

# CONTACT

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



**Franciscan  
Amazon  
Conference at  
Antoniamum**



**Brazil,  
First Inter-  
Franciscan  
JPIC Congress**



**Malta,  
7th European  
Continental  
Meeting**

## Franciscan Network on Migration

The Franciscan Network on Migration is an initiative of JPIC aimed at creating a network within the Franciscan family of lay and religious people who are working on migration issues. This is an inclusive effort that aims to bring together Franciscans who are running or serving in projects such as migrant centers and shelters, houses of refuge, parishes, and individual ministries, for mutual support, experiential learning, promotion of best practices and approaches, and coordinated advocacy efforts.

**1**

### ECOLOGY

Amazon - India - South  
Korea - Brazil -  
Venezuela

**2**

### MIGRATION

USA - Central America -  
Malta

**3**

### DIALOGUE

India - Italy - Brazil -  
Netherlands

# Listen to the Cry of the Amazon

*Letter for the Feast of Saint Francis 2019*

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Lord give you peace!

After converting to the Gospel, St. Francis's only desire was to live and witness to the Gospel in the world. In the chapters XIV to XVII of the Earlier Rule we can see quotations he makes from the Gospel, in which Jesus sends out his disciples (see Mt 10:1-42; Lk 9:1-6; 10:1-20, Mk 6:7-13). Living, witnessing and preaching the Gospel for Francis should always be done in minority, poverty, humility and submission to the Church, keeping nothing for himself, giving everything back to the Lord (see VAIANI. C. *History and Theology of the Spiritual Experience of Francis of Assisi*, p.131). Moreover, when the brothers that God himself had given him arrived (cf. Test 14), Francis began a life of fraternity which to this day is the highest expression of the Franciscan charism.

Recently, the PCO 2018 took up the concept of contemplative fraternity (cf. Those Who Have Ears, Let Them Listen to What the Spirit is Saying... to the *Friars Minor* Today, 92-105) and made specific proposals on living and implementing our form of life where we are, open to international fraternities (cf. Idem, 140-148).

Together with this appeal of the Order, we all feel challenged by the Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* with the statement that "All of them have a right to receive the Gospel" and "Christians have the duty to proclaim the Gospel without excluding anyone" (EG 15) and with the quotation of Jesus's missionary mandate the foundation of evangelization: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (EG 19).

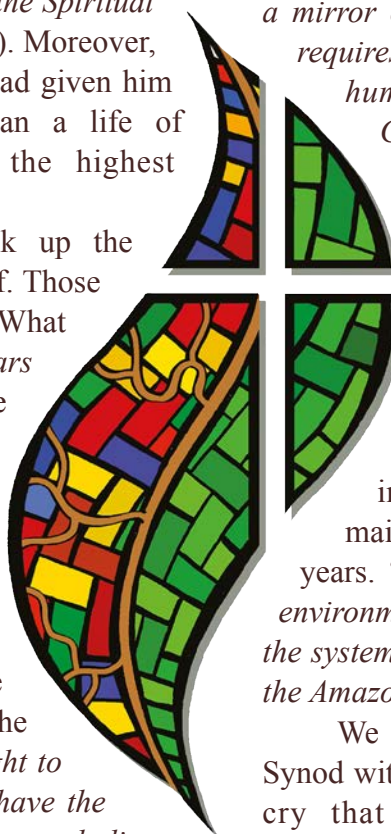
It is good to remember that St. Francis himself sent his friars out "two by two" recommending that they announce peace and penance (cf. 1Cel 29). This confirms the missionary dimension of our charism that urges us to go forth towards our brothers and sisters of the whole world, coming to them in a unique way, preaching with our form of life and action in favour of reconciliation, peace, justice and respect for creation (cf. GGCC 1:2). This challenges us today more than ever in the context of the climate crisis and the migratory crisis in which we live, and the Church invites us not to be indifferent.

Pope Francis recently looked at the Church in the international Amazon and convened the Amazon Synod with the theme: "*The Amazon: New Paths for the Church and for Integral Ecology*". In the preparatory document of the Synod we read that "*The Amazon is a region with rich biodiversity; it is multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-religious; it is a mirror of all humanity which, in defence of life, requires structural and personal changes by all*

*human beings, by nations, and by the Church.*" We must also remember here that

there are about 32 million inhabitants in the Pan-Amazonian region (in the 9 countries that have Amazonian forests) and among them, there are approximately 3 million indigenous people who form about 390 different peoples and nationalities. These indigenous people were born and raised in harmony with the forest and have maintained this balance for thousands of years. "*But life in the Amazon is threatened by environmental destruction and exploitation and by the systematic violation of the basic human rights of the Amazon population*" (Instrumentum Laboris, 14).

We Franciscans are called to accompany this Synod with great attention which asks us to hear the cry that goes forth from the Amazon (see Instrumentum Laboris, 45-46). We want to recall here the data obtained from the Synod Preparatory Document: "*The Amazon Basin encompasses one of our planet's largest reserves of biodiversity (30 to 50% of the world's flora and fauna) and freshwater (20% of the world's freshwater). It constitutes more than a third of the planet's primary forests and –*





*although the oceans are the largest carbon sinks – the Amazon’s work of carbon sequestration is quite significant. It covers more than seven and a half million square kilometres, and 9 countries share this great Biome (Brazil, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela, including French Guyana as an overseas territory)”. We are called together with the Church to enter into a process of personal and community ecological conversion, requested by Pope Francis in the Encyclical *Laudato Si’* (LS 216-221), “allowing the power and the light of the grace we have received also be evident in our relationship to other creatures and to the world around us. In this way, we will help nurture that sublime fraternity with all creation which Saint Francis of Assisi so radiantly embodied.” (LS 221).*

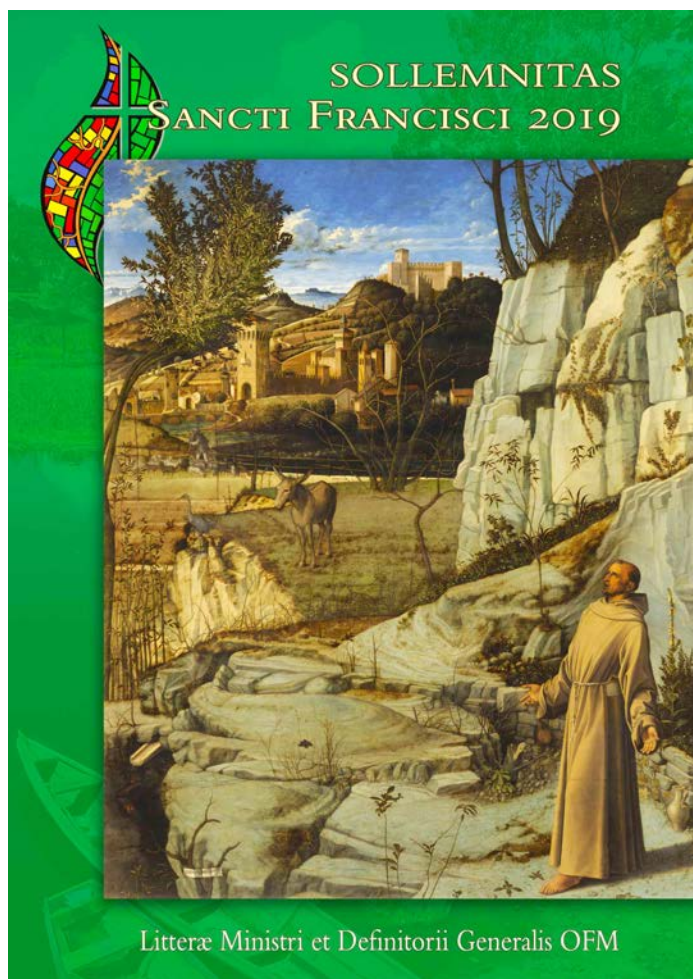
The ecclesiological dimension of missionary evangelization, which is proper to our identity as followers of the Risen Jesus Christ and of St. Francis of Assisi, requires us to expand our vision on the participation of the laity in all aspects of the life of the Church. As Pope Francis reminds us, the laity are not only assistants of those considered to be the “first” or “privileged” class of evangelisers. All members of the Church share the same responsibilities in living and proclaiming the Gospel. Therefore, a radical rethinking of how we organize all aspects of evangelization is necessary, and how we work in information and formation for a spirituality of integral ecology. Evangelization and

human and environmental promotion represent two sides of the same coin: “love of God and love of neighbour”. Doing this we must combine our efforts with those of the Amazon area and with all others who live in similar conditions, as a way of embodying the message of St. Francis of Assisi in our life and the life of the Church and today’s world.

