

CONTACT

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



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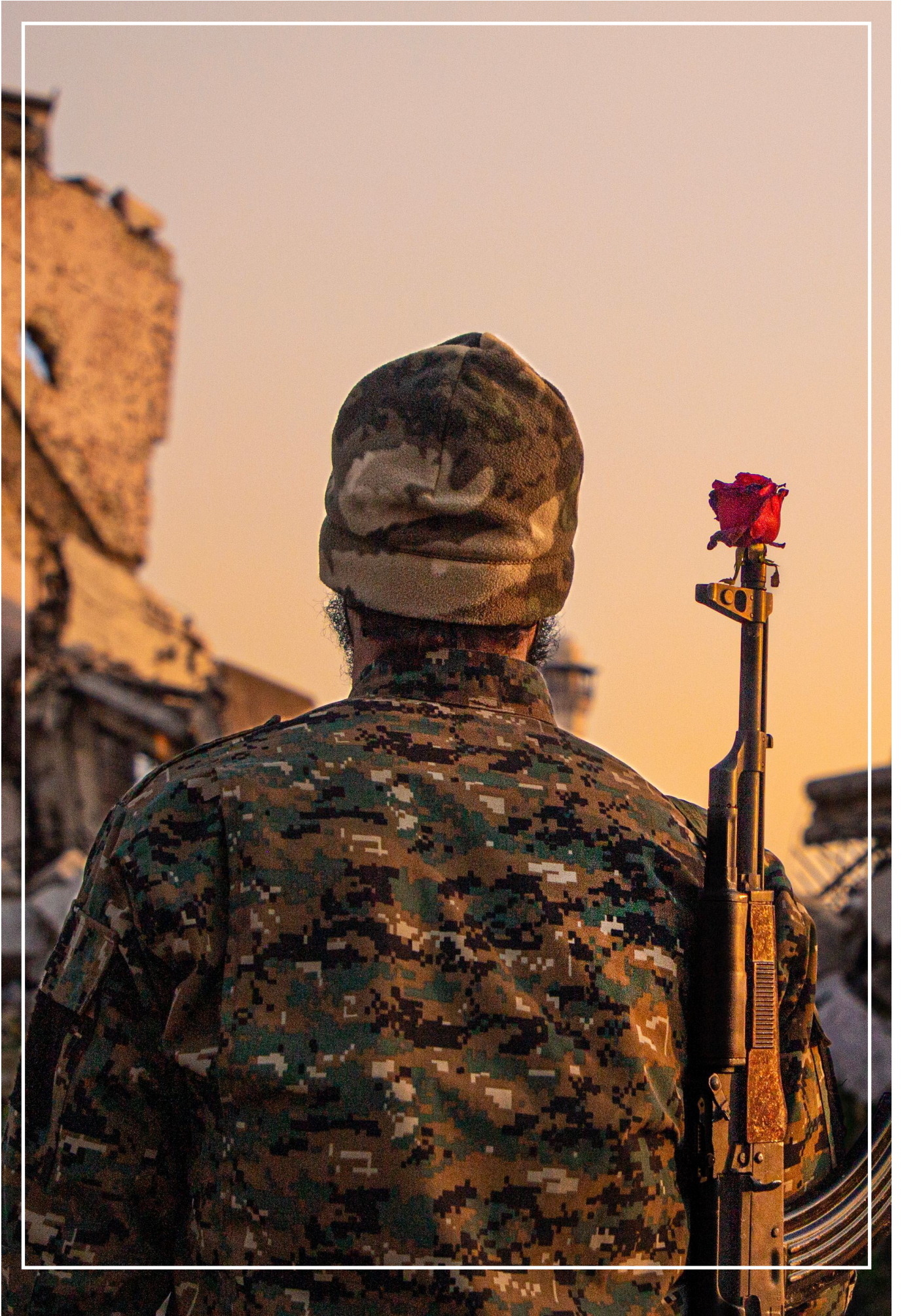
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I WILL NOT BE SILENT

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FOR THE LOVE OF ZION, I WILL NOT BE SILENT

Message of the Minister General of the Friars Minor on the war in the Middle East

For the sake of Zion, I will not be silent, for the sake of Jerusalem I will not give myself peace (Is 62:1).

