

Ordo Franciscanus Sæcularis
National Fraternity of Canada
National Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Action Plan
Adopted by Resolution 2012, National Chapter of Elections,
Châteauguay, Québec, 25 May 2012

“And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:8)
“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.” (Mathew 5:9)
“The Lord God took man and settled him in the garden of Eden
to cultivate and take care of it” (Genesis 2:15)

1. The Basis of Franciscan JPIC concern and action

1.1. The basis of Franciscan justice, peace and integrity of creation (JPIC) concern and action is the Bible, Catholic Social Doctrine/Teaching, Franciscan Tradition and Spirituality, the OFS Rule and General Constitutions, reading the “signs of the times” and the Catholic Action model of “See, Judge, Act.” Franciscan values for 800 years have been: poverty, simplicity, humility, justice, peace, joy in God, universal brotherhood and kinship with creation.

2. An OFS Presence in the World

- 2.1. In March 2003, the International Council of the OFS (CIOFS) established the Presence in the World Commission (PIWC) to respond to the Conclusions of the 2002 General Chapter regarding the presence of Secular Franciscans in the world. This presence includes activity in the field of JPIC.
- 2.2. The OFS General Chapter, 2008 in its’ conclusions stated: “For too long, the Order has not fully entered into its active mission in the world. The moment has come, and it can no longer be deferred, to “enter the city,” to exercise with determination and full visibility its own responsibilities to witness, and to promote justice, peace, human rights and the integrity of creation”.
- 2.3. *Parrhesia* means to speak clearly and boldly without fear or hesitation. Benedetto Lino, ofs, (a CIOFS Presidency Councillor) wrote this about *parrhesia* recently: “Today, more than ever, we should ask the Lord for the grace of *parrhesia*, for each one of us, for the whole SFO [*sic*] and for our churches.”
- 2.4. *Parrhesia* applies to all JPIC activity and especially to Franciscan Voice Canada (see below n. 8).

3. OFS Rule and General Constitutions

- 3.1. The OFS Rule (nn.13-19) and the OFS General Constitutions (“For a Just and Fraternal Society” nn. 18-23) form the OFS basis of the JPIC “holy activity” mentioned by Our Seraphic Father Francis (Later Adm & Exhort 51-53).
- 3.2. The Rule and General Constitutions are in turn grounded on the basic principles of Catholic Social Doctrine e.g. human dignity; the common good; the preferential option for the poor; agápe/caritas/love and peace; solidarity; and the sacramentality, integrity and stewardship of creation.

4. Franciscan Tradition and Spirituality

Note: Paragraph 4 is a synthesis by the National JPIC Animator and is based on a variety of sources including the OFS rule and General Constitutions, the Guidelines for the Animation of JPIC (2009, OFM Office for JPIC); a decade of work promoting social justice based on Catholic Social Teaching and Our Lady of the Angels Regional Fraternity JPIC Action Plan 2008, and was inspired greatly by, and is a fruit of, the JPIC Animator's course at the Pontifical University Antonianum (2011).

4.1. Franciscan tradition and spirituality leads us to put life before profit, to struggle for justice and peace, and to care for creation. This is at the heart of our Franciscan charism, experience and holy activity. Francis and Clare refused to be bound by the values of a merchant society based on profit at the cost of the exploitation and marginalisation of the poor. Following the poor Jesus, they lead an alternative counter-cultural life based on solidarity with the lepers, the poor and the marginalised (the *minores*) and also with nature, a gift from God, with whom we have kinship as the Canticle of the Creatures and OFS Rule attest. We can say that Francis and Clare responded to the “Cry of the earth and Cry of the poor” and that they also discerned a “cry for peace” and sought right relationships and were peacemakers.

4.2. Still today the enemies of justice, peace and good stewardship of creation are greed, lust for power and ignorance. To emulate Francis and Clare currently requires concrete choices and action in a commercially globalised world. Implementation of this JPIC Action Plan will lead to contemporary ways in which we can follow Francis and Clare in a practical and concrete manner.

4.3. The OFS, in order to follow the Rule, has a prophetic mission to make it a priority in its' fraternal and individuals' lives to raise their own and others' awareness of, and act for, JPIC.

4.4. Our JPIC plans and actions should reflect our belief that in addressing systemic injustice, which is the root cause of so much poverty and pain in our world, we will bring hope and positive change into the lives of those who suffer most.

4.5. We need to understand the link between faith, charity, justice and stewardship; to develop the habit of analysis of political, social and economic issues (see, judge and act) in light of the social doctrine of the church in order to arrive at clear conclusions; and to take pertinent action ourselves and in collaboration with partner organizations and especially to advocate for the voiceless and un-empowered (the *minores*).

5. A JPIC Structure for the OFS National Fraternity of Canada

5.1. A National JPIC Commission, chaired by the National JPIC Animator, (will ideally) (is to) be composed of French and English Sector Sub-Commissions composed of their Sector Regional JPIC Directors. The task of each Sub-Commission is, based on this National JPIC Action Plan, to prepare or adopt and adapt JPIC Action Plans and recommend resources and materials specifically for the local fraternities of its sector.

5.2. The National Council requests:

1. each Regional Fraternity to select a JPIC Director who will work with either the French Sector or English Sector JPIC Sub-Commission, (or both), and promote and animate JPIC in their Regional Fraternity.

2. each Local Fraternity to select a JPIC Councillor who will work with their Regional JPIC Director and promote and animate JPIC in their Local Fraternity.
3. each Local Fraternity to consider the French Sector or English Sector JPIC plan and adopt for formation and action one or more key issues (outlined below in 6.2) which affect justice, peace or creation.
4. all Fraternities to:
 - a. consider the whole Rule (anew) from the perspective of JPIC, and
 - b. integrate OFS Rule (nn 13-19) and the OFS General Constitutions (art 18-23) in (all) fraternity meetings, workshops, retreats and daily life.

