to these dehumanizing situations from the activities inspired by Franciscan spirituality, recognizing the generosity and sensitivity of so many

men and women who work alongside the Franciscan brothers.

Similarly, in the afternoon, the JPIC General Office, in the person of its Director, had the opportunity to present to the CIJPIC participants its report inspired by the one presented during the 2021 General Chapter. In addition, it was a moment to recognize and thank the tireless work done in these years by the brothers who carried out this Office, namely, Br. Jaime Campos, OFM, Br. Rufino Lim, OFM and Br. Ángelito Cortez, OFM.

With the aim of making present the agreements of the last two CIJPIC, Br. Angelito reminded the brothers of the Declarations born in the Verona 2016 and the Jerusalem 2019 meeting. At the end, criteria were offered to be taken into account for the drafting of the final document of the meeting that brought together brothers of more than 14 nationalities.

The local fraternity closed the day by offering the JPIC animators a concert with the "Canarinhos Choir" of Petrópolis.





The International Council of JPIC visits Favela Rocinha and the monument Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Since the year 2007, the franciscan province of the Immaculate Conception from Brazil is present in Rocinha, one of the largest Favelas in Rio de Janeiro. To begin with this experience the participants of the International Council of JPIC, early in the morning of November 23rd began their journey.

After the “cafezinho” (cup of coffee) two of the brothers living at the favela took a group of participants to show them a sector of the community. During the tour, the closeness that the sons of St. Francis maintain with people was verified. The relationship they establish from the simplicity of life and the capacity for reception was evident. In addition, on weekends temporarily professed brothers, students of theology, come to the fraternity to collaborate in pastoral care.

At the end of the guided tour, in which each of the visitors got an idea of the reality of the place, the fraternity offered a delicious lunch with some parishioners.

The day ended with a visit to Christ the Redeemer, a famous national and religious monument throughout Brazil.





Opportunities and challenges for JPIC in the Order

The fourth day of work of the International Council of JPIC was marked by reflection and analysis. During the morning, Br. Cesar Kulkamp, OFM, General Definitor for Latin America, presented a synthesis of the Plenary Council of the Order of 2018 and the General Chapter 2021 regarding JPIC.

Afterward, the Three Franciscan Networks in the world were then presented. Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, presented the Franciscan Network for Migrants of the Americas whose origin dates back to 2018 and which currently has more than 70 Franciscans in different countries of Latin America and the United States. In the coming weeks, Brazil will form its team to be part of it. Then, Br. Francesco Zecca, OFM, explained the reality of the Mediterranean and the importance for the development of a Franciscan Network in the area. Interreligious dialogue, welcoming migrants and refugees and commitment to young people offer opportunities to work from the culture of encounter. The Minister General, together with the General Definitory, have created a Committee to articulate this Network. Finally, Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM, presented to the International Council the Franciscan Network for Peace in Asia. He presented the projects that are currently working on this theme and that are promoted by Franciscan brothers in countries such as the Philippines, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea, among others. With the commitment and support of the entities of the Order could lead to the construction of this Network. Right now it's just a wish.

Before lunch, there was a virtual meeting with Br. Francisco Gómez, OFM, Secretary General for Missions and Evangelization and with Br. Hieronimus Rupa, OFM, Vice Secretary for Formation and Studies. The question that accompanied the presentation of the brothers was: How can JPIC animators contribute to those responsible for the formation and evangelization of the different entities? For Br. Francisco it is important that JPIC animators contribute to the elaboration of the Ratio Evangelizationis that is in the process of consultation in the entities. In the same way, he suggested supporting the New Ways of Life and continue a joint work between JPIC, evangelization and formation as part of a whole, but respecting the identity of each of them. Br. Hieronimus shared the opportunity that we Franciscans have in the framework of the Centenary that runs from 2023 to 2026. He also announced the Congress of “Non-ordained Brothers” at the level of the Order to be held in 2025. The challenges facing formation are affective maturity, clericalization in the Order and experiential formation. In all this, JPIC animators can offer support and be part of those processes.

In the afternoon, Miguel Ángel Jaimes, a Colombian layman with experience in pastoral project processes, sensitized the brothers to the need to work as Franciscans in a Network to get out of the self-referentiality from which the message to the CIJPIC of the Minister General prevented.

