



NEWSBRIEFS



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



Editor's Note: *During these rich liturgical days following Easter, we are called to respond with compassion and to bring the presence of Christ to wherever we are. As disciples, we continue to reflect on the life of Jesus and to follow his example throughout the day. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we strive to determine what is ours to do during the global COVID-19 pandemic. Beyond our pain, we are challenged to keep connectedness alive, maintain solidarity and create a future that benefits everyone on Mother Earth, our common home.*

The COVID-19 pandemic revealed inequities threatening all people's lives, but that disproportionately affect the poor. It has exacerbated a crisis of economics, ecology, politics and social issues. To emerge from this global crisis, we must emphasize justice and equity. A viable solution is inclusive and fair, so that a global regeneration can heal our societies and our irreplaceable Mother Earth. The COVID-19 Commission, established by Pope Francis in 2020, prepares the future that gives us this hope.

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVOCACY: INTEGRAL PART OF THE WORKFOR JUSTICE, PEACE & INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)

"We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis,"
(Prayer of Pope Francis during the Angelus.)

The universal prayer intention of Pope Francis for the month April is FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS. The question that we need to answer is: Is the promotion and defense of human rights part of JPIC concern? Should we bring to the awareness of the religious institutes the violation of human rights that are happening in the countries where their members are present, and which need their prophetic response? This question is relevant at a time when there are gross violations of human rights all over the world even during this time of the pandemic which authoritarian leaders exploit to perpetuate themselves in power.



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At the moment, the attention of the world is focused on Myanmar where over 600 peaceful anti-coup protesters have been shot by the police and military. Nuns and priests have joined the civil disobedience movement although the bishops and superiors have cautioned them from getting involved. Pope Francis is pleading to put a stop to the violence. The UN has condemned the gross violation of human rights in Myanmar. Sanctions have been imposed.

The UN Human Rights Council, the International Criminal Court and other International Organizations have also expressed concern about the Philippines. There are over 33,000 victims of extrajudicial killings perpetrated by police, military and the death squads. The killings continue even during the pandemic. In other parts of the world, repression and human rights violations persist—whether in Thailand, Palestine, Iraq, Syria, Russia, China, Hongkong, and many parts of Africa and Latin America. In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis looks at the global situation and laments how fundamental rights are discarded or violated:

“It frequently becomes clear that in practice human rights are not equal for all... While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or violated.” (FT 22)

In spite the violations of human rights, there seems to be hesitation to speak out on the part of the Church and among religious. The question remains: is human rights advocacy really part of the mission of the Church and religious congregations?

Fifty years ago, the 1971 Synod of Bishops came out with a document *Justicia in Mundo* (*Justice in the World*). It declared that “the Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of people and their very salvation demand it.” (JM 36). This document which was one of the sources of inspiration for the emergence of the Commission for

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation of the unions of superiors general (USG and UISG) clearly affirm that the Church has the right and duty to proclaim the message of justice and to denounce instances of injustices, including the violation of human rights

Thus, the promotion and defense of human rights is an integral part of the pastoral and prophetic mission of the Church and religious institutes. It should not just be the option and passion of individuals. This is the duty and mission of every member of the Church—the clergy, laity and religious. The task of the commission and the secretariat as well as JPIC promoters is to foster a greater awareness and clearer analysis not just of the ecological crisis but also the social-political situation in various parts of the world—including specific cases of human rights violations. It is up to the leadership of the local Churches, religious institutes at the general and provincial level to promote awareness/analysis and urge their members to act prophetically and to be in solidarity with the victims of injustice and human rights violation.— *Contributor: Fr. Amado*

L. Picardal, CSSR, Co-Executive Secretary. [Downloads are available on jpicroma.org](https://www.jpicroma.org)

ECONOMY OF FRANCESCO

During the last decade we have experienced climate changes affecting our planet and people. As young people, we are becoming conscious that there is no second earth. We have to take action and be resolute.



In the Frate Elia Chapel in Assisi during the Economy of Francesco.

