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

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On the 21st September, at San Damiano, I participated in the celebration of the centenary of the Cantic of the Creatures. Standing before the Crucifix that spoke to Francis, I recalled that “the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor are inseparable.” As I spoke those words, my heart was heavy thinking of Gaza, Ukraine, and the many places where today only the cry of pain resounds.

Francis composed the Cantic in the autumn of 1225, blind and ill, yet capable of transforming his frailty into universal praise. Today, faced with images of war that parade across our screens, we risk instead a blindness of the heart, a numbness to evil, a complicit silence. We seem to stand mute before logics of extermination that should make us cry out in horror.

“Praised be you, my Lord, for those who forgive for love of you” - this verse of the Cantic, added by Francis during a conflict between the bishop and the mayor of Assisi, sounds today like a provocation. Forgiveness is not an escape from reality, but recognition that only through reconciliation can we find pathways to integral peace.

But how can we speak of forgiveness while too many children die under bombs? How can we sing “Brother Sun, Sister Moon” while the earth is bloodstained and witnesses so many people fleeing their homeland? Perhaps here lies the hardest lesson the Lord offers us: conversion cannot be merely personal, it must become social, political, prophetic.

The encyclical *Laudato Si'* has taught us that everything is connected. Today's wars are not separate from the ecological crisis, from inequality, from the economy that kills. The logic that destroys our common home is the same that destroys peoples. Like the ancient prophets, we are called to denounce “those who trample upon the poor,” even when the poor is an entire people under siege.

The shame we feel in the face of our silence must become a starting point, not a destination. Francis saw his experience of frailty transformed into the beginning of conversion and compassion. We can transform our helpless pain into active witness, into words that break silence, into gestures that sow reconciliation.

The Canticum teaches us a “grammar of relationships”: everything is brother, everything is sister. Even those we consider enemies today. This is not naivety, but Gospel radicalism that alone can break the logics of death.

San Damiano sends us back into the world with the mandate to “repair our common home.” We cannot do this while ignoring the wounds that war inflicts on this home. The peace that Francis sang is not the absence of conflict, but the presence of justice. In fact, justice today demands that we do not remain silent, that we do not look the other way, that we become seeds of peace and hope even when all seems lost.

The Lord is teaching us that our time calls for the same boldness as Francis: to transform suffering into praise, pain into prophecy, silence into words that liberate. *Laudato si’, mi’ Signore*-Praised be, O my Lord- even through the trial that purifies and converts us.

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM

Minister general



CELEBRATION OF THE CANTICLE 2025

On the 21st September, 2025, the 61st “Celebration of the Canticle” took place in the Sanctuary of San Damiano, a particularly significant edition because it was within the framework of the **VIII Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures**.

The event brought together the faithful, friars and pilgrims to give thanks with Francis of Assisi to the Lord through the praise of creatures, in the same Church of San Damiano where the Saint composed

the verses in the winter between 1224 and 1225. As the Letter for the Eighth Centenary recalls, “the Canticle is a synthesis of the way in which Francis saw reality, and together we still want to sing it with joy of spirit!”

At the beginning of the celebration, a passage from the Franciscan Sources on the composition of the Canticle, read in the Garden of Canticle, where 800 years ago St. Francis wrote those verses. After the reading, the procession left for the atrium of the church of San Damiano, where Mass was celebrated under a bright sun that welcomed all the participants.



The Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, OFM, presided over the Eucharistic celebration. During his homily, Br. Massimo recalled the wisdom and timeliness of the Cantic of the Creatures: “The Cantic of St. Francis was born from this prophetic intuition... true praise to the Creator cannot ignore listening to the suffering of the most fragile”. “Here then the Cantic of the Creatures teaches us... the grammar of relationships... Francis sees a network between creatures who come from God and return to Him.” “The Cantic of the Creatures, born from the heart of Francis here in San Damiano 800 years ago, is more relevant than ever... everything is called to reconciliation.”

At the end of Mass, the handover took place between the Guardian of San Damiano, Br. Mauro Botti, referent of the Centenary of the Cantic, and the Guardian of the Porziuncola, Br. Massimo Travascio, referent of the Centenary of the Easter of St. Francis: Br. Mauro gave Br. Massimo the parchment containing the text of the Praises to God Most High and the Cantic of the Creatures, which he had received in turn at La Verna in the autumn of 2023, at the end of the Centenary of the Stigmata.