Markus Heinze, OFM, Executive Director of Franciscans International, who shared the history, organizational structure and issues addressed by Franciscans International.



General lines of Action for Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation efforts of the Order

On Friday, November 25, 2022, the fifth working day of the International Council, the general lines of action for the next few years were drawn up. In the first part, the friars attending the Council were divided into three language groups: English, Spanish and Italian. Then, each of the groups presented their proposals at the plenary. By the end of the morning, the general lines of action were: Conversion and Integral Ecology; Human Migration and Refugees; and Culture of Peace.

During the afternoon, Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM, presented the first draft of the Declaration of Petrópolis 2022. At the end, the participating brothers offered various edits to enrich the original draft.

In the second part of the afternoon meeting in Petrópolis, our gracious hosts gave us a guided tour of the Petrópolis Cathedral and the Imperial Museum, which preserve part of the city's history.

The day concluded with a Brazilian “Churrasco” offered to us by the friar community from in Petrópolis. The festive dinner coincided with the end of the academic year for the friars in the Initial Formation studying theology. Besides sharing food, each one of the JPIC animators shared his experience of working in the areas of JPIC with a friar in Formation. The activity ended with placing of a tau by each of the animators on the theology student.



The Conclusion of the Petrópolis International JPIC Council 2022

The International Council was coming to an end. But before that, some action proposals had to be drawn up to carry out the general lines approved the day before. In the same way, Fr. Angelito presented again the draft of Petrópolis 2022 Declaration which incorporated the observations that had been made at the friars' assembly.

Not finding consensus around some parts of the proposal, the Animation Committee was asked to offer, after lunch, some edits to both the content and wording of the Declaration.

On the other hand, Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, presented to the assembly some projects that were being promoted by the JPIC General Office such as the World Youth Day Lisbon 2023 and the Franciscan Centennial 2023-2026. Furthermore, the international JPIC courses for the upcoming years have

been approved, the content of which will be related to the Franciscan Centennial.

The brothers joined the local parish community in celebrating the Eucharist at 4:15 PM on the First Sunday of Advent, which took place at the Sacred Heart Church in Petrópolis to mark the conclusion of the International Council for JPIC (ICJPIC). Br. Marcos Antônio de Andrade, OFM, Secretary of Formation and Studies of the Immaculate Conception Province presided at the Mass. The homily was given by Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM. Before the final blessing, the members of the International Council for JPIC were presented to the wider parish community.

The last meeting of the ICJPIC focused on approving the Petrópolis 2022 Declaration, reaching consensus around the proposed actions steps, and evaluating the work of the International Council for JPIC.

The Order's JPIC event ended on a festive note. The friar community in Petrópolis invited the visiting friars to a cultural night. It began with a married couple presenting a delightful regional dance from Brazil. It was followed by a local folklore dance group that beautifully displayed their German culture harkening back to the strong German part of the heritage of the city of Petrópolis. The next day, the brothers gradually returned to their places of work and mission.



The Inicial Franciscan Formation to the service of Migrants. Testimonies. Three franciscan brothers in Inicial Formation share their experiences working at the service of migrants.

I am Bro. Flávio Lorrane Clementino de Almeida, OFM, I was born in August 25 1993 in Triunfo in the state of Pernambuco/ Brasil. I belong to the Franciscan Province of Saint Anthony in Brazil.

I have been a volunteer at “La 72, Home – Refuge for Migrants” since February desde 2022. I have the opportunity to be present, day by day, with brothers and sisters that walk searching for a better life. During the first month after my arrival, I was helping in

the basic needs of the shelter. After that I began to help in the area of communications taking pictures, making videos and managing the social media. Many migrants look for information through social media, and one of our mission is to get this information around. It also helps to show people our activities at the shelter. Here at the friary, we are 3 brothers, we carry out the mission to be a genuine Franciscan presence, so we intend to become one among them.