For a long time, I have been accompanied by a question: how long is it possible to remain silent in the face of the evil that wounds the world?

As a believer, as a Friar Minor and as Minister General of a fraternity that has been present in the Holy Land for centuries, I feel that the time has come to speak out.

In this reflection, on the one hand, the fear of taking a position and doubt emerges; on the other, the evangelical imperative to speak in the name of my brothers and sisters scattered throughout the world, especially for the situations that have been agitating the Middle East for years now, where we Friars Minor are present: from Israel to Palestine, from Jordan and from Lebanon to Syria.

I have been to these countries several times, even in recent years. I have met mothers who mourn their children, families forced to abandon their homes, and people who continue to hope despite everything. I was particularly touched by the situation of young people, who see no future and often just want to escape. Who can blame them?

Recent scenes have filled the gap: in Israel and Gaza, in southern Lebanon as far as Beirut, in the last hours in Taybeh, traditionally identified with the biblical Ephraim to which Jesus withdrew before his passion.

In the face of the thousands upon thousands of children who have died, of the victims of violence that spares no age or condition, of the indiscriminate destruction that lays waste to the land, and of the dispossession of peoples from their lands and their rights, I feel bound to repeat, together with the prophet, that it is precisely because I love — because we love — Jerusalem and all that land, the cradle of many peoples since the earliest of times, that we can no longer remain silent. I take full responsibility for these words, speaking to them with fear and freedom of conscience.

I would like all peoples to see the justice and glory of Jerusalem (Cf. Is 62:2) and call it by a new name, which only God can give and which no human strategy can ever invent.

I would like no one to call Jerusalem "abandoned" or "devastated" her land (cf. Is 62:4). And in the face of the total destruction of homes and people, the question rises strongly and painfully: until when?

How long will power claim to be able to destroy with impunity, and a few will decide who should live and who should die — the little ones, the young people at a rave, the families in Israel, Gaza, the West Bank, Leba-non?

How long will children continue to pay the price of adult wars?

How long will the law of the strongest be considered more important than human law and dignity?

And until when will this also happen in Ukraine and in many other parts of the world, ravaged by violence, oppression, and endless wars, which have now almost become a value in themselves?

And how long will we remain silent, resigned to the banality of evil, afraid of the consequences of a word of denunciation, perhaps only out of the desire to remain quiet and not to take on the pain of the world?

As a pilgrim to the Holy Land many times, I have learned that that land has a unique symbolic force for everyone. We, Christians, are not strangers to it: here our fathers sought the face of God, here Christ walked, and here his Church still bears witness to him in the passage of time. No people are strangers to it: neither the people of the Covenant, nor the disciples of Christ, nor the believers of Islam.

We need, then, watchmen on your walls, O Jerusa-lem, who are silent neither day nor night, remembering the Lord's promises (Cfr. Is 62:6). Nor do we want to give rest to the Lord until he has restored Jerusalem and made it the glory of the earth (cf. Is 62:7).

We do not rest, Lord, as Friars Minor who have continued to remain in that land since we came there in the time of Saint Francis of Assisi. Faithful to the peoples who dwell in that land — dedicated to the care of the holy places and the welcome of pilgrims, to pastoral ministry and education in our schools, to dialogue, and to social and cultural works — we wish to keep walking this path, clearing it of stones and lifting up a banner of peace (cf. Is 62:10).

We cannot and do not want to remain neutral, but to be builders of peace, workers of justice, capable of denouncing evil wherever it comes from.

No political, religious, strategic, or military reason can justify the denial of the inviolable dignity of every human person, without exception.

We choose to stay, even when our presence may no longer seem welcome. Let us choose to remain with the humility of the little ones and with the frankness of those who learned from Jesus of Nazareth to give to God what is God's and to Caesar what is Caesar's.

We do not want to remain neutral either, we who do not live in the Holy Land, but who love it and make it known in the world as a land of peace. Let us learn from so many brothers and sisters who, with the steps of peace and reconciliation, tread lands soaked in the blood of the

little ones, where the arrogance of the few bullies who claim to govern the world resounds, challenging the only power: that of the love of the Almighty and merciful God, who wants the peace and happiness of all his children.