In truth, St. Francis lived an integral ecology, even though this terminology was not used in the Middle Ages. Pope Francis speaks of integral ecology incorporating the human and social dimensions: “*environmental, economic and social ecology*” (LS 138-142), “*cultural ecology*” (LS 143-146) and “*ecology of daily life*” (LS 147- 155). And then he relates integral ecology to the “*common good*” (LS 156-158) which requires a responsible ethic to respect the elementary and inalienable rights of all people with “*a summons to solidarity and a preferential option for the poorest of our brothers and sisters*” (LS 158-162). St. Francis’s way of life, becoming a brother to the lepers, the poor, to creatures, to the men and women of his time, enabled him to live in an integrated manner in fraternity and in the world.

The call of the Amazonian peoples directly affects actions related to ecology. However, we must all remember that “*in order to promote integral ecology in the daily life of the Amazon, it is also necessary to understand the notion of intergenerational communication and justice, which includes the transmission of ancestral experience,*





*cosmologies, spiritualities and theologies of the indigenous peoples in terms of care for our common home.*”(Instrumentum Laboris, 50). The responsibility for our “common home” must be based on love for future generations and should “*be a distinctive way of looking at things, a way of thinking, policies, an educational programme*” (LS 111).

Those of us who live far away from the Amazon receive a vital call regarding what comes from that area. The search and extraction of gold from rivers and other places, continuously produce destruction and pollution of the environment. It is good to remember that this precious metal is also the cause of violence, slavery, smuggling, robbery and theft in indigenous territories. The same happens with wood, illegally removed from the forest, which passes through corrupt means and then reaches the “legalised” international market. In silence, there is also the “bio-piracy” that steals various products and plant and animal species from nature, together with the millennial knowledge of the Amazon peoples. Many other products are exported as commodities, whose production requires the complete eradication of the forest (see Preparatory document).

We know that the Catholic Church has been present in some parts of the Amazon, since the arrival of the European colonizers. The Church is still a prophetic voice in the Amazon. We want to send a special thanks to the brothers of our Order who currently live and work in the Amazon region of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. At the same time, we ask all the brothers of the Order to be sensitive to the cry of the Amazon, defending the life, dignity and rights of the Amazon peoples. We also ask them to be an ever more present Church, and with the Amazonian missionary face, a Prophetic Church that faces the challenges of today (see Instrumentum Laboris, Part III).

For more information, see:  
[www.sinodoamazonico.va](http://www.sinodoamazonico.va)

Happy Feast of Saint Francis!  
 Peace and all good!

Rome, 29 September 2019

*Feast of the Archangels, Saints Michael, Gabriel and Raphael*

Br. Michael Anthony Perry, ofm (*Min. Gen.*)  
 Br. Julio César Bunader, ofm (*Vic. Gen.*)  
 Br. Jürgen Neitzert, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Caoimhín Ó Laoide, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Ignacio Ceja Jiménez, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Nicodème Kibuzehose, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Ivan Sesar, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Valmir Ramos, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Antonio Scabio, ofm (*Def. Gen.*)  
 Br. Giovanni Rinaldi, ofm (*Sec. Gen.*)



# Inter-Religious Tribute to the Victims of Sri Lanka Bomb Attacks – Chennai

*The main topic of this inter-religious meeting was, “Make me an instrument of Peace – Humanity beyond boundaries.”*

We were all affected by the loss of innocent lives due to the bomb blasts in Sri Lanka on the Easter Sunday this year. The gruesome bomb blasts shattered the happiness and calmness of Easter. These shocking acts of terrorism forced the people of Sri Lanka to go on lockdown, but the people around the world came out in support of the people of Sri Lanka.

One such support came from the Franciscan Family Chennai (FFC). An Inter-Religious Floral Tribute to the victims of bomb attack as well as to show our unity beyond boundaries of religion, caste and race were organized on the 28th of April 2019 behind Valluvarkottam, Chennai. The main topic of this inter-religious meeting was, “Make me an instrument of Peace – Humanity beyond boundaries.”

The speakers during this meeting were invited from different religions such as Hinduism (Sr. Lalitha, Brahma Kumaris, Raja Yoga Meditation Centre, Nungambakkam and Swami Shashi Shikananda, Rama Krishna Mission), Islam (Mr. A. Faizur Rahman and Dr. Salahuddin Mahammad Ayub, Chief Kazi), Buddhism (Swami Shanthilalji) and from Christianity (Br. Praveen Henry D’Souza, OFM, President of AFFI).

The students sang the prayer song of Stella Maris College. Dr. Victor A. Singarayar, OFS, Joint Secretary of FFC, welcomed the speakers and the gathering. The nursing students of St. Isabel Hospital composed and sang a beautiful song on the



importance of peace and unity among all religions. All much appreciated this song. All the speakers condemned the dreadful acts of violence carried out in Sri Land and all over the world in the name of Religion and Race. And they insisted the need to live in peace and harmony with each other.

Sr. Anthoniammal, FBS, recited the peace prayer dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi. Mr. Arul, OFS read out a pledge for peace and unity among all religions and races in the world. And finally, Sr. Arul Mary, FMM, Secretary of FFC, gave the last words of acknowledgment. She thanked all the speakers for their valuable contribution and the Franciscan Family that came together to prove that we can and ought to live in peace and unity with others.

**Br. Joseph Raj, OFM**  
Coordinator of FFC – Chennai, India





## "Stay in the Encounter with Others" JPIC Camp for youth and friars in Naples

*The 3rd JPIC Camp was held in NAPLES from August 19 to 24 with the theme: "Stay in the Encounter with Others." It included testimonies, visits, field experiences, reflections, fraternity and prayer, etc.*

Alex, three years old, lives in a gypsy camp in Giugliano in Campania, a few kilometers from Naples. Since May, water and electricity have been cut off, forcing him and the other 400 people in the camp to live in a situation of extreme poverty and marginalization. According to their stories, the institutions would refuse to recognize their presence. And there have been attempts to clear the field against their will. There have been solidarity and support for them. People like Br. Enrico, who choose to dedicate themselves to those who were in need

and bring some relief into their lives, so stressful and tiring.

Alex, with his crumpled clothes and his disheveled blond tuft, disappeared among some tin shacks and then re-emerged in a rush among dust and rubble, offered me coffee and ice cubes for freshening up from the heat. What a wise and timely offer! Because we have spent the next hour playing ball and running with the other children who live in Giugliano's gypsy camp.

I had already been to Naples in the past. I had stayed in a hotel in Chiaia, one of the most beautiful districts of Naples, just a few minutes from Piazza del Plebiscito. From the window of my room, every morning, I admired the Vomero hill and the beautiful colors of its historic buildings. I believe I have never seen so much beauty as I could see in the gypsy camp of Giugliano in Campania, in the lively eyes of Alex and the other children.

A term that the friars taught me during the experience of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is "*Evidently Hidden*." It is easy also for us to refuse to acknowledge the presence of the gypsy camp of Giugliano and to pretend as if the thousands of people who live in the 15-story buildings of Scampia don't exist. The presence of all these people, remaining on the margins of society, is more





than ever evident. And it is indeed a great sin not to recognize their presence because they exist right there. The presence of God and the beauty of life that He has given us was not difficult to perceive in the Ponticelli boys. They have found a form of social redemption in the families of Scampia who redeveloped the condominium garden on their initiative to give children a decent space in which to play.

It was the gift that the field of JPIC left me. And I think this experience seems to be very well summed up in the title that the friars wanted to give to this experience: “*So-Stare nell’Incontro*” (Stay in the Encounter with Others). His Eminence Felice Accrocca, Archbishop of Benevento and Fr. Luigi told us about a journey that started from the meeting between Francis and the Sultan as narrated in the Franciscan Sources. We had an opportunity to reflect on different ways of coexistence, and the importance of listening for a genuine, disarmed and disarming dialogue, and how disarmed Francesco was when he appeared before the Sultan. We observed it ourselves with our own eyes, visiting Scampia, Giugliano, Ponticelli and Caivano, in the Land of Fires. We were forty of us, including youth and friars. We have shared this intense experience and immersed ourselves in the meeting.

In Caivano, we met Fr. Maurizio Patriciello, who told us about his daily commitment to tackle the serious environmental and social problems that plague the area. His words have given us a strong sense of responsibility because each of us can play an essential part in protecting Creation. We can help

to defend the environment and dedicate ourselves to the people we meet as bearers of beauty. What we received in return will be something extraordinary. The part of ourselves that we will have given will be found again in the other. And the beauty that we will have brought into the world we will see again in the things that surround us. Perhaps it could be where we least expect it, among the houses of a suburban neighborhood or in the smile of a child running happily through the rubble at the edge of a road.