The time is now and unless we change our way of living, we will see the consequences of the climate crisis. This crisis is connected to socio-economics but is largely an ethical crisis that has harmed human beings. The pandemic has worsened the social problems and inequalities that divide the world. The world's economy is sick, and the problems are symptoms of a social illness. What we can do to change the inequality that wounds the social fabric?

Pope Francis said we cannot be quiet, we need to act together. *“a worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person’s problems are the problems of all.”* (FT, 32).

In 2019, young economists, students, entrepreneurs and activists accepted an invitation by the Holy Father to reanimate the economy. He invited us to seek a different economy, one that includes, creates life, humanizes and cares for creation. He gave us the path, to follow the footsteps of Saint Francis and choose God as our polar star, becoming poor with the poor, taking his example to rebuild our house. A movement was born: the Economy of Francesco, an answer from more than 3,000 young people. The event was scheduled for March 2020 in Assisi but was postponed to November 2020. We gathered in 12 villages/working groups to propose economic alternatives and to develop projects for a more equal and just world. We divided into streams: research, projects, entrepreneurship and webinars to prepare ourselves with seniors and other young people to deepen the connections to cure the world’s wounds. The November 2020 event was online, in 5 languages, with 27 webinars, 30 speakers, and 60 sustainable projects shared by the youth. The desire to create a concrete and sustainable project was stated in the final declaration.

The Agriculture and Justice village, which involved at least 100 young participants discussed solutions to agriculture, food security and world supply. The results were two projects: Women-Mother Earth Alliance and Demo-Farm. The Mother Earth Alliance aims to build a strong global coalition around the themes of **women’s right to land**, and food sovereignty. These initiatives highlight the role of women in food security, and the need to recognize rights and improve conditions. The project is to build concrete actions to connect the hungry with food producers. The pilot project is in Florianopolis, Brazil, providing organic and agroecological product baskets to combat food insecurity worsened by the pandemic. The project is on-going and the young people are tracking the results.

The Demo-Farm aims to develop a global network of pilot farms rooted in regenerative agricultural practices and vocational education. Local farmers around the demo farm area are invited to be part of

this by learning the regenerative agriculture practices and using the knowledge on their own farms. Implementing one demo farm in a vulnerable area can increase soil health and contribute to mitigating climate change. It can also contribute socially and economically by serving as a hub for education, especially for women and youth, and by reducing or leveraging farm costs by building a low waste model and increasing cooperation.

These projects are just two examples of the proposals that the youth of Economy of Francesco are developing. This is how we are committed to hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the Earth.—Contributor: *Catalina Salome Hinojosa Lopez, Member of the Executive Board of the Economy of Francesco and on the Working Group for Agriculture and Justice.*

FOOD AND HUNGER



The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was established as a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1945 to raise the standards of nutrition globally. They have made many recommendations to improve the efficiency of production and distribution of food and agriculture products.

The Committee of World Food Security (CFS) was established within FAO in 1974 and reformed in 2009 as an inclusive international and intergovernmental platform (governmental and NGO) to work together to ensure food security and nutrition. Within this committee, as part of the Civil Society Mechanism (CFS), the International Communities of Religious (ICR) of the USG/UISG Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission, was registered with observer status and enabled to participate in the work of the CFS and FAO.

The Committee of World Food Security meets in general session each October at FAO. Year-round it works to develop policy recommendations and

guidance for food and nutrition topics that are discussed at the general sessions. The topics of the February 2021 session indicate some of the most important issues under discussion. Food systems is an overall issue that has been in the forefront of agriculture debate in recent years. Two significant policy statements on this subject were endorsed. The first concerns voluntary guidelines. This policy statement considers the aspects of hunger in terms of sufficient food as well as adequate nutrition. Previous studies have shown that the number of people in the world going hungry every day has [increased since 2014 with 820 million now undernourished](#). Their diets lack adequate and balanced nutrients. And finally, [WHO states that in 2016, 39%](#) of the world's population was overweight or obese. The second policy statement, titled Agroecology, concerns current policies of food production and distribution and analyzes what methods would be most appropriate for the world today.