We do not want only to call for peace in general, but to call by name what prevents it and can even make it impossible. We want to put words and gestures of peace, to ³ take a standby remaining close to those who suffer — wherever they are — raising our voices so that the little ones are not victims of the arrogance of the proud.

Brother Francis sent us into the world with a simple word: may the Lord give you peace! We want to continue to shout it and to realise it with our lives and with the proclamation, together with women and men of goodwill.

Today, peace cannot be just a wish. It must become a choice, a responsibility, a stance in favour of the life of every person and against everything that humiliates and destroys them. Let us commit ourselves, each according to his or her own responsibility, to transform this choice into concrete gestures.

In this spirit and with confidence, I entrust these poor words to those who want to listen to them and, once again, to our own lives at the work of peace and justice. In unceasing intercession, I greet everyone in the name of the Lord and with lively fraternity.

Br. Massimo Fusarelli, ofm

Minister General



THE 6TH JPIC ASIA-OCEANIA CONTINENTAL MEETING OPENS IN JAKARTA

Jakarta, Indonesia, June 23, 2026

“For Saint Francis, JPIC was not a program. It was a way of living the Gospel”

With the participation of animators of **Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)** from Franciscan Provinces and Custodies across Asia and Oceania, the **6th JPIC Asia-Oceania Continental Meeting** officially opened in Jakarta. The gathering is being held from June 22 to 27 under the theme “Caring for People, Caring for Creation.”

The meeting brings together Friars Minor from more than a dozen Franciscan Entities across the continent with the aim of strengthening reflection, formation, and collaboration in addressing the challenges of human dignity, peacebuilding, and care for our common home.

The opening day began with the celebration of the Eucharist, presided over by Br. Agustinus Lorensius Nggame, OFM, Minister of the Province of St. Michael the Archangel of Indonesia. In his homily, he emphasized that justice, peace, and the integrity of creation are not merely programs or activities, but a way of life that flows from an encounter with God. “For Saint Francis, JPIC was not a program. It was a way of living the Gospel,” he reminded the participants.



During the opening ceremony, Br. Agustinus also extended an official welcome on behalf of the host Province. “The gathering of brothers from different countries, cultures, and languages is a sign of **fraternity** that transcends borders,” he said, expressing his hope that these days would not only provide an opportunity to share experiences and projects but also deepen Franciscan identity and strengthen the common commitment to justice, peace, and care for creation.

Participants then received a message from Br. Ignacio Ceja, OFM, Vicar General of the Order, who recalled that the promotion of justice, peace, and care for creation is not a secondary activity but an essential dimension of Franciscan evangelical life.

In his address, the Vicar General highlighted that this meeting takes place during a particularly significant moment for the Franciscan Family as it commemorates the eighth centenary of the Transitus of Saint Francis of Assisi. Inspired by the witness of the Poverello of Assisi, he encouraged participants to cultivate a spirituality of contemplation, solidarity with the poor, simplicity of life, and collaboration in response to the challenges faced by the peoples of Asia and Oceania.

During the opening session, Br. Daniel R.

Blanco, OFM, Director of the General JPIC Office, presented the objectives of the meeting and offered a historical overview of the continental gatherings held since 2008. In his presentation, he recalled that, for nearly two decades, JPIC animators in the region have sought to answer a common question: “What does it mean to be Franciscans in Asia and Oceania in the face of the challenges of justice, peace, and creation?”

In the afternoon session, Br. Taucen Girsang, OFM, Vice Director of the General JPIC Office, presented a synthesis of the journey undertaken by the Order in the field of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation. Drawing on the declarations of the International JPIC Councils held in Petropolis (2022) and Assisi (2025), he invited participants to strengthen continental cooperation and renew the Franciscan commitment to vulnerable peoples and to the care of creation. His presentation served as a bridge between the global experiences of the Order and the concrete challenges facing the Asia-Oceania region today.

The first day was also marked by the presentation of reports from the various Franciscan Entities of Asia and Oceania. These reports highlighted the richness and diversity of **JPIC ministries and initiatives** throughout the region. From the defense of Indigenous peoples’ rights and accompaniment of

displaced communities in Papua, to initiatives promoting interreligious dialogue, migrant outreach, peacebuilding, and environmental protection in countries such as Myanmar, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Sri Lanka, India, Japan, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, the Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, Timor-Leste, and Indonesia, participants shared experiences that demonstrate a Franciscan presence deeply rooted in the realities of local communities.