**Andrea Sidioti**  
Camp participant



## India: Solidarity walk – for the cause of migrants

On 24 March 2019, the Franciscan Friars along with their parishioners of St. Sebastian's Church, Madhavaram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, South India, had taken an important step to go along with the Caritas India to organize a solidarity walk for the cause of migrants who live and work in and around the city of Chennai. Caritas' **Share the Journey Campaign** is encouraging communities and organizations around the world to spend time with migrants and refugees, get to know them, walk and live in solidarity with them. The friars got inspired by the very act of Pope Francis, who spoke about honoring the dignity of migrants and building solidarity and creating a culture of encounter with them. And they had organized the event to bring awareness in their locality about human dignity that is due to migrants.

Almost more than half a million migrant workers, who live in and around the city of Chennai, are unskilled workers. Migrants who come to the city of Chennai are typically at the receiving end of misplaced bias, such as loud, sexually open, dirty and so on. In workplaces, migrant labor is often deprived of the most necessary and essential of amenities such as a clean toilet, drinking water, and

a place to rest. It is perhaps not news that migrants are taken for granted and the accounts show that there is a long way to go before migration with dignity is achieved.

Having recognized the plight of the migrants around Chennai, Br. Simon A., OFM, parish priest of St. Sebastian's Church, has taken this initiative of organizing a solidarity walk for 2 km to promote the welfare of their living condition. Around 300 parishioners had walked in this rally holding along with them the banners and posters expressing, *"This world belongs to us. Migrants are people too. Love your neighbors..."* Few migrant workers also had taken part in this rally. The solidarity walk campaign was concluded with a Eucharistic celebration specially offered for the cause of migrants. The homily was focussed on the concerns of Pope Francis regarding the challenges faced by migrants.

We thank Br. Simon A., OFM, the friars, the parishioners of St. Sebastian's Church and Caritas India for promoting the work of Justice and Peace for the cause of migrants and inviting the people around Madhavaram locality in Chennai to live in peace and harmony.

**Br. Xavier Durairaj, OFM**

JPIC Animator, Province of St. Thomas the Apostle – India





## Br. Joseph Nangle: "Catholics' Collaboration with Trump is Scandalous"

*Br. Joseph Nangle belongs to the Order of Friars Minor (OFM) and has served as a missionary in Bolivia for over 15 years, was another 12 years the co-director of Franciscan Mission Service and last Thursday he was arrested, along with 70 other Catholics, for protesting against the immigration policy of the government of Donald Trump. Brother Joseph was kind enough to answer some questions for [pazybien.es](http://pazybien.es) and highlights the serious situation in which migrants live due to current measures in place by the US administration.*

***From the Franciscan charism, what motivates you to carry out this type of action, even putting your own security at risk?***

Thank you for this opportunity to explain a little more certain Franciscan efforts against many crimes carried out by the Trump Administration and in particular what we were trying to do with a large group of Catholics on Thursday, the 18th of July. The charism of St. Francis lends itself to our current times, especially in the US, to carry out a prophetic action against such crimes against humanity perpetuated by our government at this time in our

history. St. Francis set the tone in this regard with his dangerous trip to Egypt at the time of the crusades. We can't do less now.

***How are Franciscans and Franciscans in the United States promoting a culture of encounter and social integration of migrants?***

Everywhere in our country, especially in pastoral work, our habit is a light and hope for the brothers and sisters of Latin America. I think every Franciscan brother and sister realizes the crucial role we play with those who are trying to just live in peace in our country.

***How can Franciscans join and collaborate in other countries to your action against the death policies the Trump administration?***

That is a key question. From the friars from other countries, we American friars need words of encouragement, challenge and even words that insist that we more and more clearly put into practice our prophetic vocation within the American "empire" of today.

***What would you say to Catholics in the US and the rest of the world who support Donald Trump's policies?***

The collaboration and support of the Trump horror by our Christian and or Catholic brothers and sisters is a tragedy, a scandal and something incredible. This is why a direct Franciscan voice is essential. It





is a matter, I think, of Jesus' words and actions: "Alas for you, Pharisees."

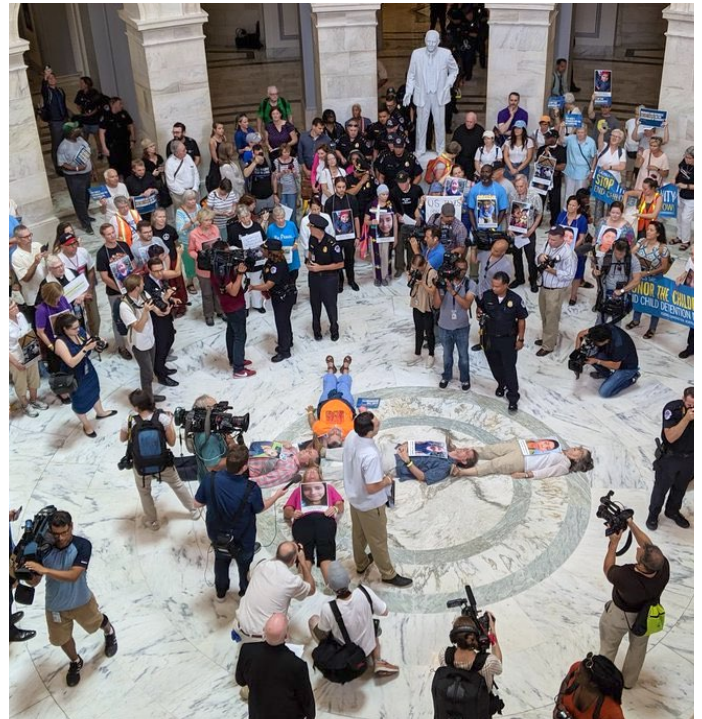
***Can we have hope that the current situation can be reversed?***

There's always hope. Politically we long for a radical change with the 2020 elections. In terms of our faith, we console ourselves with the words of God from the Prophet Isaiah: "Console my people, console them...their period of service is ended. I have heard the cry of my people."

***Do you plan to repeat actions like those you took at the Capitol? What legal consequences could they have for you?***

I believe that what we have done on July 18th may well be, well, must be repeated constantly by US Catholics. I would call my dear friars, together with the Franciscan sisters to be part of what can be a great movement in favor of justice for "the lessor ones." It seems to me that this movement could boost a necessary renewal and revitalization of the Franciscan community in this country.

Brother Joseph also highlighted, during the press conference last Thursday, what is defined as "original national sin." Despite the great rhetoric about freedom and independence, the founding statement of our Country was plagued with racism and misogyny from the get-go. Written by several slave owners and excluding women from the right to comment on the public life of the country, the



document contained a great insult to the original Americans.

In the Declaration of Independence of 1776, the only reference to native Americans was to keep far away from "our borders, the ruthless and poor wild Indians, who everyone knows their main precept is destruction regardless of age, sex or condition."

Now, more than two hundred years later, one would have thought that those sins, at least, would have started to be overcome. Slavery was officially abolished; women received the right to vote at the beginning of the 20th century; and the civil rights movement of the 1960s addressed the persistent injustices towards African Americans.

However, in today's climate, Donald Trump is dragging us back to those dark times with a combination of irrational fear and hate toward people who are not like him with an atmosphere of pure cruelty. What is almost worse, are the so-called Christians who support, applaud and allow this descent to a new dark era in the United States.

Today, we make our own the words of the Catholic Bishop of El Paso, Mark Seitz, when he sees the daily horrors that take place between his city and Ciudad Juárez: "This government and this society are not well. We suffer a hardening of the heart that threatens life."





## India: "Save water and land"

*A cycle rally was organised by the friars in Chennai, South India on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July for the cause of water and land.*

A cycle rally was organised by the friars in Chennai, South India on the 7<sup>th</sup> of July for the cause of water and land, and around 250 children and youth had participated in this event. They covered up around 20 km of distance in and around Madhavaram, Chennai and the neighbouring area holding posters with slogans "Save water and it will save you later; No water no life; Water is life, Treat it Right; Reuse the Past, Recycle the present, Reduce pollution in the future..."