The ongoing debate on agribusiness discusses innovations and contrasts industrial agriculture with organic production methods. This important dialogue and debate must continue to address the nutritional needs of the people.

In 2020, the Secretary General of the UN at New York, Antonio Guterres, called for a UN conference to be held in September 2021 entitled The United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS). The goal was to ensure a global movement for safe, accessible, sustainable and equitable food systems and commit to learn, share, gather and act for food systems transformation so that all people in the world are assured adequate food with a balanced nutrition and to overcome malnutrition.

Two emergent topics developing at CFS during 2021-2023 are the Youth Engagement and Unemployment in Agriculture and Food Systems and the Voluntary **Guidelines on Gender equality and women's empowerment for FSN (Food Security & Nutrition)**.

Contributed by Ken Thesing, MM, JPIC Promoter for the Maryknoll Missionaries and Religious Representative for the ICR Association at FAO

Useful links for further information.

- [Committee on World Food Security \(CFS\)—documentation on the CSF Session 47 on February 2021.](#)
- [Committee on World Food Security YouTube page - contains recordings of the CFS 47 Plenary](#)

[Session and other interesting videos.](#)

- [United Nations Food Systems Summit 2021—resources and information.](#)

FROM LAUDATO SI' TO QUERIDA AMAZONIA



On March 3, 2021, the Spanish-Portuguese Speaking Group reflected on the relationship between the Encyclical *Laudato Si'* and the Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia*, rediscovering the immense wealth of Pope Francis' teachings and the discursive consistency of the messages he addresses to God's people. A clear indicator of a deep harmony between the Church's ability to read the signs of the times and its undertaking to advocating in each setting for justice, peace and the care for creation.

In the above messages, the dialogue between faith and science is focused on the awareness that the environmental destruction is driven by the irresponsible exploitation of natural resources by human being. Understanding the vital consistency of ecosystems is the science domain; assuming the care for creation as an ethical stance is up to religions: interconnection between these two competence areas is key to assuming an integral ecology. In this regard, *Laudato Si'* reports the environmental destruction in the world, opening new paths in the Church, while *Querida Amazonia* points out the critical level reached by this situation in the concrete geography of the Amazon Basin that is shared by nine countries.

The guiding thread of *Querida Amazonia* (8) is Pope Francis' assertion already found in *Laudato Si'* (48- 49 and 91-93): "Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach." Thus, the Pope clarifies the meaning of the "Integral Human Development," whereby the option for ecology under the Social Teaching of the Church is quite different from other noble global agendas that point to environmental advocacy as well.

Laudato Si' had already indicated (L.S. 38) the urgent need to safeguard the richly biodiverse lungs of our planet which are the Amazon and the Congo basins, an

issue also emphasized in the Apostolic Exhortation (Q.A. 48) with the addition of the Borneo ecosystems. This call of the Supreme Pontiff gains greater importance due to the enormous destruction of these biomes, with selfish economical systems associated in the exploitation of lands without respecting either nature or communities. Hence, the development of rules for social and environmental protection should become a joint challenge involving all the social actors. These rules should prevent any kind of interventionism that could hamper projects' transparency; seek communion among current societies; and lead them towards intergenerational solidarity, in order to ensure to future generations a rational use and enjoyment of natural goods.

A change in consumption patterns is required, so the **current production systems' approach to natural resources** must be deeply reviewed. From this viewpoint, education becomes the path that is mapped out in *Laudato Si'* and clearly signaled in *Querida Amazonia*. Advocacy of human rights and local cultures should ensure households' habitat and heritage. With this perspective, human development leads to **personal integration, fullness of creature's dignity, denial of any destructive possession, and revival of creation's harmony.**

Contributor: Rafael Bejarano, SDB, Director de la "Ciudad Don Bosco" in Medellin, Colombia

[Link to ppt](#)

IMPORTANCE OF ENCOUNTER AND DIALOGUE

The Encounter, Dialogue and Reconciliation Series focused on nonviolence, family & community and men & women in collaborative relationships. This was a collaborative program with the Catholic Nonviolence Initiative (CNI) a project of Pax Christi International. The Nonviolence conflict resolution session stressed the importance of formation in nonviolence, provided examples of conflict resolution and an analysis of violence and how to organize against it.



