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Who won and who lost in 2025?

A brief Christian and Franciscan assessment

Some win, and others lose, so we were taught. For others, we can all win. Whilst the apparent victory of some and the apparent defeat of others are stated below, the outcome could very well be reversed, and it wouldn't be far from what happened in 2025. The objective of this Christian and Franciscan assessment is to emphasise that when some win, we all lose, and if we let some lose, we all lose, and vice versa.

With the commemoration of the Eighth Centenary of the Canticle of the Creatures, Saint Francis of Assisi won, inviting us once again to build human and cosmic fraternity. The bellicose voices that, waging war, murdered thousands of innocents, sowed hatred, and destroyed God's creation lost.

With the celebration of the Tenth Anniversary of the Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis, whose sudden death moved a large part of the world, won, as did people of goodwill who are living a dynamic of ecological conversion and commitment to caring for our Common Home. Those who profit from the business of violently extracting the bounty of creation in Africa, Asia, and Latin America lost.

The millions of migrants and refugees around the world who maintained hope against all despair and were welcomed and received by Franciscan networks won. The politicians who, with their anti-immigrant narratives and actions, gained electoral advantage by exploiting xenophobic fears amongst their citizens lost.

On the 15th November 2025 in Belém, Brazil, the more than 70,000 people who took to the streets for the Global Climate March to demand a more explicit, more radical commitment from world leaders to address climate change won. The transnational corporations that turned COP30 into a summit that would not affect their economic interests lost.

With the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexisti te*, published on the 4th October, Pope Leo XIV and the poor of this world won, for it reaffirmed that God chooses them, that Christ became poor,

and therefore, the Church is with and for them. Those who enriched themselves through the labour of the poor, creating sinful structures that cause poverty and extreme inequality, lost.

By crossing the Holy Doors in some churches around the world, Christians won by experiencing the meaning of being pilgrims of hope. The self-sufficient, whose only hope and desire is that nothing changes, lost.

With the awards granted for their commitment to integral ecology to Pope Francis, Patriarch Bartholomew, Leonardo Boff, the Laudato Si' Movement, and the Pan-Amazonian Ecclesia Network (REPAM), the Order of Friars Minor was a winner, as it valued the enduring legacy of its founder beyond its borders. The losers were “[t]he attitudes that obstruct the paths to solutions, even among believers, [and] range from denial of the problem to indifference, comfortable resignation, or blind trust in technical solutions” (LS 14).

May God be with us in 2026 so that we may all continue to win.

Fr. Daniel N. Rodríguez Blanco, OFM

Director of the JPIC General Office





JPIC ANIMATION COMMITTEE MEETING 2025: REVIEW, FRANCISCAN NETWORKS, AND 2026 AGENDA

The six members of the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Animation Committee met virtually from the 9th -11th December, 2025, to evaluate the work carried out during the year, outline the agenda for 2026, and strengthen collaboration within the global Franciscan network.

Participants included Fr. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco OFM, Fr. Jean Eric Mutabazi OFM, Fr. Tomás Insua, Fr. Taucen Girsang OFM, Sr. Mary Sebastian LSSJ, and Fr. Cordian Szwarc OFM.



The following individuals participated in the meeting: Fr. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco OFM, Fr. Jean Eric Mutabazi OFM, Fr. Tomás Insua, Fr. Taucen Girsang OFM, Sr. Mary Sebastian LSSJ, and Fr. Cordian Szwarc OFM. The main objective of the meeting was to review the activities carried out by the JPIC General Office during 2025, define strategic priorities for 2026, strengthen regional Franciscan networks, and discuss collaboration with partner organizations. Key topics were also addressed, such as the 2026 International JPIC Course, the two planned continental meetings, and a structural proposal regarding the place of JPIC within the Order.

The meeting began on Tuesday the 9th December, with a prayer led by Fr. Taucen Girsang OFM, followed by the presentation of the new Committee member, Fr. Cordian Szwarc OFM. During the day, participants reviewed the activities of the JPIC General Office in 2025, reflecting on the progress made and areas for improvement. The discussion on the 2026 agenda helped identify priorities and strategic lines of action. Subsequently, Tomás Insua shared updates related to the Feast of Creation, highlighting the perspectives and plans for the coming year.