Among the experiences presented, particular attention was given to the eco-pastoral initiatives developed in Timor-Leste and Indonesia, where Franciscan fraternities accompany rural communities through programs in organic agriculture, sustainable livestock farming, and ecological education. These initiatives seek to strengthen local economies, reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers, and **promote** a more harmonious relationship with creation, integrating environmental stewardship with the human development of vulnerable communities.

The reports also revealed a number of common challenges across the region. The

defense of human rights and Indigenous peoples, the accompaniment of migrants and refugees, the consequences of armed conflicts, environmental degradation caused by extractive industries, and the effects of climate change emerged as recurring concerns. At the same time, participants shared signs of hope arising from collaboration with civil society organizations, local communities, other religious traditions, and various sectors of society.

The 6th JPIC Asia-Oceania Continental Meeting will conclude with the approval of a final document outlining the principal challenges, commitments, and orientations for JPIC animation in the region over the coming years.

As the continent faces increasingly complex challenges—from poverty, migration, and **social conflict** to the ecological crisis—participants seek to renew the Franciscan commitment to be signs of hope, reconciliation, and **care for creation**.

OFM





A VISIT TO THE PROVINCE OF ST PAUL THE APOSTLE

In between 4–8 June 2026, from the **General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)** Br. Taucen Girsang, Vice-Director of the Office, made a short visit to the **Province of Saint Paul the Apostle, Malta**. The purpose was to meet and listen to the friars who have been participating in serving in various JPIC ministries.

Intercultural Church. One of the most significant experiences during the visit was the encounter with the Franciscan international fraternity in Valletta where a Franciscan church is open to welcoming the believers from various nationalities and the ministry is served together by Maltese friars and from abroad – Br. Thomas OFM (India), Br. Arsan OFM (Pakistan), and Br. Jhoan OFM (Philippines). There is a visible reality where the friars are responding to the needs of people coming from diverse cultural, social, and national backgrounds, including migrants and workers from Pakistan, India, the Philippines, and other countries. Intercultural living constantly raises questions about integration, dialogue, communication, and mutual understanding. In this context, according to Br. Ramon Farrugia OFM, the Minister Provincial, the Franciscan spirituality and charism serve as a powerful instrument for unity and fraternity. They enable friars from different nations and cultures to work together in one mission, fostering mutual respect and collaboration. The vision of a Franciscan convent as an “open tent” for friars from all over the world offers an inspiring response to the question of how Franciscan spirituality remains relevant in accompanying the people of our time.

Dar Frate Jacoba: A self-sustaining community.. The visit also included Dar Frate Jacoba, a community dedicated to promoting the values of recycling, reusing, and sustainable living, coordinated by Br. Raymond OFM. The project demonstrates an integrated approach that connects animal farming, agriculture, education, vocational training, renewable energy, electric vehicles, and solar power. Such initiatives require adequate personnel, financial support, strong community involvement, and effective systems of cooperation. The experience highlights the importance of developing a structured ministry that can support and expand self-sustaining communities. While the commitment of friars and volunteers remains essential, the involvement of qualified professionals is often necessary to ensure the success and sustainability of the project.

Peace Lab. Another important visit a well-known centre that was visited by Pope Francis during his Apostolic Journey to Malta (April 2022). During the visit, the local JPIC Animator, Br. Dionysius OFM, had the opportunity to meet and speak with the Holy Father. The Peace Lab movement traces its origins to the period following the First and Second World Wars. Its founder was inspired by the urgent need to promote peace and reconciliation in society. Initially, the mission was carried out through radio broadcasting, spreading messages of peace to a wider audience. Over time, educational materials on peace were introduced into schools throughout Malta, helping young people learn about peace-building and the teachings of *Pacem in Terris*. One of the significant achievements of the movement was its contribution to the establishment of a national Day of Peace in Malta, celebrated annually on 1 July. Today, it is necessary to continue this rich heritage to the future and so the voice of Peace from the Franciscan friars in Malta can be heard.

