



Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Commission Update

by Kent Ferris, OFS

The National Fraternity Chapter in Denver was a great Chapter! We were blessed to have our sister Janice Benton, OFS, Executive Director of the National Catholic Partnership on Disability, join us to receive the 2012 JPIC Award and provide us with the impetus for the NAFRA Statement addressed to the presidential candidates on the dignity of human life and justice. During 2013 the JPIC Commission will provide a series of monthly updates broadening our understanding of and appreciation for the dignity of life and justice.

The commission continues to work on projects including the development of a Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission webpage that will have a link on the NAFRA website. Early preparations for a second JPIC gathering slated for July 2013 will also be addressed.

We continue to strengthen our relationship with the Franciscan Action Network (FAN). FAN is our means of staying connected with JPIC entities in the other orders in our Franciscan family. FAN also strengthens our efforts, ranging from care for creation to immigration and basic civility in public discourse. FAN also sponsored a retreat, "The Conversion to Right Relationship," with Father Richard Rohr, OFM, which some Secular Franciscans were able to attend. How blessed we are to benefit from both JPIC and FAN gatherings. The means of building community within the Order is multiplied by these opportunities!

The JPIC Commission will benefit from the volunteer efforts of a small group of regional ministers and National Executive Council representation who will review and strengthen the nomination and selection process for the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Award.

Finally, as Father Pio Jackson, OFM, said during the 2012 JPIC Rally at our Lady of the Snows Retreat Center, "JPIC is part of our Franciscan DNA." I understand this to mean that it is less about being satisfied that we have a regional fraternity JPIC animator, and more about understanding that just as we are to go from Gospel to Life and Life to Gospel, we are to "praise and glorify him forever!" in all the ways we show respect for the dignity of human life through justice, peace and the integrity of creation. We accomplish this, stay true to this obligation, by developing relationships and in turn broadening them to create a sense of community and fraternity.

Let me conclude by noting from Chapter 2, Section 9 of our Rule, that St. Francis declared the Virgin Mary as the protectress and advocate of his family. Maybe it would be appropriate to review this prayer from Blessed Pope John Paul II who addressed this prayer for peace to "Mary, the Light of Hope":

Immaculate Heart of Mary, help us to conquer the menace of evil, which so easily takes root in the hearts of the people today, and whose immeasurable effects already weigh down upon our modern world and seem to block the paths toward the future.

From famine and war, deliver us. From nuclear war, from incalculable self-destruction, from every kind of war, deliver us. From sins against human life from its very beginning, deliver us. From hatred and from the demeaning of the dignity of the children of God, deliver us. From every kind of injustice in the life of society, both national and international, deliver us. From readiness to trample on the commandments of God, deliver us. From attempts to stifle in human hearts the very truth of God, deliver us. From the loss of awareness of good and evil, deliver us. From sins against the Holy Spirit, deliver us.

Accept, O Mother of Christ, this cry laden with sufferings of all individual human beings, laden with the sufferings of whole societies. Help us with the power of the Holy Spirit to conquer all sin: individual sin and the "sin of the world," sin in all its manifestations.

Let there be revealed once more in the history of the world the infinite saving power of redemption: the power of merciful love. May it put a stop to evil. May it transform consciences. May your Immaculate Heart reveal for all the light of hope. Amen.

(For a copy of the JPIC Commission's Annual Report email Kent Ferris at ferris@davenportdiocese.org)