On Wednesday, the 10th December, following the opening prayer led by Tomás, the session focused on the Franciscan Networks of the Americas, the Mediterranean, Asia, and Africa. Each region presented its main initiatives, challenges, and opportunities. The Committee then discussed collaboration with various partner organizations, including Franciscans International, the Laudato Si' Movement, Pax Christi International, and Roman VI, emphasizing the importance of coordination and joint work.

The final day, Thursday the 11th December, began with a prayer led by Fr. Jean Eric Mutabazi OFM. During this session, the Committee reviewed the initial proposal for the 2026 International JPIC Course and received updated information on the continental meetings in Asia and Africa. A central point of discussion was the proposal to transform the current JPIC General Office into a General Secretariat, which sparked an in-depth exchange on its structure, functions, and mission within the Order.

The meeting concluded with an open session dedicated to other matters, reaffirming the shared commitment to justice, peace, and care for creation, inspired by Franciscan spirituality.

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FRANCISCAN TAKEAWAYS FROM COP30

COP30 came to an end on 22 November, closing two weeks of negotiations for which more than 56.000 delegates descended on Bélem, Brazil. In a year that marks the 10th anniversaries of the Paris Agreement, the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, and the 800-year anniversary of the *Canticle of Creatures*, Franciscans International supported a large delegation to attend the UN Climate Conference. Twenty-four brothers and sisters, representing all branches of the Franciscan family, took part in events inside and outside the COP30 venue, sharing concerns of the grassroots communities they represent to demand stronger climate action.

Despite an ambitious agenda set by the Brazilian presidency, COP30 ultimately fell short of delivering a breakthrough in the struggle against climate change. Billed as the ‘COP of implementation’, negotiators failed to adopt an envisioned roadmap to phase out fossil fuels. Instead, the commitment to transition away from fossil fuels made two years ago at COP28 in Dubai continues to be watered down at the insistence of a coalition of oil-producing countries.

“This is a great disappointment and shows the failure of political leaders to take the climate crisis seriously,” said Budi Tjahjono, FI’s International Advocacy Director. “While it’s encouraging to see that over 80 States are considering their own initiative to phase out fossil fuels, COP30 did not meet the moment. Similarly, while delegates agreed to an urgently needed increase in funding, these political pledges need to be made concrete. However, Belém did make one thing crystal clear: across the globe, people are running out of patience.”

Spurred on by climate-vulnerable nations and civil society, the push for stronger climate action continued. As part of these efforts, FI and the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) launched a new report exploring faith-based perspectives on a Just Transition – one of the key issues being discussed at COP30. Drawing on inputs from communities at the frontlines of the climate crisis, the organizations propose that a Just Transition should not be narrowly approached as a shift to a low-carbon economy, but rather as a structural and systemic transformation to a more equitable, inclusive, and greener society.

Throughout the conference, FI joined several side-events and press briefings to raise the need for such a truly Just Transition and provide recommendations on the way forward to negotiators. This research also built on a previous report on non-economic loss and damage released by FI and LWF during COP29 in Azerbaijan. Utilizing the deep connections of the two organizations in grassroots communities, this paper provides a deeper understanding of climate change-related impacts that cannot be expressed as monetary value, such as the destruction of cultural heritage or the loss of traditional knowledge.

Outside the COP30 venue, civil society organized a range of events to provide a platform to those unable to join the negotiations and to explore alternative solutions to the crisis. Members of the Franciscan delegation joined the Talanoa and Tapiri interfaith dialogues, where they met with representatives from Indigenous, traditional, and marginalized communities.

They also took part in the Peoples’ Summit, a forum led by popular and social movements that brought together 25.000 delegates, who presented their manifesto to COP30 president André Corrêa do Lago. On 15 November, Franciscans were among the 70.000 people who took to the streets of Belém in the largest global demonstration to demand climate justice.

The efforts of our delegation all complemented other initiatives coming from both the Anglican and Catholic Churches. The delegation met with Cardinals Fridolin Ambongo OFMCap, Felipe Neri, and Jaime Spengler OFM, the three signatories of the call to action by the Catholic Bishops’ Conferences of the Global South who demand, among other things, payment of the ecological debt owed by wealthy industrialized nations.

