

# NEWSBRIEFS



A monthly publication of the UISG-USG Justice Peace & Integrity of Creation Commission



**Editorial:** Welcome back JPIC Promoters and Animators to another year of being together to determine what is ours to do in making this world a better place. In the spirit of the Amazonian Synod, we travel the journey *Laudato Si'* sets out before us, "May we courageously stand against injustices, including loss

of territory, exploitation, threats to biodiversity, and the imposition of cultural and economic models which are alien to the lives of indigenous peoples everywhere." (Prayer in preparation for the Amazon Synod) [Amazonia Casa Común](#) [EN](#) [ES](#) [IT](#) [PT](#).

LINKS: Click underlined blue text to open a link or copy and paste the URL on your browser window.

## STATEMENT FROM THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE JPIC & MINING SEMINAR



The Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and Mining Seminar opened with a meaningful liturgy prepared by Br. Rodrigo Peret, OFM, honoring the 271 mining victims from Brumadino. Their names were called one by one in remembrance of their sacrifices and courage. The assembly sought the graces from that painful experience to enlighten and guide them during the session. Their lives were to bear fruit these days.

Special thanks to the Coordination Team: Sylvia Obregon, Budi Tjahjono, Rodrigo Peret, OFM and Sheila Kinsey, FCJM.

**W**e, the participants of the Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) and Mining Seminar, representing 36 different catholic organizations and religious congregations from about 14 countries were gathered in Rome from 25 to 27 September 2019. As persons committed to JPIC, we came together in response to the ongoing crisis concerning the impact of mining activities on the environment and human rights and the role of church organizations...

We hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and we are deeply saddened by the reality, as we have witnessed the continuing destruction of our common home. This destruction, as also described by *Laudato Si'*, causes great distress. In turn, it calls for a prophetic response on behalf of

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Amazonia: New Pathways for the Church and for Integral Ecology—know, recognize, live with and defend. Synod participants include Sr. Nonata De Aguiar Bezerra, SND, Br. Joao Gutenberg, (Marist) from REPAM and Mr. Humberto Ortiz Roca, Assistant to the President of the Peruvian Episcopal Conference. They spoke about their work with indigenous peoples.

the communities and nature affected by the extractive development model.

The current model of extractivism is devastating and destroying our common home. It devours the earth's finite goods, creates cycles of violence and injustice, displaces people from their homes, livelihoods and cultures, and fosters a materialistic and throwaway culture.

As animators and network of justice, peace and integrity of creation, we see and recognize the following key issues related to mining and extractives that need to be addressed:

1. Power imbalance affecting the very people who are facing the threats and risks of mining and other extractive projects;
2. Impunity, corruption, and other factors that are imposed on the communities, affecting their ability to say no to destructive mining projects and exercise their right to self-determination;
3. The disrespect of human rights, the disregard of human dignity and the continuing acts of violence;
4. The mistreatment of nature as merely things to be used for the satisfaction of humanity.

When God's creation is disrespected, we are distressed and outraged. And so we turn to Pope Francis and are guided by his words in *Laudato Si'*...

*it should always be kept in mind that "environmental protection cannot be assured solely on the basis of financial calculations of costs and benefits. The environment is one of those goods that cannot be adequately safeguarded or promoted by market forces". Once more, we need to reject a magical conception of the market, which would suggest that problems can be solved simply by an increase in the profits of companies or individuals...Moreover, biodiversity is considered at most a deposit of economic resources available for*

*exploitation, with no serious thought for the real value of things, their significance for persons and cultures, or the concerns and needs of the poor. [190]*

JPIC has a distinct and unique role to play in ensuring that we effectively and meaningfully implement *Laudato Si'* and carry out our mission of accompanying the people of God and protecting our common home.