Br. Simon A., OFM, initiated this rally in collaboration with *Earth Day Network*, *Caritas India* and Br. Charles Bernar, OFM, Vice Provincial of the Province of St. Thomas the Apostle, India was the chief guest of this event and he flagged off the cycle rally. This rally was a wake-up call for the people of Chennai as the city battles with its historic worst drought in over 70 years. The parishioners of St. Sebastian's Church have come forward to adopt a nearby lake to clean and restore it as a follow up of this event. The local OFS fraternity also will organise tree-planting in and around the Church compound. Thanking you St. Sebastian's Parish for taking this initiative for the better future.



**Br. Xavier Durairaj, OFM**

JPIC Animator

Province of St. Thomas the Apostle – India





## Franciscan Eco-Transition Movement; South Korea

Pope Francis' Encyclical *Laudato si'* appeals to us to collaborate and engage in a comprehensive dialogue to resolve environmental crises. It's because social justice, global peace, ecological and climate crisis are deeply interrelated.

"I urgently appeal, then, for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (*Laudato si'*, 14)

Climate change is primarily an ethical and religious issue. It is the current generation with moral irresponsibility for economic profits that has critical environmental impacts on the next generations. Moreover, reckless competition over natural resources causes violent conflicts within nations and brutal wars between nations. An increase of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, flooding, and typhoons, along with countless warnings from scientists indicate that there is little time left to resolve the climate crisis.

Unfortunately, there has been no reflective discourse on climate change in South Korea. The government and civil society discuss energy transition only for economic growth while sidelining an in-depth consideration of the climate crisis. Even worse is the lack of awareness of the religious communities on the issue. Ordinary people concern only for some environmental problems such as air pollution from micro dust by power plants. While politicians don't care about climate-related issues, the government has no specific legislation to

respond to the climate crisis amid public indifference.

The Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission has decided to devote its energy to informing about the dire impacts of extraordinary climate change on our fragile planet for the next three years. This year the JPIC Commission is making an effort to help people realize the seriousness of climate change by organizing "Eco-Transition School" and "Eco-Transition Workshop."

### Eco-Transition School

The Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission has been promoting ecological transition experiments and making an ecological discourse under the theme of "ECO Transition Movement" since the beginning of 2019. A dictionary definition of 'transition' is 'a process of changing from one system or method to another.' In Christian terms, it is synonymous with 'Metanoia' or 'Repentance.'

*Eco-Transition School* which consists of six sessions, was held every Friday evening in June – July 2019. Through this program, participants could realize that 'creative dialogue for transition' is necessary to induce social change. Members also studied a 'discourse on economics for transition' to establish the basis of an ecological discourse in South Korea. When it comes to socio-cultural aspects of transition, members investigated some urban experiments of ecological transformation happening in South America and South Korea. Participants also explored "Transition Village Network" that is expanding around the globe. The JPIC Commission hopes that the Eco-Transition School could contribute to finding the real values of the movement of ecological transition and constructing a discourse on ecology in South Korea.



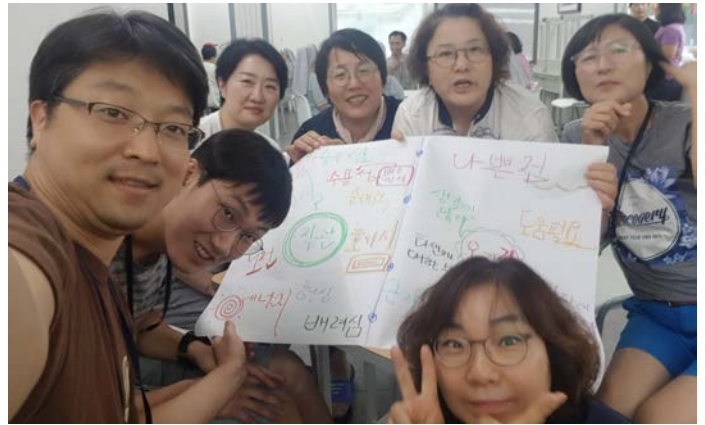
## Eco-Transition Workshop

The Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission organized the “ECO Transition Workshop” for its annual summer camp in *Sancheong* from July 26 to 28, 2019. Narumon Paiboonsittikun, an expert facilitator from Thailand, has led the event. She has facilitated workshops on ecological transition in Thailand and many other countries for more than 15 years. The total number of participants was limited to thirty for the intensity of training. Inter-Franciscan annual summer camp explores social issues and challenges that South Korea faces. And usually, a large number of Franciscan family members participated until last year. This summer, however, a participatory workshop has been arranged to share ecological problems and seek solutions more proactively, instead of through lectures, questions, and answers-based seminar.

The first day was dedicated to listening. The participants shared what they were expecting from the summer camp. Later, Narumon said that we should find creative solutions for ourselves since no one can provide a panacea for all the ecological problems. The participants have learned and practiced the art of deep listening to communicate more effectively with others who are interested in ecological transition. She emphasized that our storytelling is vital for promoting ecological transition. She added that, more crucially, we needed to practice listening to the feelings, thoughts, emotions, and body language of others.

On the second day of the workshop, members had a training course for teambuilding. The tool for the session was based on four types of human being that are recognized by Native Americans: buffalo, mouse, grizzly, and eagle. ‘Teambuilding’ was a task of doing a jigsaw after allocating team members into four roles within the same team. Participants could realize how difficult the communication was since they were supposed to communicate with limited language, gestures, or exchanging glances to complete their picture. In the afternoon, participants teamed up with people of similar types to work on team building activity together. It was a valuable time to observe and understand the different types of mentality.

On the last day, participants practiced verbally describing ten different pictures about climate change to the person besides themselves. They were



given just a minute to explain about given images to all the other participants at the workshop. They had to focus on what climate change is, the damage caused by it, and possible solutions. Reflecting on our daily lives is the first step in finding solutions to avoid climate catastrophe. It is also critical to inform people around us of the stark truth of the climate crisis. The participants could realize how important it is to educate others on the negative impacts of climate change in a short time.

## Prospect

Eco-Transition Workshop launched this year, was designed as a practical training course to address the climate crisis with civil society organizations and faith-based advocacy groups. Public concern over climate change and environmental education in Korea has been growing in recent years. But there isn't any effective training program for facilitators and coordinators. Narumon’s insightful leadership inspired high confidence among the participants. The Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission will be planning a “Climate Change Transition Workshop” and “Intensive Course of ECO Transition workshop” for next year. We expect that Catholics, Buddhists, Protestants and Won Buddhists (a native Buddhist sect in Korea) can take part in these programs together.

**Br. Aloysio Kim, OFM**

JPIC Animator, Province of the Holy Korean  
Martyrs – Seoul

# Franciscan Participation in COP25

*The urgency for radical changes in the hyper-consumerist lifestyle of individuals as well as the political and economic systems that have caused the destruction of the whole ecosystem is staggering.*

The 25<sup>th</sup> international climate conference (COP25) organized by UNFCCC will be held in Santiago, Chile on this December 2 – 13. The JPIC Office in Rome and other Franciscan brothers and sisters are going to participate in COP25 in collaboration with diverse groups. The JPIC Office has been communicating with the JPIC Animator, Br. Massimo Cavieres, OFM, and his Commission of the OFM Province of *Santísima Trinidad* of Chile. They are actively engaged in the *Alianza Inter-religiosa y espiritual por el Clima* (Interreligious and Spiritual Alliance for Climate) in Chile, which is one of the collaborators for the agenda of the JPIC Office.

The program of the participation consists of formation course on climate crisis, various celebrations of *Laudato si'*, conference, workshops on urban gardening and solar panel, public actions, and ecumenical/inter-religious ceremonies for climate justice. It is particularly significant that there will be not only the involvement of the civil society but also that of the ecumenical and inter-religious communities as well as the aboriginal peoples in Chile. There will be a conference in which delegates of the youth group and aboriginal peoples will take part in the discussion for climate solutions and concrete action.

The JPIC Office expects this year's participation in COP could evoke much wider and deeper engagement in climate action within the Franciscan family. The Plenary Council of the Order 2018 has declared that "As individuals, fraternities, Entities and as an international Order, (we are) to make a clear and radical option for the lifestyle



indicated by *Laudato si'*, authentically living out our charism and embarking on a journey of ecological conversion" (PCO/18, 189). The JPIC Coordinators at the International Council for JPIC 2019 have made a pledge on immediate action for climate saying that "We recognize that our misguided human actions are destroying the vital climate system of our common home. There is little time left for humanity to change its course if we are to avoid catastrophic consequences for Earth's community of life. In this existential crisis, we must hear the voices of young people clamoring for climate justice" (Jerusalem Statement).