Although COP30 did not meet most of civil society and States’ expectations, the conference in Belém was not an endpoint in itself. Strengthened by the connections built and the knowledge gained, the Franciscan family remains convinced that care for creation is not optional, and will use all avenues at its disposal at the United Nations and at the grassroots to advocate for stronger climate and environmental policies. The road to COP31 starts yesterday.

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A DAY AT FRANCISCAN HOUSE GUAYMAS: HOPE, HUMANITARIAN AID AND FRANCISCAN MISSION IN SONORA

The trip that was supposed to bring Genevieve closer to the U.S. border ended in tragedy. The 27-year-old African woman fell from the train in which she was traveling north and was left lying on the rails. She tried to get to safety, but she did not manage to do so in time: the train lacerated her right foot. It was noon time in the month of September 2024. The pain, indescribable, could only be expressed between screams and tears.

Whilst she struggled to survive, her three traveling companions — with whom she had crossed the Atlantic — continued the route with the weight of leaving her behind. Everything indicates that they achieved their goal.

That same day, very close to the site of the accident, Sandra Martínez and Aracely Llanes, members of Franciscan Home-Casa Franciscana Guaymas, were carrying out their daily work of delivering food and hygiene kits to migrants who pass through the famous Empalme, twelve kilometers from Guaymas, in the State of Sonora. When they learned of the accident, they went immediately: they offered her water, protected her from the inclement sun and transferred her in the mission vehicle to the National Hospital of Guaymas. She remained there for about seven months, recovering from surgery and grief. They saved her life, although they could not save her foot.

Guaymas Franciscan House, founded more than seventy years ago by the Franciscan Province of Santa Barbara (United States), is a key point of support for the neediest population in the region. The Franciscan presence is recognized in the multiple chapels that dot the city, witnesses of decades of pastoral and social work.

Today, the mission has a solid infrastructure to sustain fifteen programmes dedicated to physical and mental health, education, food, humanitarian support for migrants, and accompaniment of people in street situations. Amongst its facilities are medical, dental and psychological offices, a pharmacy, reception rooms, administrative offices, a house for volunteers and another for the Franciscan fraternity, a dining room for children and adults and a school reinforcement center.

From the day of the accident, The Franciscan House-Casa Franciscana took over Genevelle's care. After her prolonged hospital stay, she was accommodated in a room within the facilities.

Today, Genevelle begins her mornings with Mass at 7:30 a.m in the mission's small chapel, together with collaborators and volunteers. In her free time she creates costume jewelry to sell and generate a small income. However, what excites and challenges her the most are the English classes she teaches to the children of the educational project of the Franciscan Home.

The Director of the Guaymas Franciscan Mission, Fr. Martín Ibarra, OFM – Vicar of the Province of Santa Barbara – explains the work of the mission through a large map of the State of Sonora where all the communities served are indicated. He distinguishes two

modes of work: the internal mission, focused on the programs that are developed within the facilities, and the external mission, which involves going out to rural communities to bring those same services. It was precisely the external mission that allowed Sandra and Aracely to meet Genevelle and save her life.

A TRADITION OF SERVICE THAT LEAVES ITS MARK

In the heart of Guaymas stands the Fray Ivor Toneck Conservatory of Music, an elegant white construction that recalls the dedication of this Franciscan friar, who dedicated his life to promoting local youth through music. With effort and vision, Fr. Ivor managed to make the conservatory a space for professional training in musical arts.

PILGRIMS OF HOPE

Genevelle has not given up on her initial dream. She waits patiently for the conditions to be right to try to cross the border. In the meantime, the Franciscan Home-Casa Franciscana is her home, and its team of volunteers and collaborators, her family. Her story is a living testimony of what it means to be a pilgrim of hope.

That same hope that accompanied Aracely Llanes, who died on the 27th November, 2024, just two months after the accident. He spent the penultimate month of his life caring for Genevelle in the hospital. Their dedication remains an act of love and service that profoundly honours the Franciscan charism.

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INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE ARTIST FRIARS OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

General Curia, 3rd-8th November 2025

From 3 to 8 November 2025, the **International Meeting of the Artist Friars of the Order of Friars Minor** was held at the General Curia in Rome, promoted by the General Secretariat for Missions and Evangelisation and the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Office of the Order, with the collaboration of Br. Samuel Abiyu, violinist friar and student of the Pontifical Institute of Sacred Music, and of Br. Antonino Clemenza, professor of philosophy at the Pontifical University Antonianum in Rome.