We need to respond and act, and thus we are committed to:

1. On-going integral ecological conversion resulting in responsible personal and collective choices that lead us to a lifestyle that honors creation;
2. Be an active Church for the victims, where from our spirituality, we spread the Gospel and Catholic Social Teachings, in particular *Laudato Si'*...
3. Build bridges and facilitate connections between and among congregations, with Church and non-Church actors and with men and women religious living among the grassroots communities, as well as foster ecumenical and interfaith initiatives and inclusive intercultural dialogue...
4. Join our voices and engage in the continuing advocacy work that includes stronger protection of human, environmental and land rights defenders, holding governments accountable for their responsibility to end the impunity of corporations for their human rights abuses and ensuring access to justice for the victims...
5. Contribute and complement the work of faith-based organizations, social movements and civil society about the Action Agenda of the Thematic Social Forum on Mining and the Extractive Economy and explore ways of creating synergy and mutual advancement.
6. Broaden and deepen our understanding of thematic issues related to mining and extractives, includ-

ing—a) the right to say “no”; b) the alternatives such as fair trade and a solidarity economy; c) local integral development; d) just transitions; e) artisanal and traditional mining; and f) reflection on the rights of nature.

With confidence in the Spirit of God, we unite our reflection, endeavors and prayers with those of the whole Church at this time of grace and this important moment during the Special Assembly of the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region.

May our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope. (LS 244)

Click for [seminar materials](#) and a [video](#). For more information, please contact Rodrigo Péret, OFM at [rodrigoperet.afes@gmail.com](mailto:rodrigoperet.afes@gmail.com) or Sheila Kinsey, FCJM at [skinsey.fcjm@gmail.com](mailto:skinsey.fcjm@gmail.com). Also, visit the [JPIC website](#).

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN SOUTH SUDAN



**A** workshop on gender based violence (GBV) in South Sudan was held last July in Kit, the Spirituality Center of the Good Shepherd Sisters. Representatives were present from each of the seven dioceses in South Sudan, including religious men and women, diocesan priests and laity, who came with their experiences of working in parishes, schools, hospitals and spiritual centers. The Leadership Team of South Sudan and the the JPIC Secretariat developed the workshop to address the major problems related to GBV which is seen in the recruitment of child soldiers, men killed to destroy the safety in regional areas and women/girls abused physically and socially.

To be sensitized and grounded in issues related to GBV, the participants engaged in deep reflection around relevant topics: Sacred Scripture, Catholic Social Teachings, historical context of South Sudan, activities of the United Nations, cultural practices, laws of South Sudan, prevention, pastoral responses and addressing the pain of those accompanying the victims. Dynamic dialogues ensued from the experiences of the participants, helping them to reach deeper insights and practical solutions.

Phase II, which is funded by the UK, will be held from September to December and will continue the spirit of cooperation and networking that was developed at the

July workshop, with prepared plans to move this experience throughout the country. It will include training on GBV awareness and prevention, information about the International Protocol, as well as further training focusing on pastoral response for GBV victims. The program will be developed in collaboration with the team that organized the GBV workshop in July, and like-minded NGOs and other experts (as determined by the participants).

Thus, a network of trusted people is being established throughout communities in South Sudan, so that faith actors will be able to continually share their knowledge and experiences as well as train members of their communities. A program for ongoing networking will be set up over the course of the workshop.

The [statement](#) from the July workshop was sent to local newspapers and broadcasted on radio.

## TRAUMA HEALING IN UGANDA



Sr. Mary Lydia Apili Bwor (Secretary General); Fr. Ankwasize Evarist and Sr. Maria Josephine Nazziwa, psychologists; Sr. Sheila Kinsey, Sr. Beatrice Wangatia, and Sr. Specioza Kabahuma.

**A**t the workshop on the Protocol for the Investigation and Documentation of Sexual Abuse in Areas of Conflict held in Uganda last year, it was evident that the participants had experienced deep levels of trauma in violence. This was either because they were victims themselves or were experiencing the pain of the victims with whom they ministered. Thus, it was determined that a workshop on trauma healing would be helpful.

The workshop was conducted at the center for the Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) with the team of two professional psychologists and the JPIC Secretariat. Participants were from various regions in Uganda serving in the ministries of education, counseling, formation, pastoral responses and medical services. The workshop provided in-depth experiences of personal trauma healing for the participants and also their service in ministry.