This experience has helped me to discern more deeply about my calling to the Franciscan religious life. I have encounter people that even though they have nothing, they never lose hope. This has been an impulse for me to give my life to the service of others. Here we get people that don’t even have a pair of shoes when sometimes I have a lot more than that. I reflect on my life and I see that many things are superfluous. I have changed some of the attitudes and I have learned to pay attention to the voice of God and the voice of the ones that suffer. I will go back to Brazil being a new friar Lorrane: one that have learned to let go and lives with the basics, one that have learned to listen more and talk less, one that is in solidarity with the ones that suffer and tries to cure the wounds, one that values fraternity and God’s Mercy.

I am Bro. Martín Salmorán Vázquez, OFM, I was born in October 16, 1992 in Tuxtla Gutiérrez, Chiapas, México. I belong to the Saint Philip of Jesus Province in Mexico.

My actual ministry is at “La 72, Home – Refuge for Migrants” this shelter is located in Tenosique, Tabasco, México. My community is composed of 3 brothers (1 solemn professed and 2 in temporary vows) we are at the service of the people in mobility situation. Our service consists in assisting these people on their way through Mexico. We provide water as we go across the border of Guatemala and Mexico. On our first encounter we provide information about the routes then we take them to La 72. Once at the shelter we provide food, medical assistance, dormitories and legal assistance so they can apply for Legal Refugee Status.

This experience with my brothers and sisters migrants has helped me to realize that our mission as Franciscan friars is to be close to our brothers and sisters in mobility situation, to listen to them, to assist them spiritually and also to assist them in their physical needs. As son of Saint Francis I have to understand that we are as well Pilgrims and Strangers in this World. I also realize that our Church is a “Church on Mission”. We need more Friars committed to the service of these brothers and sisters.

This experience has also helped me to become more humane and to commit myself with the Order in this humanitarian work that we as Franciscans are doing. In the end, this experience has changed my life, my vocation and my sense of belonging to the Order. “Let us begin, brothers, to serve the Lord, for up to now we have done little or nothing” – St. Francis of Assisi..

I am Bro. Pietro Guardati, OFM, I was born on May 25, 1996 in Rome. I belong to the Province of Saint Bonaventure Abruzzo-Lazio (Italia)

The project that I am working at is called

“Migrants on the Job” which is promoted by the Missionary Volunteering of the Risen Christ APS (Association for Social Promotion) in collaboration with the Youth Center of the Sacred Heart Parish in Rome.

This project was launched on 2019, and it is aimed to young migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, ages 18 to 30 years old. Migrants that have the desire to undertake a path of personal growth and develop their potential, with the final goal to encourage their autonomy and integration to working world.

We offer a course that is divided in two parts: the first part consists in a motivational workshop, this workshop helps to get to know them personally, their dreams, expectations and capacities, while the second part consist in an orientation about the labor market in Italy and how it functions. At the end of the course, with the correct guidance, the participants are sent to the working world taking part in training practices or seeking to be placed as employees.

From the Testament de St. Francis.

...when I was in sin, it seemed too bitter for me to see lepers. 2. And the Lord Himself led me among them and I showed mercy to them. 3. And when I left them, what had seemed bitter to me was turned into sweetness of soul and body.

My experience working among migrants is a way to express my vocational identity as friar minor. From a past of exclusion and discrimination to a present where the Lord is working a conversion in my heart so I can be with them as friar minor and “with them, build a future according to God’s project without excluding anyone” (Pope Francis message on the 108 World Day of Migrants).

This experience moves me to welcome what is different and to go out of myself, receiving the always-new gift of vocation, a call to give the same tender and merciful welcoming of God.

ACOGER

PROTEGER

PROMOVER

INTEGRAR



Praised be my Lord for the first face-to-face meeting of the RFM Advocacy Committee!

The Advocacy Committee of the Franciscan Network for Migrants (RFM) held its first face-to-face meeting from September 30 to October 3, 2022 in the City of Bogotá, Colombia, in order to draw lines of action for the period 2022-2025 and develop operational work that strengthens the Network's capacity to effectively promote and protect the rights of migrants at the regional level through better internal and external synergies.

The Advocacy Committee is a space made up of representatives of the different countries that make up the RFM. This committee has been organized in order to respond and give voice to the problem of exclusion experienced by migrants, victims of human rights violations, to generate structural changes in the societies of origin, transit and destination.

