



NEWSBRIEF

A publication of the USG-UISG Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

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May you have a blessed Christmas and a joyous New Year! Know that you are in our thoughts and prayers in a special way. We are grateful for the many ways you have supported the JPIC Office and have made this world a better place. We have been inspired by how you have made the presence of Christ visible in your lives. May you be blessed in surprising ways in 2016.

[CLICK UNDERLINED BLUE TEXT TO OPEN A LINK](#)

JPIC PROMOTERS AT COP21



Demonstrations were held throughout the world for COP21 on November 29 and 30. Pictured here are some of our JPIC Promoters in Rome showing their support for COP21.

COP21, the Conference of the Partners held in Paris November 30 to December 12, 2015 established a venue for us to join the global efforts to address the impacts of climate change. The meeting provided a grand opportunity to consider strategic actions for climate justice. Church groups were visibly present and provided prayerful reflections to support the moral concerns of the conference. It was an occasion to consider the importance of language in the creation of a vision which honors the determined spirit of courageous persons facing the tragic effects and daunting conditions of poverty and environmental degradation. Through the

sharing of resources and networking created opportunities to explore future options. Over and over again, we experienced persons with stories and experiences.

Some key points of the agreement:

- To peak greenhouse gas emissions as soon as possible and achieve a balance between sources and sinks of greenhouse gases in the second half of this century.
- To keep global temperature increase “well below” 2C (3.6F) and to pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5C.
- To review progress every five years.
- To provide \$100 billion a year in climate finance for developing countries by 2020, with a commitment to further finance in the future.
- To protect the Earth’s forests.

Some aspects of the agreement will be legally binding, such as submitting an emissions reduction target and regular review of the goal. However, the targets set by nations will not be binding under this deal obtained in Paris. For more information please visit <https://catholicclimatemovement.global/> and <http://www.mongabay.com/>.

The [COP21 blog](#) on the jpicroma.org website was created to engage JPIC Promoters in this effort and to honor the commitment of other promoters at the event. We welcome any other comments from participants of COP21 for this blog. Our ongoing prayerful support and actions are CRITICAL to implement this momentous agreement.



Br. Rodrigo Peret, OFM, who reports to the Integrity of Creation Working Group (ICWG) as well as other organizations was involved in a number of workshops concerned with the effects of mining, forging network connections, promoting human rights, involvement of indigenous persons and the role of women. He is pictured here helping to facilitate the discussion of the work being done by women in Africa regarding agriculture and mining.

SEMINAR ON THE PACT OF THE CATACOMBS: "A POOR SERVANT CHURCH OF THE POOR"

A seminar on the Pact of the Catacombs was held on November 14, 2015 at the Aula Magna of the Urbaniana University in Rome. Close to 400 people attended the event which marked the closing of the 50th anniversary commemorating the **Pact of the Catacombs** during the year of consecrated life which began in November 2014.

The seminar featured Dr. Alberto Melloni, professor at the University of Modena RE, Italy, who spoke about the historical context of the Pact and the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, and Fr. Jon Sobrino, SJ, professor at the University of Centro Americana "José Simeón-Cañas" in El Salvador, who spoke about the impact the Pact of the Catacombs on the Church today. In small continental groups, participants shared how they could contextualize the Pact in today's church realities.

Testimonies on significant issues concerning the Church today were shared by individuals from different parts of the world, including two signers of the original Pact—Bishop Luigi Bettazzi, the Emeritus Bishop of Ivrea, Italy, and Bishop José Maria Pirés, the Emeritus Bishop of Paraíba, Brazil. They talked about their experiences in relation to the Pact, inspiring the audience of mostly religious men and women to go out and awaken the world and commit themselves to the people they serve, the majority of who are existentially poor.

As we begin the *Jubilee Year of Mercy* let us remember the words of Pope Francis: "An evangelizing commu-



nity knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn4:19), and, therefore, we can move forward, boldly and take the initiative to go out to others and seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast. Such a community has an endless desire to show mercy, the fruit of its own experience of the power of the Father's infinite mercy. Let us try a little harder to take the first step and to become involved." (*EvangeliiGaudium* # 24)

Materials from the seminar will soon be available at www.pactofthecatacombs.com. For special request for material, write to Daisuke Narui, SVD jpic@svdcuria.org.

During this Year of Consecrated Life, *Newsbrief* featured the biographies of some bishops who signed the Pact of the Catacombs. At the conclusion of the celebration, let us remember the bishops who were physically present during this significant event at the close of Vatican II. Reference for the Signers of the Pact of the Catacombs: Xabier Pikaza & Jose Antunes Da Silva, Eds., *The Pact of the Catacombs: The Mission of the Poor in the Church*, Verbo Divino, Estella Navarra, 2015, p. 17-19.