The story-telling format was used on seven life topics: experience of God, spirituality, meaning of their lives, suffering, inner strength, freedom and wholeness. These served as a basis for the inner journeys, small group sharing and large group processing. The two psychologists responding to the sharing of the groups, by summarizing, deepening and enriching the experiences. They also gave specific input to enhance the experiences.

After processing their inward journeys and coming to a place of healing from traumatic experiences, the participants met in ministry groups to determine future actions to be more effective ministers. Networks were established for support, encouragement and the sharing of the experiences of their planned activities going forward.

At the closing ceremony, everyone agreed the workshop helped them go through unique experiences which showed and revealed God's power and goodness to them. It was a time of learning, which provided a platform to recognize and develop personal integrity.

#### TESTIMONY OF SR. MARIA JOSEPHINE NAZZIWA

This was an amazing approach which was introduced so humbly, discussed and guided simply but seriously. A do-it-yourself, characterized by genuine sharing and humility.

This was a facilitation in which members were recalling their past and present good and sad experiences with a new attitude because they were encouraged to trace God's presence and active participation in the incidents.

The spiritual issues of Wholeness, Freedom, Suffering, Meaning of our Lives, Spirituality and Experience of God were so powerful in this approach, they in themselves did not seem new, but the way they were discussed was unique.

As a counselling psychologist, I was introduced to yet another approach where clients were getting healing with less threatening reactions, focusing on God. Participants, apart from gaining as self, were equipped to use this approach even to the victims to whom they were giving care.

Touched by "knowing we are deeply loved, we want to share in and experience affirming and at times truthfully challenging ways," indeed it was a moment of meeting God in a special way. It was more of a retreat than a workshop!

I saw, heard and felt the power of a wholistic approach to healing, empowerment and trust in God when we combined the spiritual, psychological and physical approaches.

The sharing of Sr. Sheila Kinsey, Fr. Ankwasii Evarist and Sr. M. Josephine Nazziwa enabled participants to discuss thoughts and feelings related to the experience. The physical exercises that were introduced to them enabled members to understand the importance of having them and allowing them to also share the exercises with the victims they care for.

I recommend, therefore, that this approach is spread everywhere, especially to religious and other people that give care to victims of any kind.

The words of one of the Sisters captures the sentiments of the participants: "I'd like to thank and appreciate you for this year's workshop. It has been the best for me, a deep healing and peace within me. I didn't know I was deeply affected until the time of sharing our experiences. I feel happy, I love myself and I will take care. After all, I am not the Chairman of the universe. I don't own the world; so let the world be and let Me BE and I WILL BE! HAPPY TO BE ME. Crazy thoughts! Isn't it?"

The group formulated a [statement](#) at the end of the workshop. A formal report will be submitted in November. The staff at ARU and the two professional counselors continue to be available to the participants during this time of implementing their plans.

#### NETWORKING WITH UGANDA'S PARLIAMENT

Networking with Uganda's parliament was an important initiative began after the 2018 workshop on the Compassionate Response to Victims of Sexual Abuse in Situations of Conflict in Uganda, sponsored by UISG and the United Kingdom Embassy to the Holy See and facilitated by the JPIC Secretariat. In the workshop, the participants also received some training on the use of the Protocol which was developed by the UK.

They were so committed to changing violent behaviors that dialogue continued regarding a National Catholic advocacy initiative. The Uganda Episcopal Conference, John Paul II Peace and Justice Centre and Association of Religious in Uganda (ARU) joined together in a determined joint effort against human trafficking and all forms of modern slavery.

As a first action, the Uganda Episcopal Conference, through its Parliamentary Liaison Office, has introduced the idea to Catholic members of Parliament to encourage a working relationship that could explore joint efforts. Following the recent Ugandan labor report of companies who send the youth out of the country for work, this group also included a representative from the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, as an important strategic partner.

This joint committee is continuing to develop a memorandum of understanding and more official documents that will establish their advocacy efforts and their underlying cooperation in this initiative. Members want to continue to network with other groups around the same root causes of trafficking.