This year, in celebrating the eighth centenary of the Canticum of the Creatures, the artist friars accepted St. Francis' invitation to look at the world with new eyes, capable of grasping the presence of the invisible in the visible. The Canticum, in fact, continues to be a source of inspiration and creativity, an invitation to recognise the beauty of reality and to return it to the wounded world, with a spirit of fraternity and gratitude.



The call addressed to all the entities of the Order was answered by 14 friars from Austria, Brazil, Colombia, Croatia, India, Italy, Mexico, the Netherlands, Poland, the Holy Land, Venezuela, and Hungary. In the richness of their different artistic expressions, they passed days of formation and sharing on the ministry of being an artist in the Order, of exchange of experiences, of confrontation with Br. Alessandro Brustenghi, tenor friar of the Seraphic Province of St. Francis of Assisi and Sardinia, and with Br. Sidival Fila, visual artist of the Province of St. Bonaventure of Lazio and Abruzzo.

Amongst the most significant moments of the meeting, the dialogue with the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, represented a precious opportunity for sharing and discernment. In an atmosphere of fraternal listening, the Minister offered a reflection on the vocation of the artist friars at the service of the Church and the contemporary world, stimulating a fruitful exchange of ideas and perspectives. Following the



example of St Francis of Assisi, the friars rediscovered how art, lived as a humble service to beauty, becomes a bridge of fraternity: through brushes, chisels, musical notes, words, colours and sounds, it weaves relationships, preserves the evangelical and ecclesial memory, and opens up to shared contemplation.

The artist friars questioned what a Franciscan aesthetic can be in the contemporary world and how art can become a way of evangelisation, when it is lived as a vocation and ministry at the service of the Gospel. During the days of the meeting, the artist friars also experienced a moment of pilgrimage and prayer in the Sanctuary of San Damiano in Assisi, where St. Francis composed the Cantic of the Creatures.

The artist, an inspired man, is called to make God's beauty visible in everyday life.

The friars gathered together dreamed of new common projects, eager to make the Cantic of the Creatures resonate even today, with Francis of Assisi, in the life of the world.

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A DAY AT THE HOME FOR MIGRANTS AT FRONTERA DIGNA: HOPE AND HUMANITY ON THE MEXICO–UNITED STATES BORDER

A Day at the Home for Migrants at Frontera Digna, Piedras Negras, Mexico

“Carol,” a pseudonym to protect her identity, is an eight-year-old Central American girl who, along with her two siblings and her mother, has been staying for four months at the Home for Migrants at Frontera Digna, a migrant shelter in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, run by the Franciscan Sisters of Mary Immaculate. This shelter has become a key point in the current context of migration in Mexico and the complex journey to the United States.

Piedras Negras is the last Mexican city before crossing the Rio Grande, the natural border with the United States. The city is officially connected to the neighbouring country by three international bridges: two for vehicles, with long lines, and one for rail. In this border setting, marked by migration tensions, Frontera Digna offers a space of protection, welcome, and dignity.

Without any formal responsibility, “Carol” has become the shelter’s ambassador. She greets official visitors with a genuine smile—despite missing a few teeth—and with the naturalness that only children can maintain, even in the most difficult circumstances.

At the end of August, the bishops from both sides of the border—known as “Tex-Mex”—met at the Diocese of Piedras Negras to analyse Donald Trump’s anti-immigrant policies and the pastoral response. Amongst their activities, they scheduled a visit to the shelter, where “Carol” was part of the welcoming committee. The host bishop,

His Excellency Alfonso Miranda, recounted on his social media: “Some children wouldn’t let go of the bishops, they didn’t want to let them leave, until finally—without paying a ransom—they were released.” Little Carol was amongst them and even asked for one of the prelates’ pectoral crosses as a souvenir.

Together with Fr. Flavio Chávez, OFM, head of the Franciscan Network for Migrants in Mexico, we paid a fraternal visit to the Franciscan Sisters in Piedras Negras. We bought our tickets to this border city at the Monterrey Bus Terminal. Years earlier that same place had prohibited the sale of tickets to foreigners seeking to reach northern Mexico, causing humanitarian chaos at the terminal and surrounding areas.