The urgency for radical changes in the hyper-consumerist lifestyle of individuals as well as the political and economic systems that have caused the destruction of the whole ecosystem is staggering. And the voice of the public, especially youth, demanding for climate justice is ever-growing. All these make the role of the religious communities more significant and crucial. Therefore, the Church should convert itself to the Franciscan vision of Creation and make self-sacrifices for the poor and the sister Mother Earth. Franciscans are being called to become ecological prophets of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and we hope our participation would be a meaningful sign of our ecological vocation.

**Br. Rufino Lim, OFM**  
Assistant, JPIC Office– General Curia







## Franciscan Network on Migration

The Franciscan Network on Migration (RFM) is pleased to share that our first Gathering and Human Rights Training took place during the first week of September at La 72 Migrant and Refugee Shelter, Tenosique, Tabasco, Mexico. Twelve brothers and sisters from Honduras, Mexico and the United States came together to learn about global migration, human rights, and service to migrants. The group also discussed the political context of each country represented, as well as their vision for the network.

The Franciscan Network on Migration is an initiative of JPIC aimed at creating a network within the Franciscan family of lay and religious people who are working on migration issues. This is an inclusive effort that aims to bring together Franciscans who are running or serving in projects such as migrant centers and shelters, houses of refuge, parishes, and individual ministries, for mutual support, experiential learning, promotion of best practices and approaches, and coordinated advocacy efforts.

Our vision is that this coordinated corridor of support along the migrant route from Central America through Mexico to the United States will leverage our collective efforts and enhance the support we currently provide to migrants and refugees. The creation of the Network will allow migrants and refugees to better access the wide

range of resources and support. There is no monopoly on these issues and on ministry to migrants and refugees, and therefore the Franciscan Network on Migration envisions collaborating with many organizations and institutions that support and protect migrants and refugees.

In our first year, our goal is to articulate, protect, train and disseminate the different Franciscan experiences of attention to migrants from Central America, Mexico and the United States. The goal is to be able to offer people with forced mobility in the region an integral accompaniment in their displacement and influence the transformation of the structural causes that originate and maintain the lethal human displacement in the region.

To these ends, we have facilitated two main experiences meant to solidify both our network and our commitment to accompanying our migrant brothers and sisters holistically and comprehensively. In the first experience, the *Via Crucis Migrante*, we walked together the migrants' route from *El Ceibo* to La 72. Our 57-kilometer journey inspired and challenged us to walk in another's shoes, and to understand more deeply the causes and struggles that push people to make this journey. One Franciscan sister from the US offered this reflection, "On this lifelong journey it is not so important to move on as it is to come near, to walk with and to witness to the other's beauty, love and suffering."

During the second experience, our first Gathering and Human Rights Training, we came





together to gain technical skills, experiential understanding, and context from our peers, all of which will inform our service to migrant people.

Training topics and discussions included:

History of the RFM; Context analysis: work by country and / or region; Tour of the facilities of La 72; Assistance to victims of crime and other opportunities for immigrant status adjustment; Human rights information session for migrants in Mexico: joining new arrivals in the daily human rights orientation at La 72; Physical and mental health during the migration route; Dangers in the migratory route and self-care: joining new arrivals in the daily discussion at La 72; The migrant path: visits to the migratory routes of El Ceibo and La Palma; Access to international protection: refuge and asylum in México; Migrant panel: sharing experiences and testimonies; Franciscan Approach: Deepening the specific basic objectives of the RFM. Visualize the RFM in 2020. Work with the mapping and other specific issues that need attention

Members of the Coordinating Committee of the RFM also made several visits to the local teams in Central America to accompany them and learn their perspectives on what the role they will play in the Network, as sending countries and countries that receive deportees. Additionally, we have been visiting friars throughout the US with the goal of understanding better how they are helping or want to help, and incorporating them into the Network.

As we move forward into 2020, Our endeavors will expose, systematize, and disseminate information regarding human rights violations among migrants in order to advocate within local and regional migration policies, and demand observance of laws around protection of migrants and refugees in Central America, Mexico and the United States.

**Lori Winther**  
Executive Secretary - RFM





## JPIC National Assembly in Bolivia

*The 35th National Assembly of the Franciscan Movement of Justice and Peace was held at San José de Tarata Convent, near the city of Cochabamba.*

The Meeting brought together 52 people from the JPIC departments of La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Sucre, Oruro, Trinidad, Potosí and Tarija. The theme of the Meeting was “Faith and Politics,” given the upcoming presidential elections that will take place in Bolivia this October.

During the first day of the Meeting, the participants gave accounts of activities of the JPIC departments highlighting the national projects of “educations for children and young promoters of justice and peace,” “Faith and Politics,” “promotion of the integral ecology” and “the message of *Laudato si’*.”

During the second day, Dr. Ronald del Barco intervened, a master’s in political science and a professor at the Universidad Mayor de San Simón. His presentation helped the participants to understand the bases of the policy at a general level and also gave some light on the current policy in the country. I had the opportunity to share with the audience the ecclesial and Franciscan perspective of Politics in the afternoon, encouraging them to take an interest in it and participate in it to become aware that we cannot remain indifferent, which means the awareness that is required to our indifference to this social phenomenon.

Besides, the participants had the opportunity to work with the recent JPIC International Council document “Jerusalem Statement.” All the points of the ICJPIC were reviewed, including the lines of action proposed by PCO 2018. The JPIC departmental groups began to work identifying the lines of action that are already present in their projects as well as those that will be prioritized for the coming years.



**Br. Jaime Campos F., OFM**  
JPIC Office, General Curia – Rome





## Extraordinary meeting of JPIC in the Province of XII Apóstoles, Lima

*On the occasion of this meeting, the Province seeks to strengthen its option and commitment to the values of JPIC.*

The representatives of the JPIC Commissions of the Franciscan Colleges in Perú have met, along with Br. Rafael Tito, OFM, animator JPIC of the Province, Br. Guido Zegarra, OFM, collaborator of JPIC and Br. Jaime Campos, OFM, Director of the JPIC Office of the General Curia on July 11 – 13.

On the first day of the Meeting, the JPIC projects of both schools that belong to the Franciscan Province of the XII Apostles in Perú were exhibited. It should be noted that JPIC values have been presented transversally within the educational institutes. The creation of JPIC Commissions in each school has allowed the development of valuable programs that are aimed at the students and their families for the care of creation.

Many other projects were presented. *El Colegio San Francisco de Asís* in Mollendo has an ecological brigade and carries out activities to celebrate World Earth Day, World Water Day, Earth

Hour, marches for peace and World Environment Day. *El Colegio Peruano Chino Juan XXIII* has a great project called “*Laudato si’*, Take Care of Common Home.” It is aimed at the educational community to raise awareness about environmental problems and the importance of working together to take care of our ecosystem. *El Colegio Santa Clara* and *El Colegio San Francisco de Arequipa* also presented their projects, highlighting the impact they have had both inside the educational community and outside in the working circles on the environment.

On the occasion of this meeting, the Province seeks to further strengthen its option and commitment to the values of JPIC. As a part of the future plan, JPIC parish groups will be organized. *San José Obrero* parish of Arequipa has become the first to send a representative to this working group.

After the presentation of the projects in execution, an analysis of the reality of Perú particularly in the Amazon followed, and some documents for projection of the JPIC work were studied such as “*Instrumentum Laboris*” of the Amazon Synod, the implications of the Plenary Council of the Order on JPIC, the Jerusalem Statement of the International Council of JPIC 2019.

**Br. Jaime Campos, OFM**  
Director, JPIC Office – General Curia





## JPIC Continental Meeting – Europe

Malta, September 2 - 5, 2019

*“Living Franciscan humanism in today’s European context: Go and repair my house”* was the topic of the VII Continental Meeting of JPIC European Animators.

In the retreat house “Porziuncola” in Malta, there was the meeting of 25 brothers working for the animation of the values of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in the European continent. The meeting started with the celebration of the Eucharist, presided by Br. Richard Stanley Grech, OFM, Provincial Minister of the Province of St. Paul in Malta.

JPIC animators, coming from Spain, Ireland, England, France, Austria, Italy, Poland, Lithuania, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and our hosts, Malta, presented their realities... Through the presentations of the Conferences we had the possibility to appreciate how JPIC animators are putting into practice the priorities set forth by the JPIC Office of the Curia... We recognized the profound work concerning the care for the creation, hospitality to migrants and the promotion of peace.


After sharing the JPIC work done in the Conferences, we listened to the presentation by Andrej Owca, SVD, who lives in Geneva and is member of the NGO ONG VIVAT International: he talked about the current social and political context in Europe. The concept of “Franciscan Humanism” was introduced by Br. José Antonio Merino, OFM, Ph.D in Philosophy and Letters, through two presentations: “Franciscan humanism for a culture of love” and “Franciscan Humanism and Ecology”.