They are asking their governments to give a credible accountability report of the work of these companies

regarding their placement in employment and the well-being of their young people which are exported to other countries. In addition, they are asking the government to seek out and provide employment opportunities in Uganda, so that the young can benefit from work at home.



Fredrick Ssemwanga,  
Legal Counsel, Parliamentary Liaison Office,  
Uganda Episcopal Conference.

Click here for a copy of the [Uganda Report](#) and the declaration on pages 80 and 81.—*Contributed by Fredrick Ssemwanga*

## THE WEB OF LIFE: REFLECTING ON THE SEASON OF CREATION AND THE AMAZONIAN SYNOD



The JPIC English-speaking promoters meeting celebrated the theme of the season of creation and honored the upcoming Amazonian synod. It began with a prayer reflection, “Praying with God’s Creation,” which included readings from *Laudato Si*, a gospel reading from Matthew 6:25-30, shared intercessions on the topic of the day and a video on the ‘Web of Life’ from the Sowing Hope for the Planet website. The final prayer was specifically written for the Amazon Synod.

A major focus of the Synod and of the ‘Web of Life’ theme is the experience of indigenous people. We were led by Kathy Schmittgens and two of her SSND sisters, Connie Schmidt and Julie Lattner, in a graphic and highly experiential exercise known as the ‘Blanket Experience’ (exclusive use only). This tracked the experience of indigenous people in Canada from their origins to the present time—the treaties that were accepted in good faith, the betrayals that took place and the small steps of progress towards restoration of rights and dignity that are starting to emerge. At the end, we shared our insights about what we witnessed.

- The universality of the story—this experience has taken place in other parts of the world.
- The cyclical nature of the story.
- Combined cultures —what to keep and what to mix.
- In some African cultures, boundaries are always being broadened, with people going out to the edges.

- The exploitation of power.
- How women and children are often the ones who suffer most.
- Experience of our own congregations. What is the dominant culture in our congregation, how is it changing and how must we address this history and this new reality?

Following this exercise, Sr. Sheila Kinsey gave an update on the preparations for the Amazon Synod. At least 254 events are planned covering human rights, women, culture, mining, in round tables led by missionary groups. The Traspontina Church on Via Conciliazione will be a center for prayer and reflection. A weblink for all the events is available. An article by soon to be Cardinal Michael Czerny, SJ and Bishop Martinez entitled “Why the Synod?” gives a good background on the Amazon.

Finally, we looked at some questions such as ‘How will we listen to the indigenous people who are coming to the Synod?’ and ‘How can the charism of our congregation impact the theme of the Synod?’ Some of the reflections included the following:

- The need to enable interactions, dialogue and conversations with those who will be here explicitly for the Synod.
- The need to look carefully at the experience and mixing of cultures.
- Awareness of ‘fear of the other’.
- Once again, awareness of dominance of culture in our own congregations.
- A reminder about the seminal book of Paolo Friere, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

This was truly a powerful experience of our historical and present day treatment of the indigenous peoples, leading on to the Amazon Synod.—*Contributed by Anne Corry, RSCJ, International Coordinator*

“Why the Synod?” [IT](#) [EN](#) [ES](#) [PT](#) [FR](#)

## CONFERENCE OF THE PARTIES (COP) 25



COP25 will be held in Santiago, Region Metropolitana, Chile, from December 2 to 13, 2019.

The clarion call of the Conference is “Time for Action is Now” (Es Tiempo de Actuar). The Amazon rainforest is currently being destroyed by fire in Brazil, as the Vatican calls for the Synod of Bishops on Amazon in October 2019. In these contexts, COP25 is convened with great expectations and challenges. Fr. Vincent Anesthasiar, CMF, Secretariat for JPIC for the Clarisians, will be regularly posting important information on [COP25](#)—click the link to read more on this article.

## INTENTIONS OF POPE FRANCIS

**October**—A Missionary “Spring” in the Church. That the breath of the Holy Spirit engender a new missionary “spring” in the Church. The video of the Apostleship of Prayer is available the first Friday of the month.