During the journey—almost nine hours—we encountered four checkpoints. Fortunately, Sister Isabel Turcios, the Directress of the shelter, was traveling with us. After six years on this journey, she knows how to handle each inspection: first Immigration, then the National Guard twice, and finally the Coahuila State Police. These inspections aim to control the flow of migrants. Until a year ago, there could be six or more, each one involving physical and psychological suffering for those traveling this route.

Sr Carmen López recalled that in the second half of 2024, the shelter received between 800 and 1,200 migrants per day, numbers that dropped drastically after Donald Trump’s return to the presidency. On the day of our visit, they were caring for around eighty people.

The contrast between the two countries is striking. From Piedras Negras, one can see an American golf course, with its immaculate greens, players going about their daily routine, and small white vehicles gliding across the terrain. From that same vantage

point, but looking toward Mexico, one sees migrants walking along the banks of the Rio Grande, trying to reach the so-called “American Dream.” The scene evokes, in reverse, the parable of the rich man and Lazarus from the Gospel of Luke (16:26): “an abyss impossible to cross”.

The third Sister in the community, Sr María Luisa Escruceria, is in charge of the recreational activities for the migrant children, including Carol. At 83 years old, she continues to offer a shining example of service and following Jesus. Her small office stores the materials that help make the children’s stay more bearable. But her best tool is her heart full of tenderness.

Miranda also shared the testimony of a migrant: “Although I was robbed, beaten, and turned away several times, there were many good people who extended a hand to me, and because of them, only because of them, I continue to believe in humanity.”

Carol and her family don’t know for sure what awaits them. They don’t consider returning to their country, nor do they dare to cross the river: the military presence, the constant surveillance, and the gangs that rob migrants make the final stretch dangerous. But, with or without anti-immigrant policies, they keep hope alive. At the Home for Migrants at Frontera Digna (Dignified Border Migrant Shelter), thanks to the tireless work of these three Franciscan sisters—true daughters of St Francis of Assisi—they will find a safe and humane space. They, with their simple and profound faith, allow us to continue believing in humanity.

Carol and her family don’t know for sure what awaits them.

Br. Daniel Rodríguez Blanco, OFM
Director of the JPIC General Office



ASSEMBLY OF THE FRANCISCAN NETWORK FOR PEACE AND INTEGRAL ECOLOGY IN ASIA

Manila, 13-18 October 2025

The first Assembly of the Franciscan Network for Peace and Integral Ecology in Asia was held in Manila, Philippines, from October 13 to 18, 2025. Hosted by the Province of San Pedro Bautista, the event brought together delegates from Franciscan entities and collaborators across Asia. The main objective was to strengthen collaboration among members through reflection, sharing and discernment, as well as planning concrete actions.

The first part, focused on reflection, began with immersive visits, organized by Franciscan Young Advocate, to families of extrajudicial killing victims, urban poor communities marked by deep poverty, and a coastal reclamation zone where fisherfolk lost their livelihoods. These encounters provided participants with real experiences of injustice. Then, Br. Lino Gregorio Redoblado, OFM, shared profound insights through the story of the Butbut Tribe, linking The Cantic of the Creatures with Franciscan identity, social justice, and the call to peace. This reflection was deepened by the testimony of Br. Angel Cortez, OFM, who spoke of living JPIC values not as an optional or task, but as a true Franciscan vocation, passion, and mission. Concluding the session, Br. Derrick Yap, OFM, encouraged participants to carry forward the core ideas of Pope Leo XIV's document *Dilexi Te* (2025) and key reflections from the OFM Chapter of Mats 2025 into new JPIC initiatives that respond to the urgent challenges of today's world.