Afterwards, the participants were able to visit the exhibition “The cry of the creatures” at the Sanctuary of San Damiano: an exhibition dedicated to the work of Gino Covili, who from the 5th July to the 12th October presents the pictorial cycle inspired by the Cantic of the Creatures and offers a path of meditation on the link between the human being, creation and God the Creator.

Throughout the day, moments of prayer, meditation and song were proposed, emphasising how Francis’s praise embraces the whole of creation and invites each person to live reconciliation with God, with their sisters and brothers and with creation.

The commemorative Letter reminds us that “everything is connected, everything is related: everything is Trinitarian” and invites us to meditate also on the deepest passage of the Cantic: “Praised be you, my Lord, through our sister bodily death”.

An opportunity for faith and reconciliation that relaunched the ever-present message of universal fraternity and care for our common home.

To deepen the spiritual and pastoral significance of the event, the Letter for the VIII Centenary of the Cantic of the Creatures is available.

OFM JPIC



NEW MEMBER OF THE JPIC ANIMATION COMMITTEE: A COMMITMENT TO INTEGRAL ECOLOGY AND LAUDATO SI'



During the Tempore Forte in July 2025, the OFM Minister General, Fr. Massimo Fusarelli, together with the General Definitory, appointed Fr. Cordian Szwarc, OFM, as the new member of the Animation Committee (AC) of the General Office for Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). This appointment will be for a four-year term.

The mission of the JPIC Animation Committee is to accompany and collaborate in the implementation of projects related to social justice, peace, and care for creation,

following the directives issued by the OFM General Chapter and adopted by the International JPIC Council, in which the AC plays an active role.

The career of Fr. Cordian Szwarc, OFM

Fr. Cordian belongs to the Province of St. Francis of Assisi in Poland. He currently serves as JPIC animator for both his Province and the North Slavic Conference. In recent years, he has worked intensively in Poland alongside the local Church and consecrated life to promote the encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the concept of integral ecology.



Amongst his most notable initiatives are:

- The dissemination of Laudato Si' in Polish,
- The creation and strengthening of ecclesial networks,
- The promotion of cultural and artistic engagement inspired by Franciscan spirituality and integral ecology.



JPIC Animation Committee 2025–2029

With the addition of Fr. Cordian Szwarc, the JPIC Animation Committee is now composed of:

*Mary Wangari Sebastian LSSJ,
Tomás Insua,
Jean Eric Mutabazi, OFM,
Taucen Girsang, OFM,
Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM,
and now also Fr. Cordian Szwarc, OFM.*

This international team will continue working to animate the Franciscan family and the Church in the mission of promoting justice, peace, and care for creation, in line with the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi and the inspiration of Laudato Si'.

OFM JPIC



FRANCISCANS INTERNATIONAL PRESENTS ITS 2025 ANNUAL REPORT: THE FRANCISCAN VOICE AT THE UN

The General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC OFM) is pleased to share the new Annual Report by Franciscans International (FI), a Franciscan NGO with consultative status at the United Nations, committed to human rights and socio-environmental justice.

The 2025 Annual Report highlights FI's key achievements, challenges and advocacy pathways to defend human dignity, protect vulnerable communities and care for our common home — fully aligned with Franciscan spirituality and the JPIC mission.

It offers the Franciscan Family, partners and Church institutions a transparent resource for formation and advocacy, linking grassroots work with international engagement.

The document is available in three languages:
English, Spanish, Italiano

JPIC OFM encourages fraternities, parishes, schools and pastoral agents to use and share this resource in their formation and communication channels.

OFM JPIC

INTERNATIONAL DAYS OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2025

2 October — International Day of Non-Violence

16 October — World Food Day

17 October — International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

27 October — Day of the Spirit of Assisi

6 November — International Day for Preventing the Exploitation of the Environment in War and Armed Conflict

16 November — World Day of the Poor

25 November — International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women

2 December — International Day for the Abolition of Slavery

5 December — World Soil Day

10 December — Human Rights Day



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**The General Office for Justice,
Peace, and Integrity of Creation**

General Curia – OFM (Order of Friars Minor)