UISG CELEBRATES 50TH ANNIVERSARY



The International Union of Superiors General (UISG) celebrated on December 12 the 50th anniversary of its foundation at the conclusion of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council. "This is a celebration not only of Superiors General, but a celebration of consecrated life!", said Cardinal João Braz de Aviz, Prefect of the Congregation for Consecrated and Societies of Apostolic life, who presided the Eucharist. More than 400 nuns participated in Santa Marian in Traspontina Church in Via Conciliazione. Speaking at the beginning of the celebration, the President of UISG - Sister Carmen Sammut commented on the image of the Visitation of Mary on the cover of the booklet of the Mass: "We can imagine the conversation of these two women, sharing their hopes, fears,

strengths, weaknesses, faith and love. We can imagine their prayers together, we can imagine how they were supported and strengthened to do God's will. Our Union is a space of mutual support for those who play a role in government. We too in our meetings, we talk about the Lord who sends us into the world to bring the good news. We also talk about our reality, our fear in front of the news...we also know that we are most effective and courageous together. As a symbol of this anniversary, UISG begins a Mission for Migrants in Sicily, where 10 nuns will work in collaboration with the local church and other stakeholders living in two communities. After the Mass the nuns received a lighted candle, a symbol of Christ the light of the world to be brought to the people they are going to serve. This project is the tangible sign of what the UISG wants to continue to be—a space of global and inter-congregational collaboration, where differences of charisms, of cultures, of languages, of stories are stimuli to go beyond what is already known with humility and hospitality. —UISG

Communications Office

HOW TO WELCOME REFUGEES/MIGRANTS IN HOUSES OF RELIGIOUS CONGREGATIONS

The December meeting of English JPIC Promoters featured the practical ways in which religious communities can respond to Pope Francis' invitation to welcome refugees and migrants Sr. Maria Jose from Centro Astalli explained what the Jesuit Refugee Services Center in Rome is doing to respond to the needs of displaced people arriving in Rome. She spoke of some practical ways in which congregations of women and men religious can take part in the ministry. She highlighted the "Semi Autonomy" project which Centro Astalli is sponsoring in collaboration with religious congregations, which aims at welcoming people whose status of asylum seekers has been officially recognized. The project helps them integrate into Italian society.

Br. Mario Meuti of the Marist Brothers spoke of the "Collaboration for Mission" project which his congregation and the Lasalle Brothers work together in Lebanon. Collaborating in Mission, they serve the refugees in Lebanon where the Syrian conflict has created a huge humanitarian crisis. Useful resources on the topic are 1) [Pope Francis' message on World Day for Migrants and Refugees \(2015\)](#); 2) [Pope's message on World Day for Peace \(2016\)](#) and 3) [Collaboration for Mission, International \(Brothers project PPT presentation\)](#).

ROUNDUP OF EVENTS



JPIC Promoters Formation Workshop 2015. Twenty-four new JPIC Promoters participated in the 2015 Formation Workshop in Rome, November 18-21. The Papal Encyclical, *Laudato Si*, was integrated throughout the experience of the four-day sessions. Presentations addressed fundamental areas for developing and coordinating Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation efforts. Topics included the spirituality of the vows, the inclusion of JPIC in congregational documents, and the role of the JPIC Promoter in developing and coordinating efforts. The next formation workshop will integrate the theme of the Jubilee Year of Mercy and will be held on November 16-19, 2016 at Casa per Ferie Enrico De Osso, Via Val Cannuta 134, 00167 Roma.

Africa, Europe Faith and Justice Network's (AEFJN) General Assembly. The AEFJN General Assembly on November 6, 2015 was held in Rome at the Missionaries of Africa Generalate. Dedicated mainly to advocacy on socio-economic issues in relation to the continents of Africa and Europe, the annual meeting was guided by the theme "Advancing the Advocacy of AEFJN in the Spirit of *Laudato Si*." The first part of the meeting was guided by the reflection given by Fr. Jaime Tatay, SJ, who is currently researching the interface between the Catholic Social Teaching and the environment. In his reflection, he underscored the multiple facet of issues raised by Pope Francis' encyclical and how they are relevant and timely for Africa-Europe relationship. The PPT he used for the reflection can be accessed on the AEFJN website: www.aefjn.org.

