



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
Justicia, Paz e Integridad de la Creación
Giustizia, Pace e Salvaguardia del Creato

8th INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL FOR JPIC MEETING

“JPIC IN A WORLD IN CONFLICT”

Final Document

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Order and in the World Today

Preamble

Following the mandate received at the General Chapter in Assisi in 2003 and in accordance with the particular statutes governing the work of JPIC, the General office in Rome convened a meeting of the International JPIC Council and invited all its members to meet in South Africa.

This meeting took place in La Verna Centre near Vanderbijlpark from 30 November to 14 December 2004. The theme of the meeting was:

JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION IN A WORLD IN CONFLICT

During our time together we listened to the problems being experienced by the people we live with and with whom we share this planet. The issues were those such as privatization of water, HIV/AIDS, poverty, weapons, war, violence and hunger.

We searched together for ways in which we as friars can promote life and assert the dignity of human life ourselves and in collaboration with other social movements.

We are very grateful to have had this opportunity of holding this meeting in Africa. We saw the truth of the statement: one picture is worth a thousand words. Our experience of being here has been a very positive and enriching one. We became aware of the way in which our brothers here respond to the challenges they face. We experienced the richness and warmth of its people and their welcome. Our contact with our fellow friars and with our brothers and sisters here helped us to realise that many of the problems being experienced in other parts of the world are also here in Africa. The theme of our gathering met with a resonance in this continent as we heard about the different kinds of conflicts taking place in so many parts of Africa.

We invite you to join with us in reaching out our hands and our hearts to our brothers and sisters and participate with them in transforming our world. We believe that a new world is possible. Our world is closely interconnected and what we have seen and heard during our stay here reinforces what our brothers said at our General Chapter that our global economic system keeps two-thirds of humanity in poverty and misery [no.10, May the Lord give you peace]

We were privileged to have our brother Vumile Nogemane, South African Provincial and President of the Sub-Saharan conference, present with us for the African Continental Congress. His sharing and his insights helped to open our minds to the reality of Africa. The local Bishop of Johannesburg Archbishop Buti Tlhagale, O.M.I. also visited us and called on us to be prophetic, to uphold the values of life and to shine a moral light on the issues that dominate the lives of so many. The newly appointed executive director of Franciscans International and a long-time friend and animator within our Order in the field of

JPIC, John Quigley, graced us with his presence and brought us up to date on the transformation taking place there and encouraged us to continue to work in partnership with Franciscans International in standing up for the rights of the poor.

As a result of our work together we came up with a plan of action, built on the five Proposals from the General Chapter and now present this plan:

Objectives

1. *All JPC Animators will encourage their entities to work together with social movements in all aspects of JPIC work.*
 - a. To be in the places of social fracture so we might share our Franciscan spirituality of nonviolence and reconciliation.
 - b. To give special importance to prophetic gestures of solidarity.
 - c. To identify in their respective regions the movements of the excluded, and the groups that work with and for them to establish collaboration with both. In this task, they should seek advice and collaboration from the JPIC Office in Rome and Franciscans International.
 - d. To request that the international offices that are expected to be opened in Washington, Brussels and Africa give special attention to the excluded and to the critical issues of our time such as hunger, water, HIV/AIDS, war and poverty.
2. *The ICJPIC will work to create a new and positive awareness of the reality in Africa.*
 - a. The JPIC animators in Africa will elaborate a plan of action to respond to the great challenges of the continent. The plan will include the creation of an office in Africa. They will pay special attention to those affected by HIV/AIDS.
 - b. The Office in Rome will help the friars in African in the elaboration of this plan.
3. *The JPIC Office in Rome, the Conference Coordinators and the JPIC Animators of all Entities of the Order will work to establish international networks among the JPIC Animators, giving special emphasis to the Social Forums and Franciscans International.*
 - a. To promote networks among the JPIC friars who work on social and environmental issues paying special attention to include friar activists.
 - b. To promote seminars on JPIC themes in the different Entities of the Order for Animators, friar activists and other friars.
 - c. To provide a calendar each year to the animators and friar activists with data on social and ecological struggles.
4. *Formation for JPIC Animation is the responsibility of the structures and ministries at all levels of the Order.*
 - a. Each conference will promote a course on JPIC animation for the JPIC Animators. This course should include an encounter with the reality of the excluded in the spirit of Francis, combining both theory and practice.
 - b. The Rome JPIC Office invites the Secretariats of Formation and Evangelization/Mission to promote a course on JPIC for their Executive Committees. As a model they should use the fifteen-day Brazilian course, which combines both theory and practice.
 - c. The JPIC Animation Committee will promote the development of a Theology of Conflict, being careful to include both our academic institutions and grassroots participation. This theology should learn from the situations of conflict, for example, Croatia and South Africa, and incorporate specific Franciscan aspects.
5. *JPIC communications is the responsibility of the structures at all levels of the Order.*
 - a. Each Conference Coordinator will set up and maintain a system of communication within the Conference.