**1 September-4 October**—Season of Creation reflect on “the Web of life in honoring Diversity.” Click link for the [message](#) of Pope Francis and some excellent [resources](#) to observe and celebrate this time.

**5-28 October**—AMAZONIA: CASA COMUN. Click link for a list of prayer services and informative, inspiring events in support of the [Amazonian Synod EN ES IT PT](#).

## INTERNATIONAL DAYS OF OBSERVANCE

**2 October**—[International Day of Nonviolence](#) marks the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi leader of the Indian independence movement and pioneer of the philosophy and strategy of nonviolence. The UN General Assembly established the international Day to “disseminate the message of nonviolence, included through education and public awareness.”

**7 October**—[World Habitat Day](#). The 2019 theme focuses on “Frontier Technologies” as an innovative tool to transform waste to wealth. The day recognizes Goal 11: inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities. Going beyond solid waste this includes all waste produced by human activity (solid, liquid, domestic, industrial and commercial), which continues to have a devastating impact on climate change, public health and the environment.

**11 October**—[International Day of the Girl Child](#) aims to highlight and address the needs and challenges girls face, while promoting girls’ empowerment and the fulfillment of their human rights. This year, under the theme, “Girl-Force: Unscripted and unstoppable”, we will celebrate achievements by, with and for girls since the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

**13 October**—[International Day for Disaster Reduction](#) “celebrates how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in the risks that they face.” The 2019 theme is “Reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services.”

**15 October**—[International Day of Rural Women](#) recognizes “the critical role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women, in enhancing agricultural and rural development, improving food security and eradicating rural poverty.”

**16 October**—[World Food Day \[FAO\]](#) is a chance to show our commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2—to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. See video on the FAO web page.

**17 October**—[International Day for the Eradication of Poverty](#) reminds us of the importance of the values of

dignity, solidarity and voice underscored in the Call to Action to fight to end poverty everywhere and “recognizes the knowledge and courage of families living in poverty throughout the world, the importance of reaching out to the poorest and building an alliance with citizens from all backgrounds to end poverty.”

**24 October**—[United Nations Day](#) marks the anniversary of the UN Charter’s entry into force and celebrates everything that the UN represents and has achieved since its establishment in 1945

**24 October**—[World Development Information Day](#) aims to “draw the attention of the world to development problems and the need to strengthen international cooperation to solve them.

## JPIC PROMOTERS MEETINGS IN OCTOBER

**2 October, 9:15-13:00.** [“West Papua, a Neglected Heaven”](#) in Aula minor of Augustinianum (Via Paolo VI 25, 00193 Roma). A seminar introducing the human rights situation of the indigenous people in West Papua. The English translation of the three-year human rights report published by the Secretariats of Justice and Peace of the local Catholic Church in West Papua will be launched.

**7 October**—English Core Group Meeting, 3pm-5pm at the Fratelli

**9 October**—Spanish/Portuguese JPIC Promoters Meeting 9am-12 pm at UISG

**16 October**— English JPIC Promoters Meeting from 9 am to 12 pm at UISG at the UISG Formation Center, Lungotevere Tor di Nona, 7 Roma. The meeting includes the webinar “Engaging in New Pathways for the Church and for an integral Ecology.” 10:30 am to 12 pm (EN, IT, PT) and 3 pm to 4:30 pm (EN, ES, FR).

1. Experiences of the Synod and Amazonia: Casa Común.
2. Indigenous people—what have they contributed and what have they learned here.
3. Dorothy Stang’s story is told by a member of her community.
4. Updates on GCCM—results of Season of Creation; *Laudato Si’* Generation and climate change; etc.

Click here to [register](#).

## SAVE THE DATE

**2-6 December**—Formation Workshop for JPIC Promoters. Theme: “Call to holiness as contemplatives in action: promoting God’s reign of justice, peace and love.” This workshop provides new Promoters with the tools needed to animate members of their congregation. Others engaged in JPIC-related ministries are welcome to attend the full workshop or individual sessions. [Click here for more information and to register](#).