The aforementioned meeting was held with the representation of Betty Calixto, Alexandra Conde and Diana Muñoz, RFM-Mexico; Brenda Peralta, RFM-Guatemala; Ana Victoria López, RFM-Honduras; Fray René Flores, RFM-Panama; Nydia Diaz, RFM-Colombia; in collaboration with Alexandra Gulden from the Quixote Center and Br. Daniel Rodríguez, OFM, member of the RFM Steering Committee and Director of the General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation based in Rome, Italy.

The agenda for September 30 began with the opening words of Sr. Diana Muñoz FMM, coordinator of the committee. She highlighted the importance of the meeting in strengthening working relationships and setting the agenda for the coming years.

After her introductory words and a prayer, there was a listening session in which the participants shared their dreams and expectations. Afterwards, the participants drew a timeline of all the past activities and felt motivated to identify challenges, limitations and hopes for the future.

On October 1, the work day was focused on the review and development of the regional actions, the

objectives and roles of the members of the Advocacy Committee. In the afternoon, the group discussion centered on collaborative work between Franciscans International and the RFM with the objective of developing direct interventions vis-a-vis the United Nations in the area of Human Mobility and the violation of the human rights of migrants.

October 2 was marked by the visit of María Teresa Urueña Bogoya, Head of Advocacy of the Jesuit Network with Migrants from Latin America and the Caribbean. She talked about the regional work of the Network and expressed a commitment to work with our Advocacy Committee. In turn, María de Jesús Lapesquer, a lay Franciscan from the Mother María Bernarda Büttler Association and member of the RFM-Colombia team, explained the workings of her team. She also shared how her work was inspired by the culture of encounter that seeks to integrate migrants.

On October 3, a working breakfast was held for the executive review of the Cooperation Framework Agreement between the University of San Buenaventura (USB) in Colombia and the Franciscan Network for Migrants. The participants included: Br. Ernesto Londoño Orozco, OFM, Rector General of the USB, Fr. Alirio Urbina Rodríguez, OFM, Provincial Minister and Br. José Fernando Vásquez, OFM, responsible for JPIC of the Province of Santa Fe with the Advocacy Committee. The afternoon was spent evaluating the meeting.

Everything concluded in the atmosphere of joy and Franciscan fervor. The Franciscan Sisters of the Sacred Heart hosted the meeting.

May the fruits of this valuable meeting of Franciscan sisters and brothers who share the commitment to the common good, justice and peace benefit the migrants.

Ana Victoria López





Cooperation Agreement between the University San Buenaventura in Colombia and the Franciscan Network for Migrants (RFM)

On 3 October this year, an important working meeting was held at the Provincial Curia of the Province of the Holy Faith in Colombia between the University San Buenaventura in Colombia and the Franciscan Network for Migrants (RFM) to finalise the details of a Framework Cooperation Agreement.

Representing the Franciscan University were Br Alirio Urbina Rodríguez, OFM, Minister Provincial, Br Ernesto Londoño Orozco, OFM, Rector General, and José Fernando Vásquez, OFM, Provincial Animator of JPIC. The RFM was represented by Br Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, Director of the General Office of JPIC and member of the Network's Steering

Committee, and the full Advocacy Committee, which was also holding its first face-to-face meeting in the city of Bogotá. The members are Betty Calixto, Alexandra Conde and Diana Muñoz, RFM-Mexico; Brenda Peralta, RFM-Guatemala; Ana Victoria López, RFM-Honduras; Br René Flores, RFM-Panama; Nydia Diaz, RFM-Colombia. Also present was Alexandra Gulden of the Quixote Center, an organisation based in Washington, D.C., with whom they coordinate their efforts in the area of human rights.

The first meeting between the university and the Network occurred last February when the opportunity for collaborative work between the parties was positively assessed. At the end of July, a second meeting was held with specific points leading to the creation of a first draft of the agreement by the university, which was reviewed and completed by the RFM's Advocacy Committee.

In this third meeting, some points were clarified, and the feasibility of some proposals was clarified.

In short, this agreement contemplates the development of different projects in various areas, such as research, psycho-social accompaniment and the editing and publication of research. They all refer to understanding the migratory phenomenon in the Americas, the psycho-social accompaniment of migrants and the structural change of the causes that produce migration.