- b. The JPIC Office in Rome will regularly distribute the CONTACT newsletter, and all Conference Coordinators will send information in to the Office on a timely basis.
- c. The JPIC Animators will encourage use of the Franciscans International newsletter.

6. *The ICJPIC invites all friars of the Order to review the manner in which we live and the society in which we live. This should be done especially in regard to poverty and sustainability, which are decisive factors in regard to exclusion.*

- a. The JPIC Commission of the English Speaking Conference will prepare a study from the writings of recent Ministers General in regard to lifestyle, and create a study or reflection guide.
- b. The JPIC Animators will promote the use of the JPIC Manual and other JPIC publications in regard to environmental issues, especially environmental justice and water.
- c. The JPIC Animators of the Entities will seek to meet with the Treasurer and/or the Economic Council to share ethical guidelines for the responsible use of resources. (Proposal 40, GC 2003)
- d. Each Conference Coordinator will promote collaboration between the JPIC Animators and the Secretariats of Formation and Evangelization/Mission of the Entities to reflect together on our manner of living.
- e. The JPIC Commission of each Entity will ask their Chapter to establish an inserted fraternity among the excluded. If it is not possible to do this in the Entity, the Entity is asked to look into the possibility of participating in an international fraternity of this type.
- f. The Year of Franciscan Formation, called for during the time of simple profession, should be one that includes sharing in the life of the marginalized and excluded.

Recommendations

1. To the General Definitorium

- a. To establish October 27th, the “Spirit of Assisi,” as an official date in the Order both to celebrate peace, and to encourage promotion of a culture of peace as well as inter-religious dialog.
- b. To promote in the Antonianum (PAA) and the other institutions of higher education of the Order the development of a Theology of Care of Creation (Proposal 41, GC 2003)
- c. To request that the JPIC Office in Rome participate in the Council for Economic Affairs of the Order to search for and to share ethical guidelines for the responsible use of resources. (Proposal 40, GC 2003)
- d. To request that the JPIC Office in Rome participate in the meeting of the General Treasurer and Provincial Treasurers. (Proposal 40, CG 2003)
- e. To reinforce the collaboration between the General Government and the JPIC Office by naming a Definitior as Director of the Office, or by naming a Definitior as a liaison with the Office.
- f. To complete the staffing of the JPIC Office as established in the Particular Statutes for the JPIC Office 2§1: *“the Office of JPIC is composed of a Director, a Vice-Director and of one or more assistants.”* The assistant could be a layperson.

2. To the JPIC Office in Rome

To continue its communications and visits with the Conferences and the Provinces, and its collaboration with other religious entities such as the Franciscan Family, Franciscans International, Inter-Congregational JPIC Movement, etc. as well as other social movements.

3. To the Entities and Conferences of the Order

To guarantee ample time and necessary resources for the JPIC Animators.

Announcement

The second International Congress for JPIC Animators of all OFM Entities will be held in early 2006 in Brazil. The Congress is an official commitment of JPIC in the Order, and is part of the celebration of the 800th anniversary of the Approval of the Rule.

We offer these Objectives and Recommendations to the General Definitorium and to all friars in their Conferences and Entities. We are aware and we recognise our own failure to live up to the demands of living out these aspects of our Franciscan calling. In this time of Advent, in which we prepare ourselves to celebrate the mystery of the God's Incarnation, we ask God to help us to find the courage to continue searching for new ways to be instruments of justice, proclaimers of peace and carers of creation and so we invite you to pray with us:

We thank you Lord for all the ways you speak to us.

We thank you for what we have seen and heard during these days.

We thank you for each other.

We thank you for the flame that is being rekindled each day.

We thank you for the faith of the people of Africa and the beauty of this land.

We thank you for inviting us to join the march towards a better world.

We thank you for continually reminding us that a new world is possible.

Help us to walk in the footprints of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as Francis and Clare did, and help us to build with our brothers and sisters this new world. Come, Lord Jesus!

International Council JPIC
La Verna Retreat Center
Vanderbijlpark, South Africa
10 December 2004