We completed the formation meetings with two practical experiences offered by the JPIC commission of the Province of St. Paul in Malta: a visit to “John XXIII Peace Lab”, an organization that tries to promote solidarity and moral values rooted in the Christian faith, without excluding any other ideas nor people. We took part in the inauguration of the “Time for Creation”, organized by the interdiocesan Commission for environment.

During the last days of the JPIC Continental Meeting, the animators worked in linguistic groups to plan the JPIC work for the next three years, in light of what the Plenary Council of the Order proposed and according to the Declaration of the International JPIC Council in Jerusalem in 2019.

**Br. Jaime Campos, OFM**  
Director, JPIC Office - General Curia





## Voices from the Amazon: land, people and religion

Join the synodal fathers, indigenous leaders, local governments and experts in a day of dialogues about the future of the Amazon.

Date: 5 October 2019

Time: 08:30 – 17:00

Place: Auditorium Antonianum  
Viale Manzoni, 1  
Roma.



AMAZON: OUR COMMON HOME

## Voices from the Amazon: Land, People, and Religion

*A conference on “Voices from the Amazon: Land, People, and Religion” will spark deep conversations and ideas on 5 October, one day before the synod begins.*

The conference will include **Mons. Hector Cabrejos**, OFM, President of the Episcopal Conference of Latin America, **Br. Julio Bunader**, Vicar General of the Order of Friars Minor, Patricia Gualinga, Sarayaku Leader, Ecuador, and **many more**.

**This conference is an opportunity to discuss the synod with synodal fathers and indigenous leaders one day before it begins. *Seating is limited—please register as soon as possible.***

**IMPORTANT:** The conference will be held in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese. English translation will not be provided.



# Program

## 8.15 Registration and Greetings

## 9.00 Opening and Introductions

**Moderator:** Agustín Hernández, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, Antonianum Pontifical University

**Speakers:**

- Professor Mary Melone, Rettore Magnifico Antonianum Pontifical University
- Fr. Michael Perry, OFM, General Minister of the Order of Friars Minor
- S.E. Signa. María Elvira Velásquez Rivas-Plata, Ambassador of Peru to the Holy See
- S.E. Jorge Mario Eastman, Ambassador of Colombia to the Holy See
- Dr. Fabio Espitia Garzón. Attorney General of Colombia

## 10.00 Testimonials

**Moderator:** Sara Muzzi – Secretary of the Italian Center di Lullismo, Antonianum Pontifical University

**Speakers:**

- Patricia Gualinga, Sarayaku Leader, Ecuador
- Sister Laura Vicuña, Amazonian indigenous community, Brazil

## 11:00 break

- Jose Luiz Cassupà, President of COICA
- Fr. João Messias Sousa, OFM Munduruku Leader, Brazil

## 12.30 Lunch

## 14.00 Synodal Church for Integral Ecology and *Laudato si'*

**Moderator:** Tomás Insua, Executive Director of the Global Catholic Climate Movement

**Speakers:**

- Sarah duPont, Producer and Co-Director, “River of Gold”
- Mons. Hector Cabrejos, OFM, President of the Episcopal Conference of Latin America
- Tania Ávila, Coordinator of the Amerindian Network–Cochabamba and Indigenous Theologian
- Deacon Alirio Cáceres, CELAM integral ecology program & Global Catholic Climate Movement

## 15.30 Closing remarks

Fr. Valmir Ramos, Order of Friars Minor General Definitior





TEMA: UMA CULTURA DO ENCONTRO  
LEMA: QUE TODOS SEJAM UM (JO 17,21).

DE 15 A 18  
DE AGOSTO  
EM LAGOA SECA - PB

Informações em: [www.Ofmsantoantonio.org](http://www.Ofmsantoantonio.org)

# I CONGRESSO REGIONAL INTERFRANCISCANO DE JPIC

## Brazil: Inter-Franciscan JPIC Meeting

*The theme of the first Inter-Franciscan Regional Congress of JPIC in Brazil was "JPIC - A Culture of Encounter."*

A large number of Franciscan Family gathered to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Regional Congress of Inter-Franciscan Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) in Brazil from August 15 to 18, 2019, in the Franciscan convent of Ipuarana in Lagoa Seca, Paraíba. The theme was '*JPIC - A Culture of Encounter*' and the motto: "May they all be one" (Jn 17,21). The meeting was articulated in six guiding axes: Spirituality, Francis and Al-Kamil – a meeting of peace, The Vatican II document, *Nostra Aetate*, Migrants as a Theological Locus, Cycle of Hope in Public Policy, *Laudato si'* and the Amazon Synod.

The hosts of the meeting were St. Antony Province (OFM) of Brazil, Capuchins, Conventuals, people from the Northeast states of Brazil, YouFra, OFS, and Franciscan parishes. The Northeast states reveal cultural diversity as vast as territory comprising the region. All the members of the Congress were more than seventy, which is a very significant number, marked by the joy of brothers "joining" efforts towards a common goal as a family. The first theme dealt precisely with our Franciscan spirituality, which is based on uniting brothers.

There is no more expressive word to define our charism than "FAMILY." Wasn't this how St. Francis considered the whole creation? Sister Moon, Brother Sun, and Mother Earth. We are children of the same Father and, therefore, brothers.

Another prominent feature of Franciscan spirituality is Minority. And how important it was for us to hear that Francis dreamed that everyone could overcome the distances that separate us. He gave a beautiful example, which turned 800 years old in 2019: Francis went to meet a Muslim leader as a brother. In the era marked by hatred, Francis became a sign of peace. He transcended the personal and institutional barriers that would make the meeting unfeasible.

*Nostra Aetate*, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions, shows us a safe path to this endeavor. The Church recognizes the religious plurality of modern society. "Open the windows so that the wind of the Holy Spirit can blow within you." The document *Nostra Aetate* wants to be a gift of the Spirit in the sense of restlessness rather than tranquility. It must worry us, the human life that is in need, thrown below the poverty line. Religious differences need to be set aside for the defence of this life. The God of life is greater than all. *Nostra Aetate* is a compass of reconciliation with other world religions.

We must be concerned about the needs of migrants that were forced to leave their countries. Recognize that while they have no choices, we have, and we can meet them. It is the Spirit of Damietta



that must move us through the poignant difficulties of these peoples who suffer the weight of indifference from a system that is only interested in profit. And it's a system that exploits people and forests by depleting resources, depriving and leading to the extinction of various plant and animal species. How can we Franciscans reduce iniquity? Where do we individually have to move within so that we do not get used to seeing evil as normal and ordinary? The evil that discriminates against individuals in society is socially constructive. This evil can be alleviated through public policies that correct the social discrepancies that few get benefits, and many are marginalized. How to arouse in us the consciousness for our Common Home and realize that if nature dies, we also die with it.

In general, this was the tone of the debates that took place in the Congress. After the advisory services, it was time to reflect, to organize ourselves to put into practice what we have learned in theory. With joy, we built JPIC regional centers in each of the Northeastern States represented in the Congress. These nuclei will function as the loci of spirituality,

awareness, reflection, and concrete actions according to each surrounding reality.

It is the immediate consequence and the fruit of the Spirit that has moved everyone since the creation of the first JPIC Regional Congress of Brazil. Various branches of the Franciscan Family have come together to articulate, organize, and carry out this project that represents the Franciscan way of life. It's because JPIC is not just an acronym but the very way of our being in this world.

We thank the Most High and Glorious God for the success of this endeavor. We have overcome many difficulties, and we recognize that God's graces poured out upon us are signs that His infinite goodness has led us from the beginning.

Pax et Bonum!

**Br. Cesar Lindenberg, OFM**  
JPIC Animator, Province of Santo Antonio – Brazil



# Mediterranean, peace frontier and a database

*From the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the first official meeting between the JPIC delegates and the Secretaries for Mission and Evangelization of the Friars Minor of European countries bordering the Mediterranean took place in Malta.*

Cardinal Gualtiero Bassetti, President of the CEI, will organize a meeting in Bari for the month of February 2020 entitled: "Mediterranean, peace frontier". It is prophetic initiative that is linked to a similar project, in which the Friars Minor have been working on for some time, in collaboration with the General Secretariat for the Missions and Evangelization, the Office of Justice, Peace-Integrity of Creation of the General Curia OFM and the Conference of Ministers Provincial of the Friars Minor of Italy and Albania (COMPI).