Soup Kitchen. The Soup Kitchen ministry in Valetta was established by Br. Marcellino OFM six years ago after learning from and collaborating with similar initiatives in some Entities in Europe. The ministry serves people experiencing various forms of vulnerability, particularly those facing mental health challenges and social exclusion. On average, approximately 80 people benefit from the service each day. Beyond providing meals, the ministry creates opportunities for training, volunteering, and active participation in community life. Many professionals—including dentists, nurses, doctors, and other healthcare workers—contribute their expertise to support the mission. The project has generated numerous opportunities for service and employment, creating a broad network of social support. The effective operation of the ministry depends on professional management, dedicated volunteers, and the support of a foundation and committee members who oversee fundraising, donations, accountability, and transparent reporting.

The visit to Malta offered valuable insights into the various ways the Franciscan charism is embodied through JPIC ministries. From intercultural fraternity and sustainable living to peace education and service to the vulnerable, these initiatives demonstrate how Franciscan spirituality continues to respond to the challenges of our time in creative and effective ways.

OFM



THE 26TH ECOLOGICAL WALK DENOUNCES THREATS TO THE COMMON HOME AND CALLS FOR THE PROTECTION OF LIFE AND LAND IN EL SALVADOR

On the occasion of World Environment Day, the Franciscan Order, together with several social, ecclesial, and environmental organisations in El Salvador, released a statement in support of the 26th Ecological Walk, celebrated this year under the theme “Walking Conscience, Transforming Commitment.”

The document expresses participants’ concern about the growing degradation of ecosystems, the advancement of projects that threaten common goods, and the social hardships affecting thousands of Salvadoran families. The organisers denounce that many decisions regarding the land continue to be made without adequate involvement of the affected communities, whilst problems such as water insecurity, job insecurity, evictions, and the rising cost of living persist.

The statement also draws attention to the increasingly evident effects of the climate crisis in Central America, including extreme temperatures, agricultural losses, and the decline in basic food production, phenomena that particularly affect the most vulnerable populations.

Alongside this denunciation, the organisations recognise numerous signs of hope present in communities, among young people, indigenous peoples, families, social organisations, and citizen movements who are committed to the care of creation every day. They highlight the work of those promoting agroecology, protecting native seeds, defending territories, and fostering more harmonious and sustainable relationships with nature.

The participants in the 26th Ecological Walk also appeal to all of the Salvadoran society—communities, churches, public and private institutions, universities, media, businesses, and government authorities—to responsibly assume the care of our Common Home through concrete actions and policies aimed at defending life, water, and ecosystems.

Specifically, the statement calls for a reconsideration of the Metal Mining Law, highlighting the risks it poses to water sources, communities, and the country’s environmental balance. The signatories recall the broad national consensus that, in recent years, led to protecting the territory from the threat of open-pit mining.

The 26th Ecological Walk concludes with a call to strengthen the paths of dialogue, justice, and social participation, reaffirming that it is still possible to build a more humane and sustainable future. “May this walking conscience also become a transformative commitment,” the statement concludes.

OFM JPIC





THE 2026 INTERNATIONAL JPIC COURSE CONCLUDES IN ASSISI WITH A RENEWED FRANCISCAN CALL TO CARE FOR MIGRANTS, CREATION, AND TO BUILD PEACE.

With the guided visit to the city of Assisi led by Fr. Pietro Messa, the **2026 International JPIC Course**, “From the Canticle of the Creatures to the Pasch of Saint Francis of Assisi,” organized by the General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the Order of Friars Minor, in collaboration with the Pontifical Antonianum University, came to a close.

The final day gave participants the opportunity to celebrate the Solemnity of Pentecost and to visit Saint Mary of the Angels and the Basilica of Saint Francis as emblematic places of the Franciscan Centenary of the Pasch of the Saint of Assisi.

During Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, the course explored various contemporary challenges of the Franciscan mission from the perspective of justice, peace, and the integrity of creation. Guided by Fr. Cesare Vaiani and Fr. Giuseppe Buffon, participants were offered a contemplative reflection on the paschal journey of Saint Francis, highlighting the connection between the Canticle of the Creatures and the experience of suffering, reconciliation, praise, and restitution lived by Francis during the final years of his life.