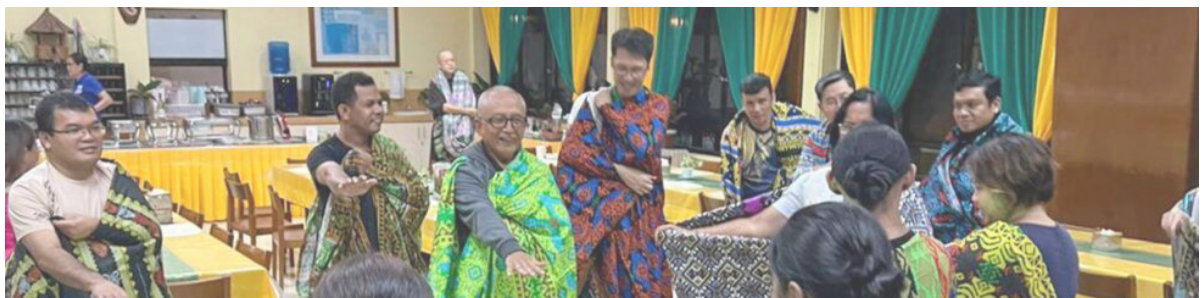


Second part, sharing and discernment, was divided into two sections: promoting peace and integral ecology action.

With the theme of promoting peace, the Franciscan peace project in Nagasaki, Japan, remains a powerful model of healing and reconciliation. Br. Albert Marfil, OFM, shared how Japanese Christians responded to the trauma of the atomic bomb and religious persecution with the enduring message: “Nagasaki and Hiroshima must be the last.” Br. Chris Pine, OFM, deepened the reflection by speaking of inner peace and the power of the heart, drawing on the faith journeys of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. For peaceful coexistence through intercultural dialogue, Br. Francis Lee, OFM, reflected on the phrase “The Lord gave me brothers,” highlighting the importance of embracing difference as a gift. Meanwhile, Br. John Wong, OFM emphasized the ongoing need for mutual respect and encounter in Asia, especially through interreligious dialogue. Br. Blair then introduced the global work of Franciscans International in advocating

for human rights and environmental justice, while Br. Alexandro grounded the discussion with a concrete example, the ongoing advocacy for human rights in West Papua.

The theme of integral ecology was explored through various actions across Asia, beginning with Ms. Maxine’s presentation on the Laudato Si’ Movement in Singapore, Malaysia, and Brunei, where parishes are now guided by clear protocols to live out Pope Francis’ universal call. A powerful example came from Indonesia’s Eco-pastoral project, as shared by Br. Fridus, OFM, where farmers are transitioning away from chemical fertilizers. This grassroots movement, which began in Pagal, is now expanding to other parishes and will soon open to Franciscans across Asia. Sr. Calista FSIC showed that community-building initiatives are also beginning to develop in bolotikon-Kota Kinabalu, Sabah (Malaysia). Br. John of God, OFM, recounted how the friars have been working for community building in Pleiku (Vietnam). Another inspiring example



came from Hong Kong, Br. William Ng, OFM, where the Franciscan charism is being creatively integrated into public schools. Closing the session, Br. Michael Perry, OFM virtually offered an insightful reflection on *Laudato Si'*, reminding participants that this call is not about stewardship, but about kinship—living as brothers and sisters in one common home.

Finally, the participants moved toward concrete planning for the Franciscan Network. Building on the Cebu Resolutions, they reaffirmed three key areas of focus while identifying new directions for action. First, in the area of peacebuilding, participants committed to strengthening connections with Myanmar migrants, exploring the possibility of a peace project to mediate tensions in the Sri Lanka–Bangladesh–Nepal region, organizing ongoing human rights

seminars, and using social media platforms for peace advocacy and training initiatives. Second, in ecological action, they pledged to further develop eco-pastoral projects in the Kampong Tambunan (Malaysia), tree-planting efforts in mountain and river areas in Myanmar, Philippines, Indonesia. They also resolved to open training programs focused on the insertion of Franciscan charism into public schools. Third, recognizing the power of digital communication, they agreed to creatively enhance the website and other media platforms to reach wider and younger audiences.

A clear outcome from the assembly was the shared commitment to organize all initiatives with a realistic, measurable, and time-bound plan to ensure practical and impactful results.