A year ago, prompted by the social and cultural situation that was spreading throughout Italy and in much of the West, the Franciscans felt called to question in a concrete manner those signs of fraternity characteristic of our Order. To this end, the idea of establishing a "Franciscan Network of the Mediterranean" has matured. As Friars Minor we strongly feel the responsibility and urgency to trigger processes shared fraternally between peoples and cultures that face the *Mare Nostrum*.

The Franciscan presence in almost all the Mediterranean countries is in itself an enormous potential which, if structured in a network, can become a tool of fundamental importance. This awareness takes on even more significance in the year in which we are celebrating the 800 Years from the Peace Pilgrimage of St. Francis to the Holy Land and the historic meeting between St. Francis and the Sultan Malik al-Kamil which occurred in Damietta (Egypt).



Faced with the rampant culture that feeds division, closure, exclusion, considering the other not as a brother, but a threat to be rejected, the Franciscans intend to promote and support the culture of dialogue, of encounter, of inclusion; as the only way to build Peace and counter any kind of fundamentalism; as our beloved Pope Francis underlined during his recent visits to the Arab Emirates and Morocco.

Therefore, in December 2018, the JPIC Council with the Secretariat for the Missions and Evangelization of COMPI met in Rome. The Minister General and his General Definitory urged us to encourage this proposal and to develop common and creative projects.

From the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the first official meeting between the JPIC delegates and the Secretaries for Mission and Evangelization of the Friars Minor of European countries bordering the Mediterranean took place in Malta, including the





Custody of the Holy Land which has a mission in Rhodes (Greece).

The objective of the meeting was to establish the definition of a “Network” to be created and the initiatives to be commenced and executed, taking into consideration integral ecology, an essential key to building a sustainable future of Peace. It seemed important to understand how to face the challenges and problems, as well as to make full use of the enormous potential that this area is able to give to all the Entities that face the *Mare Nostrum*. In keeping with the expectations of the Plenary Council OFM 2018, the Franciscans feel called to seek a concrete response: [...] for a culture of inclusion, of encounter and of fraternal coexistence.

These fixed points allowed the ME Secretaries and all the JPIC animators of the countries of the Mediterranean coast to meet, get to know each other, share ideas and projects with the aim of creating concrete and feasible proposals for a future that is already present.

It is hoped that the Franciscans who live in the Mediterranean will soon be able to network, using the work they are already doing, moreover in fact, they have created important bridges to create new

initiatives. We urgently need a **database** that allows further concrete connections.

The essential steps:

The first step is to create a **database** organized by the General Secretariat ME and the General Office for JPIC and to urge the Mediterranean Franciscan Provinces to photograph the reality of their areas by communicating the updated data provided by the friars who work in the sector, using a tool accessible to all. The second step is to enter the data onto the website of the General JPIC office in a specific section specific to the Mediterranean dedicated to migrants and refugees.

**Br. John Luke Gregory, OFM**

JPIC Commission – Custody of the Holy Land

# The Feast of St. Francis in the Vatican Gardens, A celebration of *The Season of Creation*, and the Dedication of the Synod to St. Francis

October 4<sup>th</sup> 2019 at 12.30 am | Vatican Gardens

*"St. Francis is the example par excellence of an integral ecology" (Laudato si', 10).*

## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DATE

This year's Feast day of St. Francis of Assisi (October 4<sup>th</sup>) has extra significance because it coincides with a number of important events and anniversaries:

- It takes place only two days before the Synod on the Amazon — the first ever synod on the theme of integral ecology.
- The feast of St. Francis marked the conclusion of *The Season of Creation*, the annual celebration that takes place between September 1<sup>st</sup> and October 4<sup>th</sup>. This year was the first time that it was officially proclaimed by Pope Francis for the Catholic Church.
- The Feast of St. Francis falls shortly before the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Pope St. John Paul II's proclamation of St. Francis as patron saint of ecology (November 29<sup>th</sup>, 1979).

## THE EVENT

Pope Francis will host a celebration in the Vatican Gardens during which an oak tree from Assisi will be planted, as a visible sign of integral ecology. The event will see the participation of indigenous leaders and Church leaders, sending a powerful message to the world about the Church's commitment to the care of our common home.

This celebration and the symbolic planting of a tree in a garden that is at the heart of the universal Church will be an opportunity to:

1. communicate the importance of *The Season of Creation* — this is the first public symbolic action by Pope Francis following his recent invitation to the World Church to celebrate this "*season of increased prayer and effort on behalf of our common home*".
2. communicate the importance of the Synod on the Amazon, as well as proposing St. Francis as a model and guide for the synodal process. With this in mind, the event will include a prayer of dedication of the Synod to the intercession of St. Francis, praying that the Synod will be a fruitful step in the discernment of *new paths for the Church and for an Integral Ecology* in this critical region of the world.

## ORGANISATIONS PROMOTING THE EVENT

- The Order of Friars Minor
- The Global Catholic Climate Movement (GCCM)
- REPAM

### Contacts:

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# Human Rights and Ecocide in Venezuela

*In the face of so much human pain, we choose to focus on various action alerts. We decry the ecological destruction and its impacts on our suffering people.*

In recent years we have seen how the life of Venezuelan people has reached the point of provoking the largest exodus that Latin America has seen in contemporary times. Organizations such as UNHCR estimates that, up until the year 2019, four million Venezuelans have migrated to other countries. They have escaped across the borders, desperately searching for food and seeking to gain access to basic services, among them, medicine.

The tragedy of Venezuela happens at all levels: social, cultural, political and economic. However, in the face of so much human pain, we choose to focus on various action alerts. We decry the ecological destruction and its impacts on our suffering people. We deplore a decline in the public services, the high cost of economic activities, and poor public administration. Besides the corruption in the regions, the rural populations living far from the capital are the most affected. Unlike the outside areas, the city of Caracas enjoys the nearly uninterrupted public services. Over the years, numerous official grievances have been made by the environmental groups, indigenous communities and other entities about the excessive growth of illegal mining in the Amazon.

One of the most prominent of these public grievances was made by the Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon (ORPIA) on January 17, 2019. As their leaders gathered in the town of Puerto Ayacucho, Amazonas State, Venezuela, they issued a public alert condemning the illegal logging activities in the vast areas of tropical rainforest. They also called public attention to the diversion of river channels such as the Atabapo, the contamination of its waters with mercury and other toxic substances that were used in the process of