Likewise, Fr. Francisco Gómez, General Secretary for Missions and Evangelization, presented the Ratio Evangelizationis. It in Mundum as a Franciscan path of integral evangelization, emphasizing that JPIC is not an isolated sector, but rather a fundamental dimension of Franciscan missionary identity.

For his part, Fr. Taucen Girsang, Vice Director of the General JPIC Office, addressed JPIC animation from the perspective of Franciscan spirituality, insisting that justice, peace, and the integrity of creation are transversal values of the Franciscan charism and a concrete way of living the Gospel today.

Dr. Juan Blanco also reflected on the “decolonial turn” as a critical invitation to recognize the historical and present-day dynamics of exclusion, domination, and exploitation affecting peoples, cultures, and territories, proposing paths of dignity, resistance, and transformation from the human and cultural peripheries.



On the final day, Miguel Ángel Jaimes shared pastoral and methodological tools to strengthen the service of JPIC animators in the fraternities and entities of the Order, including social impact models and instruments for the development of transformative pastoral projects aimed at responding concretely to situations of exclusion, violence, and environmental degradation through the Gospel and the Franciscan charism.

OFM JPIC





INTERNATIONAL COURSE: BETWEEN BIBLICAL HOPE, MISSION ON THE PERIPHERIES, AND THE PROFILE OF THE JPIC ANIMATOR

The JPIC 2026 International Course, “From the Canticle of the Creatures to the Easter of St Francis of Assisi,” organized by the General Office for Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation in collaboration with the Pontifical University Antonianum, continued its activities, delving into the biblical, pastoral, and testimonial dimensions of the Franciscan mission in today’s world. During the second and third days, participants reflected on the passion, death, and resurrection from the perspective of the Old and New Testaments, listened to missionary experiences from Turkey and the Holy Land, and explored the human, spiritual, and pastoral profile of the JPIC animator.

The sessions were marked by a strong biblical and theological context. Fr. Gonzalo Collipal Osses, OFM, presented a reflection on death and resurrection in the Old Testament, highlighting the progressive development of biblical hope and its ethical and communal dimensions. His presentation showed how faith in God’s ultimate victory over death also becomes the foundation of a culture of justice, care, and hope for our time.

Subsequently, Fr. Elton Viagedor, OFM, delved into the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus in the New Testament, emphasizing that the core of Christ's mission is the proclamation and inauguration of the Kingdom of God as a reality of justice, peace, solidarity, and liberation for the poor and excluded. From this perspective, the JPIC mission was presented not only as social action but also as concrete participation in the Paschal Mystery of Christ and in the historical building of the Kingdom.

One of the most significant moments of the course was the time dedicated to sharing experiences from Turkey and the Holy Land. Sr. Miriam Oyarzo Gavilán, a Franciscan missionary of the Sacred Heart serving in Büyükada, Turkey, offered a moving testimony about her work with migrant women, refugees, and vulnerable people in a context marked by the migration crisis, social tensions, and the invisibility of many victims of violence and exclusion. She presented the "Cittadella dei Fiori" project as a concrete response of welcome, listening, and accompaniment.

For his part, Fr. Carlos Eduardo Gabriel Molina Nicoli, OFM, shared a reflection on peacemaking in the Holy Land, describing the religious, cultural, and political complexity of the Middle East. His presentation showed how building peace requires a deep understanding of the historical wounds, cultural identities, and conflicts that permeate the region. At the same time, he emphasized that Franciscan spirituality has been, and can be even more so, a path of dialogue, reconciliation, and defence of human dignity amidst scenarios marked by violence and polarization.

Furthermore, the profile and mission of the JPIC animator were addressed in a presentation given by Fr. Daniel N. Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, Director of the JPIC General Office. Drawing on a Franciscan interpreta-

tion of following Jesus, he emphasized that JPIC service stems, first and foremost, from an experience of God and a concrete vocation to discipleship. The JPIC animator was presented as a brother or sister called to live the Gospel through fraternity, humility, reconciliation, justice, and care for creation.

Some temptations that can affect JPIC service were also discussed, such as evading the mission, messianism, and pessimism, with an emphasis on the need to cultivate an incarnate spirituality, capable of listening to people's suffering and responding with evangelical hope.