The JPIC Commission meeting. The Commission met on November 30 to review and discuss the work of the JPIC Secretariat in the last six months. At the meeting, the members determined that an important focus of the JPIC Commission would be to address the networking opportunities with religious congregations. This would include the sharing of the research and analysis of the data from the working groups as well as

the advocacy efforts with the membership of USG and UISG. The Commission also affirmed and encouraged the ongoing efforts of the English and Spanish groups to work together. These efforts have been enhanced through the integration of the papal announcements of Pope Francis, especially *Laudato Si*, in the areas that affect their responses to world concerns. Prayers and advocacy concerns are available on the website jpicroma.org. The request of the Refugee-Migrants Working Group that it be designated as a JPIC Commission-sponsored working group was approved. This will broaden the effectiveness of the working group as members respond to the critical needs of migration.

Anti-Trafficking Survey. The Anti-Trafficking Working Group has developed a brief survey to find out what is being done by women religious to address the problem of human trafficking. The survey has been translated into the seven languages of UISG and is available online. The superior general of each congregation has been requested to designate a member who will respond to the questionnaire. Responses are due by February 14, 2016.



The collapsed dam in Mariana, Minas Gerais state, unleashed a surge of thick, red toxic mud that devastated the nearby village of Bento Rodrigues.

Minas Gerais Dam breakage. The collapse of the mining dam in Minas Gerais is considered one of the worst mining-related disasters in the world. Information has been received from persons being affected by the grassroots and communication with the International Council of Mining and Metals (ICMM) regarding this tragedy has begun. ICMM has been involved in the meetings of the leaders of mining corporations, sponsored by the Vatican Council of Justice and Peace. BHP Billiton is a member of this council and also one of the corporations responsible for this disaster. Our JPIC Office has participated in the Vatican Council sessions both with the leadership of mining corporations and those affected by mining. A student from the University of Notre Dame Indiana in the United States is doing a study of the situation in Minas Gerais from the perspective of the lives of persons at the grassroots. It is hoped that her study will suggest further actions in support of those suffering the effects of this disaster. For ongoing updates on this

tragedy, please google “Gerais Dam Breakage.”

Resources:

[Barragem se rompe em Mariana \(MG\) e inundavila de Bento Rodrigues](#) in Portuguese.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HKnOVLpTZQ> in Portuguese and English

For positive work in areas involving mines “Marisha, A New Life Outside the Mines” is a Congolese mining community being rejuvenated with the work of the Good Shepherd Sisters. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RSZbYJHrtDk> (English)



JPIC Promoters with members of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines.

Advocacy for Lumas indigenous population in the Philippines. Members of the Rural Missionaries of the Philippines visited the JPIC Secretariat office and spoke before several JPIC Promoters in Rome on November 24 regarding the plight of the 1.7 million Lumad population in Northern Mindanao. Known as the mining capital of the Philippines, Mindanao is host to 23 mining priority projects favored by the Philippine government. “Today, this so-called Land of Promise is being eyed by big capital for its natural gas, oil and last frontier lands,” said Sr. Stella Matutina, OSB. The Lumad lands are forcibly being taken away. “Out of the 72 leaders of indigenous peoples who have been killed under the present Aquino government in the Philippines, 56 of these are Lumad of Mindanao,” she said.

The group is reaching out to various organizations in the European Union for support in their efforts to protect the ancestral lands of the Lumad and stop the violence against them by the Philippine government. The JPIC Commission has expressed its support in a [letter](#) signed by its co-presidents earlier this month. On December 10, 2015, Sr. Stella was awarded by the city of Weimar, Germany for her human rights work in Mindanao. Read more: <http://newsinfo.inquirer.net/749047/nun-seeks-world-attention-for-lumad>.

Work to address the victims of sexual violence in conflict areas. We are inviting women religious who would be interested in participating in a project sponsored by the Embassy of the United Kingdom (UK) to the Holy See, which seeks to address the victims of sexual violence in conflict areas. The Embassy has

requested that the Sisters be involved in compassionate listening as they are the most trusted in the conflict areas. The Protocol is primarily a practical tool, so there is no requirement of formal endorsement from a nation to start an implementation on the ground. Official launchings have taken place in Bosnia, Burma, DRC, Iraq and Nepal. It is currently being rolled out in Colombia and Kosovo. Training/events related to the International Protocol have been held in Istanbul, Uganda, Jordan and The Hague. In the training sessions we would share knowledge of this protocol and discuss ways to pastorally respond to such survivors. Please let us know if you would be interested in participating in this compassionate listening program. Contact our JPIC Office at jpic.cosec@lasalle.org.