In the coming weeks, the signing of the final document will take place, allowing the implementation of these projects to begin.





Br Taucen Hotlan Girsang, OFM, new Assistant Director of the General JPIC Office

Br Taucen Hotlan Girsang, OFM, of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel in Indonesia, was appointed Assistant Director of the General Office of JPIC by the General Definitory of the Order during the month of July of this year.

Br Taucen arrived at the General Curia from his home country on October 6 to take up his post.

The new Assistant Director was the JPIC President of the Franciscan Asia-Oceania Conference (SAAOC). He completed specialization studies at Erasmus University in the Netherlands. During that time he served as a volunteer with the Catholic Family Group of Indonesian origin in Haarlem-Amsterdam.

Br Taucen took his first vows in 2000, his solemn profession in 2006 and his ordination to the priesthood in 2007.

Among some of the offices he has held in his province are that of guardian, parish priest, chaplain, among others.

Welcome brother!



Franciscans COP27

The Franciscan Delegation, represented by Friar Angelito Andig Cortez, OFM, from the Province of San Pedro Bautista in the Philippines, a member of the OFMJPIC Animation Commission and an active partner of Franciscan International, participated in the annual Talanoa Dialogue at the beginning of COP27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, from November 5 to 18, 2022.

As members of the Interfaith Liaison Committee to the UNFCCC and the network working for climate justice and interfaith dialogue, the Franciscans actively participated in this interfaith event throughout the years.

The event acted as a forum for faith communities participating in COP27 to share their initiatives, concerns, and hopes for climate justice within the context of Talanoa discourse.

The Fijian Presidency of COP23 established the Talanoa discussion in order to address the most difficult issues. The Talanoa dialogue is a method of problem-solving utilised by Fiji's indigenous peoples. The methodology of the Talanoa dialogue compels

participants to consider the following issues:

Where are we now?

- Where are we headed?
- How will we arrive there?

Participants were able to share their viewpoints and ideas in small-group Talanoa conversations, which followed an introductory panel that explained the various conversational subjects.

Let us support him and all church actors and civil society organizations as they advocate and act for climate justice, and demand that our leaders build on efforts to engage with people who are working on and directly impacted by climate change to advance ethical and moral motivations to shift climate actions at all levels, including ways to promote a just energy transition, to scale up community-level climate finance, and for climate adaptation.





Franciscans join all Catholic actors in the premiere of “The Letter” at COP27

The first COP 27 screening of the Letter was presented by the Laudato Si Movement, the Vatican delegation, and the Senegalese government on November 10, 2022. It took place at COP27’s Blue Zone in the Government of Senegal Pavilion. Before the film was shown, Archbishop Nicolas Henry Marie Denis Thévenin, the Apostolic Nuncio to the Arab Republic of Egypt, had a roundtable conversation with Fr. Angel Cortez, OFM, the representative of the Franciscan Delegation, and with other representatives of Catholic organizations.

In the conversation, Archbishop Nicolas Henry Marie Denis Thévenin underlined that “The Letter” will encourage those attending COP 27 to set a higher moral standard for what they wish to accomplish in order to cut fossil fuel emissions. The letter will concentrate on significant issues such as how poor nations are more affected by the problem than other regions, how faith and science may coexist, and how crucial it is to examine the climate catastrophe from a Catholic perspective. The Pope’s hope that “COP 27 and COP 15 can contribute to uniting the human family” (cf. *ibid.*, 13) in effectively tackling the double challenge of

climate change and the decline of biodiversity will be echoed in scenes in the film that address these topics.

There must be a discussion. The COP 27 will test governments’ capacity to address how urgent this situation is as well as their ability to incorporate the perspectives of those who have witnessed and experienced environmental catastrophes into their discussions. Pope Francis claims in the film that conversing with people from various backgrounds is “like a chorus,” where everyone must sing in unison. We all must sing. And right now, unity means preserving Mother Earth, preserving biodiversity, and preserving ourselves and our children. Unity is now saving Mother Earth, biodiversity, and our own and our children’s lives. Pope Francis’s Letter.

The letter has the ability to influence how people communicate during COP 27 by bringing people together. In the end, the voices of the poor, native people, young people, and animals can be heard throughout the movie.