OFM JPIC



FIRST MEETING OF THE BROTHERS WHO WORK WITH INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

Guatemala, October 15-19, 2025

The first meeting of the brothers who work with indigenous populations took place from October 15 to 19 in the Guatemala City, hosted by the Franciscan fraternity of this central American country, in the territory of the Franciscan Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe. The meeting brought together brothers of the three conferences that compose UCLAF and saw the participation of brothers coming from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Peru, Mexico, Guatemala and El Salvador. Present also were the General Secretary for Evangelization, Br. Francisco Gómez, the General Animator of the Missions, Fr. Dennis Tayo, and the General Definitor for Central America, the Caribbean and Mexico, Fr. Joaquín Echeverry. The first two days took place at the Monte San Francisco Retreat House, located in the same complex as the provincial curia.

The first greeting addressed to the participants was that of the President of the Latin American Episcopal Conference (CELAM), Card. Jaime Spengler, OFM, Archbishop of Porto Alegre, Brazil. Speaking by videoconference, he thanked the Order for the particular attention paid to indigenous peoples who, as Pope Leo XIV recalled in his first apostolic exhortation, *Dilexi te*, “are the poorest among the poor”. He also encouraged the participants to maintain their Franciscan joy, characterized by good humor, to make the mission lighter and more exciting.

Br. Francisco Gómez and UCLAF Conference President, Br. Fernando Aparecido dos Santos, also offered words of welcome. Said Br. Fernando, “Let the Light of the Holy Spirit rekindle in your hearts the desire to read the signs of the times, to be present wherever the Spirit sends you”.

The meeting was also led by Fr. Ricardo Falla, a 93 year old Jesuit priest born in Guatemala. Missionary, anthropologist and theologian, he dedicated much of his life to the coexistence, study and evangelization of indigenous populations.

The brothers had the opportunity to share their experiences in a wide variety of services: from parochial work to help in the fight for the rights and conservation of the popular memory, from the defense of territories to the care of the common good, from sharing in the daily life to contributing to the recovery of traditional practices and rites.

On the second day, the Minister General, Br. Massimo Fusarelli, speaking by videocall from Angola, reiterated the 4 axes and 3 lines of action presented by the Commission of New Forms of Life in Latin American that were presented in the last meeting.

Starting from all the realities presented and the provocations raised in the dialogues and debates, the brothers were able to present some conclusions and wishes regarding the promotion of the presence among indigenous peoples, including:

1. The presence and sharing of life with indigenous peoples is a way of evangelizing that is an integral part of the Franciscan identity and ought to be encouraged among the brothers and the fraternities, because the culture of waste, market dominance, the accumulation of wealth and predatory consumption have seriously endangered both the planet and the dignified survival of indigenous peoples, placing them among the poorest among the impoverished.
2. The difficulty of finding brothers with the qualifications and the desire to work with indigenous peoples and to learn their style of life remains a great challenge;



3. Organizing a project for this form of presence and evangelization which involves various levels could guarantee greater security in the conduct and continuity of the processes.
4. It would be necessary to publicize this type of presence in a more open and widespread way, so that the brothers of the entire Order and beyond become aware of it.
5. Dedicating oneself wholeheartedly to learning the language of the people he serves is a crucial task for the brother who offers himself to this service.
6. The brothers selected or those who volunteer for this service must be accompanied and receive careful preparation.
7. The existing presences, above all in Amazonia, urgently need to be strengthened, looking for the necessary means for this purpose, in terms of brothers and other forms of assistance and resources.
8. Working with a complex reality, such as that of indigenous peoples, requires intense networking, involving agents of the Church and beyond. Efforts in this direction are indispensable.
9. An Executive Committee has been appointed, with a representative of each UCLAF conference, which will continue to work on the recommendations of the meeting, in collaboration with the Commission for the New Forms and the General Secretary for the Missions and Evangelization. The brothers nominated to this committee are: Br. Sebastián Robledo (Conf. Brazil e Cono Sud), Br. Antonio Vasquez (Conf. Bolivariana) e Br. Alfonso Barrientos (Conf. Our Lady of Guadalupe).



On October 16, 17 and 18, the participants undertook a pilgrimage and shared a convivial experience in regions with strong indigenous traditions: first in the Chichicastenango region, then they spent two days in Zacualpa, a region of Guatemala where the brothers have been present for over 40 years, a place of intense experiences of martyrdom and also marked by the Mayan culture.

It was an intense experience of immersion in the culture and in the life of these peoples and an experience of how to create an evangelizing presence based on intercultural dialogue and on attentive and committed listening to the reality, joys and sorrows of the people.



