



Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

To my brothers and sisters in Jesus and Francis, the joy of Franciscan spirit be with you!
Greetings of Peace and All Good!



Our spiritual father and patron, St. Francis of Assisi, praised and experienced all of God's creation as sacred. He exclaimed, "All praised be yours my Lord, through Brother Sun and Sister Moon....All praise be yours my Lord, through all that you have made....". Our SFO Rule asks us to respect all creatures animate and inanimate, which "bear the imprint of the Most High" and that we "shall strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship". As Secular Franciscans we are called to be stewards of life and creation.

The Book of Psalms, used in the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Hours, echoes the praise that creation gives to God along with humanity, "The heavens declare of the glory of God, and the firmament proclaim his handiwork" (Ps. 19:2). St. Francis experienced true solidarity with the poor and marginalized and has a profound respect for all life. He embraced Lady Poverty by living very simply, making peace in every way. It is these values that inspire the Franciscan JPIC efforts. As Secular Franciscans, we work to bring Justice and Peace to our families, in the workplace, in our communities and in the world, to live a non-violent lifestyle, to end poverty, oppression and abuse and to stop the destruction of the planet. JPIC's efforts are often directed to the systems that cause this oppression and destruction. We work our common efforts to gradually change the world in light of Gospel truth.

Social justice addresses poverty and provides adequate services to all ages as human right. Genuine social justice nurtures the weakest and promotes the common good. Without justice there is a diminishment of life in all its stages from the womb to the care center. Pope Paul VI emphasizes, "If you want peace, work for justice". Pope John Paul II was a tireless advocate of the consistent ethic of life. He was a critic of war, especially the wars in the Middle East. He was a critic of the death penalty, of economic injustice and the violence of poverty and homelessness, of abortion and euthanasia. He was a critic of the ecological crisis. He was a defender of worker's rights and an apostle of the "Gospel of Life". These two apostles of Christ have followed the footsteps of Francis in the work of justice and peace.

The work of JPIC is a work of compassion, mercy and charity. Compassion asks us to go where it hurts, to enter into places of pain, to share in brokenness, fear, confusion, grief, loss and anguish. Compassion challenges us to cry out with those in misery, to mourn with those who are lonely, to weep in those in tears. Compassion requires us to

be weak with the weak, vulnerable with the vulnerable, and powerless with the powerless. Compassion means full immersion in the condition of being human. It is simply getting out of our "comfort zones" to see the face of Jesus in the poor, in the lonely, homeless, sick, dying, oppressed, abused and imprisoned. It is providing the immediate basic needs of the unfortunate and doing corporal works of mercy. It is walking with the unfortunate in their difficult journey.



Justice promotes systemic change through advocacy. Our awareness of the difficulty of life in society makes clear that the work of JPIC is much more than engaging in works of compassion, mercy and charity but also involves a mission in social, political and economic life. JPIC actively works and advocates for the abolition of the death penalty, abortion and euthanasia, human trafficking and exploitation, child welfare, health care, crisis of water, non-violence, elder care, education, immigration, environmental and climate change issues, wildlife conservation and care of creation in general, and many more social issues.

To do the work of justice, Secular Franciscans can participate in legislation advocacy on a timely basis. SFO Rule states, "Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and the courageous initiatives."

We can participate in project visits and join prayer vigils for peace. We must be active member and supporters of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) and respond timely to its Action Alerts and other pertinent information. Advocacy work is not limited to letter writing to elected government officials, information/petition gathering, and animating and coordinating all that which has to do with Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation in conformity with our Rule, Constitution and General Statutes and the decision of our General Chapter in collaboration with FAN. No one of us can do everything, but all of us can do something.

Submitted by:

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