The documentary produced by Oscar-winning Off The Fence Productions and presented by YouTube Originals was released on Oct 4, the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi, a day which also marked the Holy See’s official entry into the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Fr. Angelito Cortez, OFM



Franciscans meeting the delegation from the Holy See

Prior to the conclusion of the first week of COP27, the various Catholic environmental organizations and institutions convened for the first time. The Franciscan delegation comprised of OFM-JPIC, Franciscans International, and other Franciscan groups from Africa attended the COP summit. COP27 is the first COP for Catholic players as an official UN Climate Change party (UNFCCC). Since COP24, the Franciscans have constantly participated in gatherings of Catholic actors. Archbishop Nicolas Thevenin, the Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt, led the Vatican delegation that facilitated the meeting.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin served as the Holy See's Head of Delegation until November 9, 2022, after which Archbishop Nicolas Thevenin, Apostolic Nuncio to Egypt, will serve as the party's leader until the conclusion of the summit. Cardinal Parolin, in his

speech to high-level leaders before returning to Rome, emphasized that the U.N. climate summit has a “moral mission” to defend the world and provide actual relief to those suffering from the “more frequent and severe humanitarian repercussions of climate change.”

On this occasion, and for the first time as an official party of the COP, the Vatican delegation listened to the questions and concerns voiced by the representatives of the various catholic organizations. Many of them stressed the significance of the Holy See's participation in the discussion on Lost and Damage, Divestment, and Protection of Environmental and Human Rights Defenders, as well as other significant topics originating on the ground, where organizations and institutions are present.

Before the conclusion of the discussion, Archbishop Nicolas Thévenin emphasised the need for genuine support and solidarity from all Catholic players. “It is crucial that we construct bridges of solidarity. Those who are most susceptible to the effects of climate change are pleading for assistance in this time of crisis. Before the conclusion of the meeting, the group intends to release a statement highlighting the summary and thoughts of all Catholic actors at the 27th Conference of the Parties.

Fr. Angelito Cortez, OFM



The Second Annual Meeting of the JPIC Animation Committee of the Order

Following the International JPIC Council in Petrópolis, the members of the JPIC Animation Committee hold their second annual meeting from November 28 to December 1 at the historic convent of San Antonio, located in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Br. Angelito Cortez, OFM; Br Jacek Orzechowski, OFM; Br. Francesco Zecca, OFM and Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, worked on the final revision to the Petrópolis 2022 Declaration based on the suggestions offered by the participants during the last session of the International Council.

Another objective set for the meeting was the evaluation of the activities carried out by the JPIC General Office during 2022. Likewise, the JPIC Animation Committee worked on the final articulation of the projected JPIC goals for 2023 based on the three general action guides that the International Council has set out for all the Conferences of the Order. Those are: conversion; climate justice and integral ecology; migrants and refugees; and Non-violence and construction of peace.

Finally, a schedule was prepared that will guide the agenda of the JPIC General Office for the upcoming year.





The Franciscans and the Laudato Si' Movement will promote integral ecology at WYD in Lisbon 2023

The Dicastery for the Laity, the Family and Life summoned the Episcopal Conferences, ecclesial movements and religious congregations to an international meeting in order to prepare the World Youth Day Lisbon 2023. The JPIC General Office was represented at the event by its Director Fr. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM and the Laudato Si' Movement by Antonio Garrido.

The meeting was held from October 16 to 19 in Fátima, Portugal, and had around 300 participants from all over the world. The Lisbon Local Committee (COL) presented to the delegations the current state of the organization and the progress of the projects that will guarantee the reception of the thousands of young pilgrims who will be present at the next WYD.

Similarly, on October 20 at the LOC facilities, the brothers Antonio Garrido, Fr. Daniel Rodríguez, OFM, and Fr. Nicolás Almeida, OFM, a member of the Franciscan Province of Portugal, held a meeting

with representatives of the LOC. The objective was to present the activities around the encyclical Laudato Si' and Fratelli Tutti that both JPIC-OFM and the Laudato Si' Movement wish to develop together during WYD 2023. The proposals were positively received and some of them will be part of the official agenda. Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, Minister General, has confirmed his participation in WYD as a pilgrim and preacher of peace.