On the 18th, returning to Guatemala City, the brothers had the opportunity to visit the Sanctuary of St. Francis the Great, in the municipality of Antigua, where they took part in the Eucharistic celebration. They were welcomed by the local fraternity and received the Certificate of Pilgrims of Hope, since the Sanctuary is also a Jubilee Church, which to date has welcomed about 40,000 pilgrims.

With the contribution of Fr. Gustavo Wayand Medella, OFM
Province of the Immaculate Conception of Brazil

OFM JPIC



JPIC FACILITATORS IN EUROPE CONCLUDE MEETING IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

JPIC Facilitators in Europe Conclude Meeting in Bosnia-Herzegovina to Strengthen Justice, Peace, and Care for Creation on the Continent

Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (October 6th-11th 2025). In the framework of the Eighth Centenary of the Canticle of Creatures, twenty-four Franciscan Friars from various European countries (Germany, Slovakia, Ireland, Hungary, Poland, Spain, Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Morocco, and the Holy Land) gathered in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, to participate in the VIII European Continental Meeting on Justice, Peace, and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC). This meeting seeks to strengthen the service of the Order of Friars Minor in JPIC matters.

For five days, the participants shared the challenges, achievements, and obstacles encountered, as well as significant experiences and some of the good practices in their provinces and custodianships regarding the promotion of these values. The meeting also focused on analyzing and systematizing the actions taken and highlighting the commitment of JPIC facilitators to issues such as migration and refugees, the pursuit of peace, and integral ecology.

This meeting, “in the heart of Bosnia, is not just an administrative act; it is a sign and confirmation that the spirit of St. Francis lives on today, especially where it is most needed: amongst those who suffer injustice, amongst a people yearning for peace, and in a creation that suffers from our negligence,” said Fr. Zdravko Dadić, Minister Provincial of Bosnia-Herzegovina, in his welcoming remarks.

Why is this meeting important?

- **To Strengthen animation:** The friars had the opportunity to meet, share their challenges, and celebrate their achievements, creating a synergy for working together.
- **To Inspire action:** By sharing concrete experiences, the friars inspired each other to continue working with creativity and passion in their organizations.
- **To Align efforts:** The meeting made it possible to align the efforts of the friars throughout Europe, ensuring coordinated and effective work, especially regarding peace.
- **To Celebrate Franciscan spirituality:** In commemorating the eighth centenary of the Canticle of Creatures, the friars reaffirmed their commitment to Franciscan spirituality and their call to follow the intuitions of St. Francis of Assisi, the first JPIC animator, contained in the Canticle of Creatures.

What were the main topics addressed?

- **Migration and Refugees:** The friars discussed the current situation of migration in Europe, noting a worrying increase in rejection of migrants and refugees, but also highlighting the evangelical actions promoted on their behalf by the Franciscan family and ecclesial and civil organizations.
- **Peacebuilding:** The friars learned about the peace process in Bosnia and expressed concern about the wars and conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East, particularly the current situation in Gaza.
- **Integral Ecology:** The participants reflected on the climate and environmental crisis and Europe’s historical responsibility in this regard. At the same time, they rediscovered the beauty and challenge of building up human and global brotherhood as one of the most genuine intuitions of St Francis of Assisi, expressed in his Canticle.

The JPIC facilitators pledged to continue strengthening the Mediterranean Franciscan Network in the three areas of attention: migrants and refugees; dialogue/peace; and youth. At the same time, they agreed to create a Peace Commission to work toward ending violence, conflict resolution, and fostering a culture of peace.

At the end of the meeting, Fr. Daniel N. Rodríguez Blanco, Director of the JPIC General Office, thanked and encouraged the participants to “live with hope this service of animation that we provide to the friars in our organizations, whose main challenge is to help them realize that JPIC is part of our way of life.”

OFM JPIC

INTERNATIONAL DAYS – January / March 2026

January 1 – World Day of Peace

February 8 – International Day of Prayer and Awareness against Human Trafficking

February 20 – World Day of Social Justice

March 3 – World Wildlife Day

March 8 – International Women's Day

March 21 – International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

March 21 – International Day of Forests

March 22 – World Water Day



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

General Curia – OFM (Order of Friars Minor)