

**Courageous Franciscans: Setting Our Intentions for 2021
Aligning Our Will with the Will of God
Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)**

We leave 2020 with the world in disarray: a pandemic that continues to rage, capturing lives, leaving all of us in deep worry, a world with endless strife, often breaking into open warfare, a contentious national conversation that seems never to resolve anything. And yet, we are a people of hope. We have just celebrated the Incarnation and know that our Lord came to show us a new world order. St. Francis had deep insight into what the Lord was calling us to do and allowed that insight to form and shape a Franciscan vision of life. As Franciscans, we are called to follow. I quote Pope Pius XII. His words are as true now as they were when he spoke them, almost one hundred years ago.

“The world needs this Franciscan spirit, this Franciscan vision of life. It is expected that you, beloved children, know it deeply, love it with passion and above all live it with the perfection that your state allows.”

How perfect these words are to refocus us as we enter the new year. How inspiring to think on them as we consider our intentions for 2021, our personal intentions as well as our intentions for our fraternity and our Order. Our Seraphic Father did not leave us without guidance. He told us how to live, how to align our will with the Divine Will. He gave us our Rule of Life. I invite you to consider our Rule as you set your intentions. I will highlight a few examples from Chapter Two of the Rule and invite you to share your intentions with those around you at home, at work, in your fraternities, as you feel comfortable.

Article 4: I commit to reading the Gospel daily and as I read it, to pray for all those in the world suffering from war, oppression, environmental degradation that has disrupted their livelihoods and lives. I will pray for all refugees and immigrants. I will pray for all prisoners, knowing our Lord and his followers were also imprisoned, for all on the margins, knowing how His earliest followers were marginalized, and every unborn child, praying that he or she will be brought into earthly being to fulfill the mission of love for which God created him/her.

Article 15: I commit to working specific hours every week to further the cause of justice. I will find creative initiatives to work for justice, despite the isolation of COVID.

Article 17: I will speak for peace, pray for peace, show peace in all that I do. I will be peace in speech, in my actions, and in my very being. Everyday. In all ways.

Article 18: I commit to honoring the Franciscan concept of universal kinship and will work diligently that my home and my life choices will honor all of creation. I will work with my fraternity and my larger Franciscan Order to communicate the blessedness of all of creation and our familial relationship with all that lives.

I personally intend to write an intention for each of the Articles in Chapter Two and invite you to do the same. If a JPIC workshop appears in one of your intentions, let me know. I would be so happy to work on it with you!

Blessings to you in the New Year!

Peace and All Good,

Patricia Grace, OFS, JPIC Animator