Among the activities to be carried out, an academic conference on Integral Ecology, the presentation of the film "La Carta", the Serata Laudato Si' (concert), the ecological village, an ecological walk, among others, stand out.

The young people of the Franciscan Family are invited to join the initiatives that will take place within WYD 2023.





Pope Francis, Nonviolence, and the Fullness of Pace in Terris: A Conference in Rome, December 5-7, 2022

Catholic Church leaders and local change makers from nearly 30 countries gathered in Rome, Italy December 5-7, 2022, to reflect on Pope Francis' relentless work for nonviolent change throughout his ten-year papacy; to share their own experience of nonviolent change in the face of acute violence and injustice; and to explore next steps in advancing the spirituality, way of life, strategies, and universal ethic of nonviolence in the Church and the world.

The conference, entitled "Pope Francis, Nonviolence and the Fullness of Pacem in Terris," was sponsored by Pax Christi International's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative and the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission of the Union of Superiors General-Union of International Superiors General (USG-UISG), the international unions of superiors of women's and men's religious orders.

"The consistent practice of nonviolence," Pope Francis writes, "has broken barriers, bound wounds, healed nations." Since his installation in 2013, Pope Francis has called the Church and the world to "make active nonviolence our way of life." The pope has implored us to nonviolently challenge and transform systems that oppress, marginalize, and destroy, while also creating new options for justice, peace, and a sustainable world. Nonviolence is the path of Jesus and a powerful practice for building social peace.

Participants from 28 nations – Mexico, Kenya, Guatemala, Romania, the Philippines, Italy, Nigeria, Peru, the UK, El Salvador, Japan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Indonesia, Germany, Belgium, Sri Lanka, Austria, South Sudan, Brazil, Netherlands, France, Cameroon, Lebanon, Palestine, Colombia, Rwanda and the US – shared rich experiences of nonviolence practiced at a grassroots level in contexts of egregious violence in its many different forms.

Together, participants reflected on Pope Francis' own experience of nonviolence; his vision that so clearly points toward a global ethic of nonviolence in the context of a "world war fought piecemeal;" and the urgent need for a paradigm shift from violence to nonviolence. Woven into the conference were times of reflection and prayer that drew on the beauty of the Advent season to move through the reality of God incarnate in different ways in the world: in silence, darkness, light, humanity, and all of creation.

Speakers from around the world

Participants heard from many presenters, including:

Emilce Cuda, Secretary of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for Latin America and Sr. Wamuyu Wachira, co-president of Pax Christi International, who reflected on Pope Francis' reference to the "prophecy of nonviolence" and his attention to those on the peripheries, popular movements, youth and Indigenous peoples as the agents by which our societies will change.

Kai Brand-Jacobsen, senior researcher for the Peace Action, Training and Research Institute of Romania (PATRIR), who is working extensively with practitioners of nonviolence in Ukraine and Russia, where nonviolent strategies have effectively protected some sectors of society and interrupted the Russian invasion.

Maudilia Lopez, an Indigenous woman from Ixtahuacán, Guatemala, the leader of Pastoral Defensoras de la Madre Tierra, who spoke about resisting the destructive practices of the Canadian mining company, Goldcorp, and about the violence of the Church in forbidding traditional practices and dress central to the life of her Indigenous community.

Fr. Rodrigo Peret, OFM, a member of Franciscans International and of the Churches and Mining Latin America Network board, who also spoke about the violence of mining in many communities and about the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil.

Fr. Nandana Manatunga, Director of the Human Rights Office Kandy in Sri Lanka, who described persistent and creative civil society demonstrations that successfully ousted former President Gotabaya Rajapaksa nonviolently and have continued to protest the economic crisis and police brutality.

Sr. Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary of the Synod of Bishops, who contributed to a rich conversation about synodality as an expression of nonviolence, a theme to which Pax Christi's Catholic Nonviolence Initiative synod submission contributed.

Harun Njoroge and Sr. Sia Temu, MM, members of the Maryknoll Sisters Peace Team, who shared their successful experiences of "Conversations for Social Change" in Kenya.