The course also included guidance from Miguel Ángel Jaimes in addressing specific challenges in pastoral work. Through a participatory methodology, participants identified real challenges present in their local contexts and reflected on processes of discernment, analysis, and the search for community-based pastoral responses. The tool presented helped to recognize indicators, causes, and possible courses of action in the face of situations that hinder the evangelizing mission and JPIC service.

The JPIC 2026 International Course thus continues to consolidate itself as a space for Franciscan formation, dialogue, and discernment in the face of the great challenges of the contemporary world, helping JPIC leaders renew their commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation from the spirituality of the Gospel and the witness of St Francis of Assisi.

OFM JPIC



INTERNATIONAL JPIC COURSE 2026 BEGINS IN ROME WITH REFLECTIONS ON JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRAL ECOLOGY

The International JPIC 2026 Course, organised by the General Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) of the Order of Friars Minor, began this Monday, the 18th May 2026, at the Pontifical University Antonianum with the theme: “From the Canticle of the Creatures to the Easter of St Francis.”

The gathering brings together approximately forty participants from various countries across four continents, including JPIC facilitators from the Order, lay people involved in Franciscan works, and visiting professors.

The course is being held in the context of the Franciscan Centenaries and seeks to explore, from an interdisciplinary perspective, contemporary challenges related to justice, peace, and the care of creation.



The opening session was moderated by Fr. Daniel N. Rodríguez Blanco, OFM, of the General Office for JPIC. The opening address was given by Professor Fr. Giuseppe Buffon, Rector of the Pontifical University Antonianum, who presented the university as the “common home of the Franciscan family” and as a cultural project open to the public, capable of articulating reflection and action from the perspective of integral ecology. He also emphasised the need to build bridges between academia, Franciscan tradition, and society, promoting an interdisciplinary vision inspired by the spiritual legacy of Saint Francis of Assisi.

Subsequently, Miguel Ángel Jaimes presented an introduction to the foundations of participatory pastoral planning, understood as a practical path for implementing synodal guidelines in ecclesial life and in JPIC (Joint Pastoral Care) animation. He also pointed out some challenges, such as clericalism, authoritarianism, and individualism, proposing a synodal, missionary pastoral approach committed to social and ecological realities.

The discussion continued with Ilaria Scenti’s presentation on migrants and refugees worldwide. The presentation addressed the legal and human differences between migrants, refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons, as well as the

multiple causes of contemporary migration: economic, socio-political, and environmental. It also delved into major current humanitarian crises, such as those in Venezuela and Sudan. Migration routes, especially those across the Mediterranean, were also analysed.

In the afternoon, Nicolás Paz, from Pax Christi International, presented the lecture “Current Wars and Conflicts: On the Horizon of a Disarmed and Disarming Peace,” in which he proposed a critical reflection on the contemporary dynamics of violence and war. Among other topics, he emphasised the need to unlearn culturally ingrained violent responses, recognise the biases that legitimise war, and rediscover nonviolence as a spirituality, a way of life, a method of social transformation, and a universal ethic. The event also addressed issues such as increased military spending, the privatisation of violence, the structural causes of conflict, and the challenge of building an embodied hope through political action and the Gospel.

The day concluded with the documentary “The Letter,” which focuses on the current ecological crisis and the call in the encyclical *Laudato si’* for integral ecological conversion, highlighting our shared responsibility for caring for our common home and the urgent need to listen to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

The JPIC 2026 International Course will continue in the coming days with various conferences, dialogue sessions, and exchanges of experiences aimed at strengthening the Franciscan commitment to justice, peace, and the integrity of creation.

OFM JPIC





FRANCISCAN FAMILIES CALL FOR A “WORLD WEEK OF THE POOR” IN 2026 FOR THE 800TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DEATH OF ST. FRANCIS

National Franciscan Families around the world have received a proposal to celebrate “World Week of the Poor” from the 9th-15th November 2026, within the framework of the 800th anniversary of the Death of St. Francis of Assisi and coinciding with the World Day of the Poor.

The initiative, signed by the Ministers General of the different Franciscan branches and leaders of the Franciscan Family, seeks to “place the poor and all forms of poverty at the centre of our attention.”