Patricia Gaffney, England, provided a number of tools to promote nonviolence which included prayers, events, messaging, and guidance for demonstrations. She also developed a timeline for recognizing important activities.

Elizabeth Kanini Kimau shared her story of establishing a model for resolving community/tribal conflict in



Kenya and South Sudan. She described how she entered into the life situations of people and gained their trust. She is now being recommended to other tribes by persons who experienced her impact.

Pietro Ameglio, Mexico, described his efforts with grassroots organizing. He shared his research and grassroots organizing tactics. He integrated his insights from his work with academics, government officials and those working on the ground.

Family and Communities explored the formative processes within the family, intergenerational communications and making connections to life in the community. The speakers were from the Focolare Movement.

Lucia Fronza Crepez, former member of the Italian Parliament and co-founder of the New Humanity Movement described her experience of raising the awareness of civic issues in the family. She shared her discernment process in which she voted against Italy's support of the war in Iraq.



Joanne and Manny Gacayan, members of the Secretariat of New Families Movement in the Philippines, discussed the importance of family formation in developing values of compassion and responsibility within the home and in the community.

Kevin and Katie Kelley, USA, along with their daughter and son-in-law own and operate Terra Vitae Farms, an intergenerational enterprise that raises livestock using regenerative farming practices in the spirit of *Laudato Si'*. They are also involved in providing foods locally and advocating healthy eating practices.



Men-Women Collaborative Relationships spoke about sustaining relationships of respect, understanding the equality of both the masculine and feminine dimensions and positive examples of collaborative interaction. Sr. Bernadette Reis, FSP, Vatican News Editorial Coordinator, shared her research on the historical aspect of women and men throughout the history of the Church. She stressed the importance of owning this experience in order to promote healthy relationships in the Church.

Fr. Alex Longo, OSA, psychologist in Rome, illustrated how negative mind-sets contribute to hostile relationships. The path forward for healing and collaboration takes courage to address difficult issues, persistence and supportive companions.

Sr. Elena Balatti, SMC, Humanitarian Coordinator for Caritas, addressed the root causes of gender-based violence in the dioceses of South Sudan. She stressed the importance of support of the government in promoting the involvement of women leaders in politics.

The series was very positively evaluated by the participants. You are encouraged to listen and read any of the information available on these topics in English, Spanish and French. The whole program with the addition of the responses from the presenters is available on the JPIC Workshop website on the Thinkific platform. To enroll in the program, please contact jplic.edu@gmail.com.

FRATELLI TUTTI AND POPE FRANCIS' LENTEN MESSAGE

The March JPIC Promoters meeting reflected on the theme: *Fratelli Tutti* and the Lenten message of Pope

Francis. Fr. Amado Picardal, CSsR, powerfully presented the message of both documents emphasizing the **importance of love as the “leap of the heart, it brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion.”** (Pope Francis Lenten Message 2021). Fr. Andreas Gofert, M. Afr, led the opening prayer helping us receptive to the importance of dialogue as shown in the early days of the church community.

The first part of the presentation focused on an Overview of *Fratelli Tutti* and a brief theological commentary. *Fratelli Tutti* can be divided into three sections following the See-Judge-Act Method. The first section is the global situation characterized by fragmentation and division (ch. 1). The second section is the theological vision which contains a reflection on the Good Samaritan (ch. 2) and the foundation of fraternity and social friendship (ch. 3—the love that impels all to universal communion). The third section (chapters 4-8) dwells with the concrete application of this theological vision to specific concerns (migration, politics, dialogue, peace, interreligious collaboration). The link between *Fratelli Tutti* and *Laudato Si'* is the theology of Universal Communion—that everything and everyone is interconnected. The focus of *Fratelli Tutti* is communion among human beings which finds expression in fraternity and social friendship.