6. Key Issues for 2012-2015

6.1. The National JPIC Commission has reviewed the issues of concern to the other branches of the Franciscan family (e.g. the OFM JPIC office; Franciscans International (FI); Franciscan Custody of the Holy Land; the Francophone Franciscan Family of Canada's Service intercommunautaire d'animation franciscaine (SIAF). In addition, concerns of the Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace (CCODP); The Catholic Near East Welfare Association (CNEWA); and the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) were considered. Since their discernment involved reading the signs of the times it is no surprise that there is much convergence of concern.

6.2. As a result, and because it is impossible to address every issue that arises, the primary priorities it is suggested the National Fraternity should focus on are:

1. Extreme poverty and the excluded
2. The ethical use of resources: especially water, mining and fair trade
3. Food: security and sovereignty
4. Human Trafficking and Contemporary Forms of Slavery
5. Care of Creation: particularly one or more of the following: Pollution; Climate Change; the Alberta Oil Sands and/or Hydraulic fracturing (fracking)
6. Peace, conflict resolution and active non-violence
7. Treatment of Refugees, Internally Displaced Persons and Migrants
8. Solidarity with, and support for, Christians in countries threatened by hostile cultures
9. Current issues regarding Aboriginal Peoples in Canada
10. Other topics at the discretion of the fraternities.

7. The Process – See, Judge, Act

7.1. The process for dealing with these issues is to take information, together with Catholic Social Doctrine/Teaching and Franciscan Tradition and spirituality, as the basis for continuing formation which must then lead to action. "See, judge, act" (to which we add "evaluate and celebrate"), is the Catholic Action model favoured by many Catholic organisations including the OFM JPIC Office (e.g. see/google their document "In defense of Sister Water").

7.2. In summary, Local Fraternities are asked to consider this plan and these issues at a General Meeting. The fraternities are asked to decide which issue(s) their Fraternity will address to the extent that they are able and to select (elect or appoint) a JPIC Councillor to promote and animate JPIC in their Fraternity.

7.3. Once the issues have been selected by a Fraternity, reference to the appendices of the JPIC Action Plan prepared by the relevant French or English Sector JPIC Sub-Commission will indicate resources for formation and action.

8. Franciscan Voice Canada

8.1. Conclusions from the XIII General Chapter of the OFS October 22-29, 2011:

“Since "the lay faithful are never to relinquish their participation in ‘politics’" (*Christifideles Laici*, 42), it is necessary to underline the importance of political education for citizen advocacy, based on the social doctrine of the Church. ... Franciscans must be agents of social transformation.”

8.2 Advocacy is a major tool of JPIC action. Promotion and advocacy of values of Franciscan spirituality highlighted in the JPIC issues above can be effectively achieved through the medium of Franciscan Voice Canada (FVC).

8.3. The National Fraternity Council (12 November 2011) mandated that a simple model of this type of advocacy network be encouraged for adoption. Following (n. 8.4) is a recommended mode of operation requiring minimal time, staff and expense.

8.4. Each Local Fraternity considers the National JPIC Action plan and decides which JPIC key issues it will adopt for action. The Local Fraternity JPIC Councillor will join the email list of selected organisations active in the chosen field(s) either from a list of organisations disseminated by the French or English Sector JPIC Sub-Commission or of its own choosing and thus obtain the information for actions as they become available. The Local Fraternity then considers whether to participate in these organisations’ actions after on-going formation if deemed necessary.

8.5. This model (has the ability to) involve(s) members (with)(through) email and can also be re-worked into fraternity bulletin mail-outs. Thus it can involve all fraternity members including isolated and shut-in members and those unable to attend a particular meeting.

8.6. The Local Fraternity is encouraged to consider inviting participation in their FVC network actions by other Franciscans, Catholics and people of other faiths or no-faith as a possible way of evangelisation.

9. Reporting

9.1. Local Fraternity JPIC Councillors are asked to keep their Regional JPIC Director informed of which issues and organisations the Local Fraternity has chosen to work on and with.

9.2. Likewise the Regional JPIC Director is asked to keep the National JPIC Animator informed.

9.3. The National Fraternity is required to complete the PIWC “Presence in the World” Survey and can only do so based on the information it receives from the Regional Fraternities.

9.4. The present National JPIC Animator, Andrew Conradi, ofs, can be contacted by email at apconradi@telus.net or telephone 604-522-8417.

10. Some closing thoughts

10.1. "Charity will never be true charity unless it takes justice into account ... Let no one attempt with small gifts of charity to exempt themselves from the great duties imposed by justice." (Pius XI, 1937, *Divini Redemptoris*, n. 49)

10.2. "As far as the Church is concerned, the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action." (Bl John Paul II, 1991, *Centesimus Annus*, n. 57)

10.3. "If you want peace, struggle for justice." (Paul VI, 1 Jan 1972)

10.4. "If you want to cultivate peace, protect creation." (Benedict XVI, 1 Jan 2010)

10.5. "The cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are one." (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, 4 Oct 2003)

10.6. "In order to be true peacemakers, we must educate ourselves in compassion, solidarity, working together, fraternity, in being active within the community. Peace for all is the fruit of justice for all, and no one can shirk this essential task of promoting justice," (Benedict XVI, 1 Jan 2012)

11. A Final Exhortation

11.1. As Francis said, and would undoubtedly say again today (but today he would also include sisters): "Let us begin, brothers, ... for up to now we have made little or no progress." (1 C, n.103)