The proposal is inspired by the “Mission to the Poor” that will take place in Rome during those same dates. According to the letter, the objective is to follow in the footsteps of St. Francis of Assisi, who “gave his clothes to the neediest” and spent time “among the poor with joy in spirit.”

A Mission Focused on Listening to the Poor

The document emphasises that the proposal is not simply about organising activities, but about reaching out to the various forms of poverty, both visible and hidden.

Among the six essential points of the initiative, the Franciscan Families especially highlight listening to the poor, urging people “not to speak ‘about’ the poor, but to put the poor themselves at the centre.”

The letter also proposes training sessions on topics related to Saint Francis and poverty, as well as spaces for dialogue with institutions, meetings in schools, and awareness-raising activities aimed at younger generations.

Prayer, Collaboration, and Social Commitment

Another central aspect of the proposal is the mission’s spiritual dimension. The text states that prayer must be “the heart of the mission,” including daily moments of prayer and presence in marginalised communities.

Furthermore, the initiative proposes collaborative work among religious, the Franciscan laity, and people “of good will,” and promotes collaboration with other ecclesial and civil organisations.

The week will conclude on the 15th November, 2026, the World Day of the Poor, with a “public prophetic gesture” arising from the experience of those days.

Invitation to Franciscan Families Worldwide

In the final part of the letter, the signatories affirm that this proposal represents “an act of fidelity to the Gospel, to the charism of St Francis,” and recall an exhortation by Pope Leo XIII on the centrality of the poor in the life of the Church.

Furthermore, national Franciscan Families participating in the initiative are invited to report on their activities so that a global overview can be presented to Pope Leo XIII.

OFM JPIC



FRANCISCANS GATHER IN ISTANBUL TO ADDRESS MIGRATION, INTERRELIGIOUS DIALOGUE, AND PEACE IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

Istanbul hosts the annual meeting of the Franciscan Mediterranean Network (FMN), a key space for dialogue, peace, and Franciscan mission

From March 24 to 27, the city of Istanbul—at the Convent of the Friars Minor of Saint Mary Draperis—hosted the annual meeting of the Coordination Committee of the Franciscan Mediterranean Network (RFMed), an initiative focused on promoting peace, intercultural dialogue, and support for migrants in the Mediterranean region.

The choice of Istanbul, a city bridging East and West, highlights the symbolic and strategic value of this Franciscan gathering in a global context marked by tensions, conflicts, and migration challenges. This historic setting stands as a concrete sign of dialogue among cultures, religions, and peoples.

The meeting began with a visit to Büyükada, in the Sea of Marmara, where participants spent time with the fraternity of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart and learned about the reality of the “Citadel of Flowers.” There, direct testimonies from migrants helped deepen understanding of the dynamics of suffering and hope that shape the Mediterranean, strengthening the network’s commitment through real-life experiences.

The working sessions of the RFMed Coordination Committee focused on mutual listening, the exchange of experiences, and the evaluation of the network’s three main pillars: migrants, dialogue and peace, and youth. Activities carried out in 2025 were reviewed, and progress was made in strategic planning for the 2026–2027 biennium, including the annual report and communication lines.

Among the highlights were the testimonies of the friars serving in Istanbul, Fr. Felianus Dogon (guardian of the fraternity) and Fr. Antonius Duma, who shared their pastoral work in an interreligious and multicultural context.

In addition, Fr. Eunan McMullan presented the work of Franciscans International, broadening the perspective of Franciscan commitment at the global level, particularly in matters of justice, peace, and human rights.

The meeting was further enriched by the virtual participation from Marseille of Fr. Alexis Leproux, head of the Ecclesial Coordination for the Mediterranean, strengthening collaboration among the various ecclesial realities in the region.

This annual meeting of the Franciscan Mediterranean Network reaffirms the urgency of continuing to build relationships,

promote interreligious dialogue, and support paths of peace in the Mediterranean—a key region for fraternity among peoples and for the future of global coexistence.

OFM JPIC



INTERNATIONAL DAYS - APRIL / JUNE 2026

July 17	World Day of International Justice
August 9	International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples
August 23	International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition
August 29	International Day against Nuclear Tests
September 1	World Creation Conservation Day
September 1 / October 4th	Time of Creation
September 16	International Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer



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

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