The second part of the presentation focused on how the message of *Fratelli Tutti* is reflected in Pope Francis' Lenten message which uses as a framework the theological virtues of faith, hope and love. Fraternity and social friendship are the concrete expression of love and communion. At this particular time, loving care and concern should be directed especially to those who are suffering due to the pandemic.

This was followed by a time of sharing by the participants based on the following questions: What is in the presentation that resonates with you? How can do I/we concrete live fraternity/social friendship in my/our community and ministry/ apostolate? What are the obstacles that I/we encounter?

The sharing centered around what resonated in the messages, how to practically live the inspiration and the obstacles that may be encountered. The issues related to feminism and the voice of women received the



greatest attention. It was stressed that in order for the messages of both documents to be actualized, women need to be included at the table where decisions are being made to develop a community of social friendship.

[Link to PPT.](#)

POPE FRANCIS INTENTIONS

APRIL Fundamental rights We pray for those who risk their lives while fighting for fundamental rights under dictatorships, authoritarian regimes and even in democracies in crisis. Prayer available the first Friday of the month. <https://www.popesprayer.va/>.

Urbi et Orbi - The Easter message of Pope Francis "to the city and the world" is a message of hope and compassion tempered with practicality. He calls for solidarity in these trying times of the pandemic and entreats us to remember the needs of the most vulnerable, as we all have a right to care. The [text is available here](#) and the [video is available here](#).

JPIC PROMOTERS MEETING

April 12—English CORE Meeting 3 pm to 5 pm
April 15—Engaging the Vision of Laudato Si'. Sowing Hope for the Planet webinar. The session is an exciting opportunity to be updated on the work of promoting Laudato Si'. 2 pm to 4 pm Rome time in EN, ES, FR and IT. [Link to flyer on JPIC website.](#)

April 20: Biodiversity Conference hosted by the Ecology Taskforce of DPIHD. The JPIC Commission USG-UISG is also a sponsor of the event.

April 20: Evaluation and Moving Forward Joint Meeting of the English and Spanish/Portuguese Groups, 9 am to 12 pm

INTERNATIONAL DAYS

April 22—[International Mother Earth Day](#) recognizes a collective responsibility to promote harmony with nature and the Earth. 2021 Theme <https://www.earthday.org/earth-day-2021/>

Other resources with a focus on earth and Laudato Si' are available on www.sowinghopefortheplanet.org.

- Ponte Sant'Angelo Methodist Church, Rome—[Avoiding Single-Use Plastics](#)
- Sisters of Saint Joseph, 23rd Publication, Author Sr. Mary Elizabeth Clark—[booklet for teaching children how to care for God's creation](#)
- Wheaton Franciscan's in the USA—[Praise for the four elements](#)
- Sisters of the Holy Cross—[carbon footprint reduction fund, climate change statement, and slideshow](#)
- Tertiary Sisters of St. Francis in Cameroon—[Community Action](#)
- [Going Solar/Cleaning Campaign/Tree Planting](#)
- The Precious Blood Convent Mariannahill, South Africa—[Garlic Pest Control](#)

- Figlie di Maria Ausiliatrice—[Care For Our Common Home](#)
- Servas de Nossa Senhora de Fátima—[Our Commitment to Laudato Si'](#)
- [Press release](#) of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development announcing the publication of a new document on water, Aqua fons vitae [EN](#), [ES](#), [FR](#), [IT](#).

April 22—[International Girls in ICT Day](#) – created to encourage and empower girls and young women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics careers.

ENGAGING THE VISION OF LAUDATO SI'

The movement to make Laudato Si' a reality is gaining momentum. There are a number of areas being considered to engage this vision. Twenty participants in the JPIC



Workshop held last

December shared their plans and insights for actualizing Laudato Si'. Over 800 persons are registered in the program as Promoters of Laudato Si' in their Congregation. We are currently looking at each of the Laudato Si' Goals. "Footsteps" are needed to actualize the goals and adapt the language for the religious.

The webinar on April 15th will have more details and development on to this engagement. For more information: www.jpicroma.org.



The Road to COP15 - a webinar on biodiversity will be presented on April 20. For more information or to register for the event, go to this [link on Sowing Hope for the Planet](#).

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