Ogarit Younan, a pioneer advocate of nonviolence education in the Arab world, who spoke about the Academic University College for Nonviolence & Human Rights (AUNOHR) that she and her partner, Walid Slaybi, founded in Lebanon.

A different logic

Conference participants explored Pope Francis' many messages, including in *Fratelli Tutti*, about the impossibility of a "just war." They heard Fr. Francisco DeRoux, by video describe the consequences in Colombia of 50 years of what some called a "just war" and the urgent need for a different logic. They discussed the application of a just peace framework that would address the root causes of violent conflict, develop crucial nonviolent skills, break cycles of violence and build sustainable peace.

The closing Mass was celebrated by Cardinal Michael Czerny, Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development with conference participants, Bishop Marc Stenger, co-president of Pax Christi International, Cardinal Robert McElroy of San Diego CA, Archbishop John Wester of Santa Fe NM, Archbishop Antonio Ledesma of the Philippines, and Bishop John Stowe, President of Pax Christi USA. The celebration concluded with a recitation of the "Vow of Nonviolence" in many languages.

Moving forward

In 2016, Pax Christi International co-sponsored with the Vatican the historic "Nonviolence and Just Peace" conference, which concluded by issuing the Appeal to the Catholic Church to Re-Commit to the Centrality of Gospel Nonviolence, a document that was presented again at the end of this conference. Since 2016, Pope Francis has shared with the Church many groundbreaking resources for the nonviolent journey, including the 2017 World Day of Peace message entitled "Nonviolence: A Style of Politics of Peace" and *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*.

We are grateful for these signposts toward a nonviolent future and look forward to all the ways that the Church will strengthen its teaching and support for the practice of Gospel nonviolence in this time of crisis and opportunity, encouraged by Pope Francis' message in 2017: "I pledge the assistance of the Church in every effort to build peace through active and creative nonviolence."

The General JPIC Office was represented by Friar Antonio Lembo, JPIC Animator of the Province of Puglia-Molise, Italy.

Website information: Pax Christi International





First face-to-face meeting of the JPIC Commission of the Conference of Brazil - Southern Cone.

The JPIC animators of the Conference of Brazil-Southern Cone met from September 12 to 15 in the city of Córdoba, Argentina, Franciscan Province of Asunción, with the objective of discussing the new organization of the conference, based on the services developed in each entity, preserving the particularity of each region and, finally, the construction of the Special Statutes (SS) of this new organization.

The face-to-face meeting opened with the words of Christian Rodríguez, a Colombian layman residing in Buenos Aires, who shared with the participating friars an overview of the recent History of the Church in Latin America, beginning with the Second Vatican Council, going through each Latin American and Caribbean Conference (CELAM), in which he emphasized the vision of the Church as the people of God, where only Jesus Christ is head, associating the clamor of the Latin Church with the prophetic speeches of Pope Francis. He also pointed out the Church's emphasis on the human dimension, the expansion of the concept of the poor in a way that includes all those who lack what is needed for a dignified life. Finally, he highlighted a call for a new Christian culture, echoing the invitation made in the Santo Domingo Conference in 1992.

Then the participants continued with the agenda, namely: sharing their work together, developing a proposal that will be presented at the Conference

level, agreeing on the agenda that will be presented at the International JPIC Council in Rio de Janeiro, and construction of the SS.

The JPIC animators read the SS of the various Conferences in order to identify the most important elements in the new Conference of Brazil-Southern Cone that is being created.

Apart from spending many hours of intense work, the JPIC animators were able to enjoy meeting the friars who constitute the provincial government. Staying at the same house allowed them to pray, share meals and moments of recreation together. They also visited the postulancy house, where they ended the meeting with a moment of prayer, meditation and spirituality directed by the friars in charge of the Formation.

The JPIC Commission of the Conference wishes that the new Franciscan vocations bear fruit and that the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi be manifested in the actions of every friar.

Brother João Paulo Gabriel, OFM

Secretary of the Brazil-Southern Cone JPIC
Commission



International days – January / March, 2022

January 1	World Day of Peace
January 15	World Day of Immigrants and Refugees
February 8	International Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking
February 20	World Day of Social Justice
March 3	World Wildlife Day
March 8	International Women's Day
March 21	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination
March 21	International Day of Forests
March 22	World Water Day



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