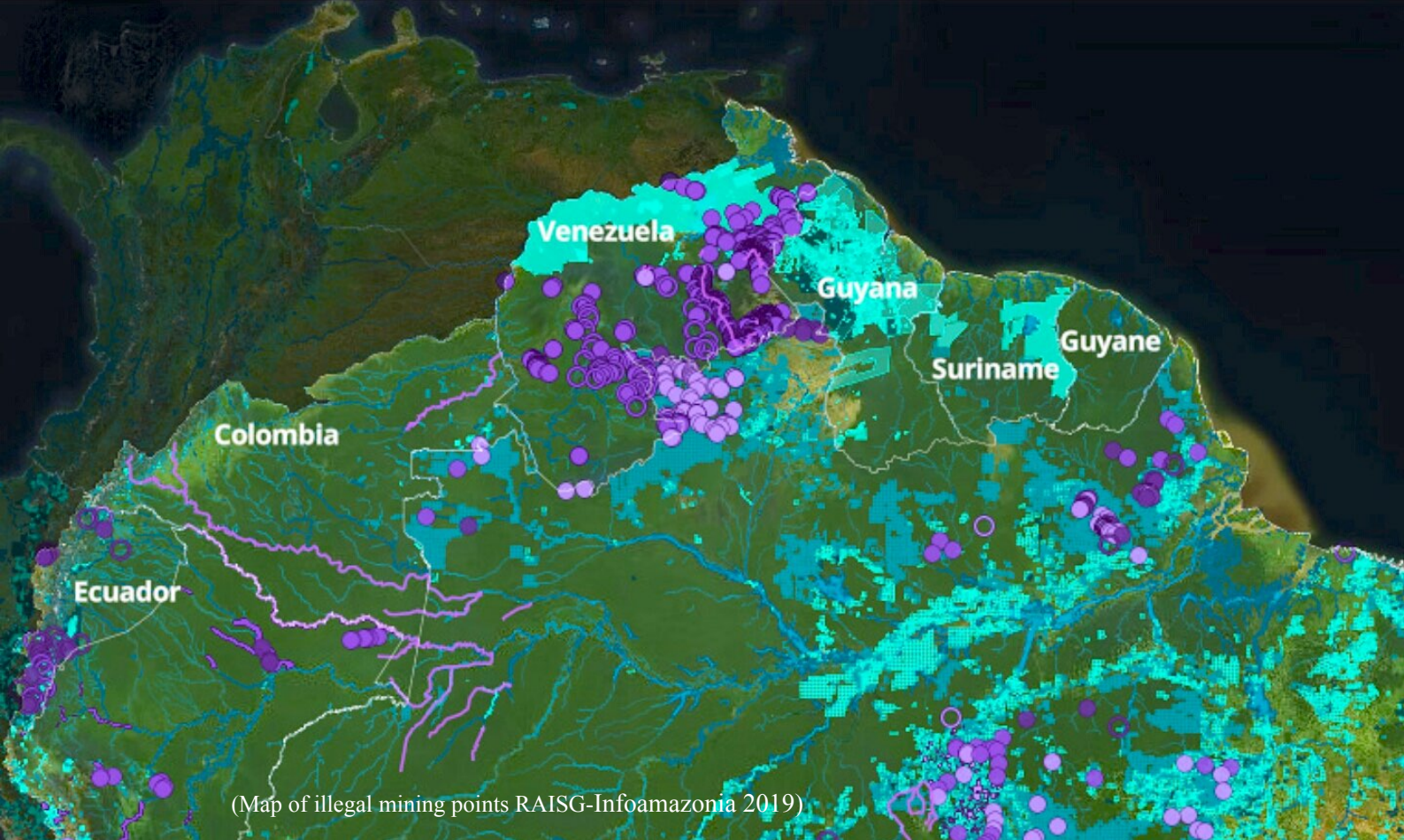


mineral extraction. The national parks such as Yapacana, have suffered from a massive loss of biodiversity, soil degradation and changes in the natural cycles of ecosystems. The indigenous population, victimized by this ecocide perpetrated by the outside power-players, has raised its voices in protest. The indigenous people decried the forced displacement of their entire communities from their lands. They also spoke about how the increase in respiratory diseases, malaria, measles, alcoholism, sexually transmitted diseases, prostitution, school dropout have wreaked havoc on their communities.

Furthermore, the indigenous leaders denounced the presence of irregular armed groups and described how they have disrupted the ecological and social dimensions of life in large areas of the Venezuelan Amazon.

The ORPIA (the Regional Organization of Indigenous Peoples of the Amazon), emphasizes that since 2013 it has have made various condemnations of the changes in the mining policy of the Venezuelan State framed in its project called “the Mineral Arc of Orinoco” or Strategic Development Sphere of the Mineral Ark of the Orinoco, where explore and exploit the minerals in Guyana, south of Bolivar State. Therefore, ORPIA denounces:





- ▶ Violation of the Constitution in its different articles.
- ▶ The fact that the prior public consultation process has not been carried out in a free and informed way as stipulated by Article 120 of Venezuela's Constitution.
- ▶ Failure to comply with Article 127 of the Constitution, which mandates a prior Environmental Impact Studies.
- ▶ Non-compliance with Article 117 of the Constitution, that requires the study and effective process of demarcation of indigenous habitats and lands.

Just as the Venezuelan state is being negatively affected by all the above so are the people in the areas such as Parguaza where communities have been displaced from their native land. That in turn, exacerbates people's poverty and deprives them of their traditional, subsistence way of life. The environmental damage inflicted on Venezuela has been so severe that it is unquantifiable, with the affected area changing from year to year. What is verifiable is that small-scale extractive projects are being turned at an incredible speed into vast areas of ecological devastation.

Another repeated, public condemnation has been made in reference to the area known as Plateado Valley. Located between the States Mérida and Táchira, it occupies part of the municipalities Ribas Dávila Guaraque, Uribante and Jáuregui. These lands have been used for livestock and high-altitude agricultural cultivation. Now, the local inhabitants protest against the valley is being laid waste by all kind of mechanical equipment used in the mining projects to exploit coltan and silver. The consequences are extreme. The headwaters of rivers such as the Mocotíes and the important arms of Uribante and Escalante rivers are affected. They make up the main hydrological system of the Andean region of the country. The environmental impacts extend to the Mocotíes Valley where, indiscriminately, all the green area is being eradicated, generating another ecological disaster in the country.

**Jessica Sánchez León, OFS**  
JPIC Delegate  
Maracaibo Convent, Venezuela





## Franciscan Call 4 Peace

Warm greetings for Peace and Good!

Eight hundred years ago, Francis of Assisi and Sultan Al-Kamil of Egypt met. Francis went to the holy land and in a strong gesture of dialogue, he arrived in Egypt for a very special meeting.

Two strangers met in peace, with one breath and heartbeat before God. One was and remained Christian, the other was and remained Muslim. The meeting had a profound effect, particularly on Saint Francis.

He had felt a relationship of faith with a brother and was impressed by their call to prayer that sounded through the city and region. Shortly thereafter he wrote a letter to the city administrators and the custodians, to also make a call for prayer.

On Friday October 4, 2019 at 2.00 pm we would like to sound the bells worldwide.

On this feast day, the anniversary of the death of Francis of Assisi,  
at the time of Friday prayer,  
to make Francis' longing come true  
to remember that important meeting between Francis and the Sultan,  
to pray together for peace in solidarity with our Muslim brothers & sisters.

We also invite everyone to go literally to "the other" in the footsteps of saint Francis, in fraternity. Visit your neighbor of different faith, meet the imam of the local mosque, ...

We hope that we can count on your support to help carry this initiative, to have your bell(s), ... ring in your towers, belfries, carillon, churches, communities, institutions – a call or another sign – on Friday 4 October 2019 at 14.00 hrs. to give a hopeful sign of prayer, peace and reconciliation among all people of goodwill throughout the world.

This peace call is initiated by the Franciscan family in Belgium and the Netherlands and is supported by the Belgian Bishops' Conference, *Pax Christi Vlaanderen* and *Orbit vzw*.

### FranciscanCall4Peace online

Website [franciscancall4peace.org](http://franciscancall4peace.org)

Facebook [franciscancall4peace](https://www.facebook.com/franciscancall4peace)

Contact

General e-mail: [info@franciscancall4peace.org](mailto:info@franciscancall4peace.org)



# Franciscans in Chile take part in "Inter-religious and Spiritual Alliance for Climate Agreement"



On July 21, various religious and spiritual communities have gathered together at the headquarters of the Spiritual Institution *Brahma Kumaris* in Santiago, Chile. They decided to ally to commit themselves to the care of the Earth and have reached an agreement. The movement for an inter-religious alliance has begun in the context of the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP25), which will be held in Chile in December.

The objective of this Alliance, as expressed in the agreement, is to promote a systemic, cultural and spiritual change that should be translated into economic and political transformations in the face of the current climate crisis. By doing so, the adherent 21 organizations have expressed their willingness to put themselves at the service of the community and facilitate links that can generate public-political influence from their respective identities.



One of the main activities of this Alliance for Climate will be the installation of a common tent. Various religious celebrations, meditations and rituals for the care of the Earth will take place in the tent. This action will go on day and night during COP25.

It was 21 religious and spiritual communities that have signed the agreement. The executive committee of the Alliance has expressed their willingness for other organizations and communities to join in this agreement in the coming weeks so that it could become as broad and transversal as possible. They have welcomed other religious and spiritual organizations from abroad, which participate in COP25, to support the initiative.



**Inter-religious and Spiritual Climate Alliance  
Chile**

Contact: [aieccchilecop25@gmail.com](mailto:aieccchilecop25@gmail.com)



# International days – October / December, 2019

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| October 2   | International Day of Non-Violence  |
| October 10  | World Food Day   |
| October 17  | International Day of the Eradication of Poverty  |
| October 27  | The Spirit of Assisi Day   |
| November 6  | International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict |
| November 18 | World Day of the Poor  |
| November 25 | International Day for Elimination of Violence against Women                                    |
| December 2  | International Day for the Abolition of Slavery   |
| December 5  | World Soil Day   |

## Agenda

**October 4** Solemnity of St. Francis in the garden of the Vatican



[pax@ofm.org](mailto:pax@ofm.org)

**October 5** Voices of the Amazon, Seminar at the Auditorium of Antonianum



[www.facebook.com/ofmjp Pic](https://www.facebook.com/ofmjp Pic)

**October 6** Inauguration mass of the Amazon Synod

**October 14 – 27** Inter-religious Dialogue Course, Istanbul

**November 11** Webinar, “Mining and Amazon”

**November 22** Meeting with the General Visitors



[www.ofmjp Pic.org](http://www.ofmjp Pic.org)

**December 2 – 13** Participation in COP25



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