Baroness Anelay, UK Foreign Office Minister for Human Rights, spoke to [Vatican Radio](#) about her recent visit to the DRC, the UK efforts in eliminating sexual violence against women worldwide, and the crucial role of faith groups in this effort.

NEW JPIC RESOURCES

Agroecology Case Studies. The ICR at FAO Working group has often underscored agro-ecology as one ‘model of agriculture’ as an alternative to the agri-business model that is touted as very productive, and it often is, but also is very dependent on expensive inputs of seeds, inorganic fertilizers, often herbicides and pesticides and, therefore, many times beyond the ability of small scale food producers who number more than three billion people in the world. Alternatively, agro-ecology and its application is often questioned as to whether it can produce enough to meet the world’s growing demands for food and fiber. Check out the following link to find the answer: <http://www.oaklandinstitute.org/agroecology-case-studies.www.oaklandinstitute.org/agroecology-case-studies>.

Prayers and reflections. Timely reflections for pressing concerns are developed by Spanish-Portuguese JPIC Promoters for the last Friday of each month at Chiesa San Marcelo in Rome, 7:00 pm-8:00 pm. Last November 27, the theme was “Plight of the Environmental Refugees Worldwide.” Many references to *Laudato Si* were included in the prayer. These prayers benefit all of us because of the worldwide significance of their intentions.

For prayers and reflections on *Laudato Si* and the Jubilee Year of Mercy, please visit our website: English section—<http://www.jpicroma.org/#!laudato-si/ccaz>; Spanish section—<http://jpicroma.wix.com/jpicromaesp#!laudato-si/c2506> and <http://jpicroma.wix.com/jpicromaesp#!anno-de-misericordia/c1lik>.



At the press conference on “Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty: a Handbook for Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.” Left to right: International Advocacy Director Jean Tonglet, ATD Fourth World, Delegate for Italy and Relations with Holy See: Fr. Michael A. Perry, OFM, Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor; Bishop Bernardo Johannes Bahlmann, OFM, Bishop of Obidos (North East Brazil); Fr. Federico Lombardi, SJ, Director of the Holy See Press Office, Ms Francesca Restifo, Franciscans International; Mr. Michel Roy, Secretary General of Caritas International.

Handbook for Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. On December 17, a press conference was held at the Salla Stampa in Rome concerning “Making Human Rights Work for People Living in Extreme Poverty: a Handbook for Implementing the UN Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights.”

We are grateful to the JPIC Promoters in Rome who provided feedback that helped develop this publication. For the poverty handbook and video please visit <http://www.franciscansinternational.org/>.

Resource: [Pope Francis’ Message for the XLIX World Day of Peace, January 1, 2016: “Overcome Indifference and Win Peace.”](#)

PRAYER REQUESTS

Prayers are appreciated for **Fr. Piero Parolari**, the Italian priest member of the Pontifical Institute for Foreign Missions PIME who was seriously injured on Tuesday morning, November 17 at Dinajpur, Bangladesh. Let us pray for peace and reconciliation through Interreligious dialogue in Bangladesh.



Please pray for the Eternal Rest of **Sr. Susan Chia** of the Congregation of Good Shepherd who passed away in Japan early this month. The JPIC Promoters remember Sr. Susan for her passionate participation and contribution to the group. The Collaboration Working group remember her and Sr. Alaine Besinger who facilitated a seminar on “Systemic Transformation for Collaboration in Religious Life and the Church Today” in January 2013. May her generosity in sharing her gifts with other religious congregations live on and flourish in the Church. May her active and generous service in mission be her legacy and an encouraging witness to God’s love for all!

JPIC EVENTS IN JANUARY 2016

- Spanish-Portuguese JPIC Promoters meeting: January 13, 9:00-12:00 am at UISG offices
- Anti-Trafficking Working Group meeting: January 14, 3:00-5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- Integrity of Creation Working Group meeting, January 18, 3:00-5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- Refugees/Migrants Working Group meeting, January 19, 3:00-5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- Collaboration Working Group meeting: January 21, 3:00-5:00 pm at Missionaries of Africa
- JPIC in the Jubilee Year of Mercy by Robert Schreiter, CPPS: January 23, 9:00 am-12:30 pm at Aula Magna, Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- ICR at FAO Working Group meeting: January 26, 9:30 am at ICR Office, Passionist Generalate
- Prayer at Chiesa San Marcelo: November 27, 7:00-8:00 pm at Via del Corso, Roma

Note: Please send a brief outline of information which would be useful to JPIC Promoters for publication in future issues of *Newsbrief* to jpicusguisg@lasalle.org.

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