



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



2015 JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION HAPPENINGS

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This year's **Ecumenical Advocacy Days**, which took place in Washington, D.C., April 17–20, focused on "Breaking the Chains: Mass Incarceration and Systems of Exploitation." I heard from several folks who did not



attend that the topic was not appealing or pertinent to their ministries. Truth be told, I felt the same way, but decided to attend anyway. I was very

pleasantly surprised. Due to the recent increase of gun violence, the topic led into gun violence and mass shootings.

I attended workshops on Restorative Justice led by Joanne Blaney, a Maryknoll Missioner who spent the past 18 years training restorative practices in Brazil. We spoke at length about the use of restorative practices within the Secular order, particularly empathetic listening practices within local and regional council meetings.

I attended the **2015 Annual Federation Conference** at the Franciscan Federation Gathering, which took place in Indianapolis, Ind., June 19–21. This year's theme was "Responding to God's Love, A Franciscan Moral Vision." The main speakers were Mary Beth Ingham, CSJ, who spoke on Franciscan Discernment and Divine Love; Thomas Nairn, OFM, who spoke about the Franciscan conscience; and Joe Chinnici, OFM, who spoke of poverty as a form of life.

I had an engaging conversation with Interim Executive Director, Dianne Kaimann, OSF, about holistic collaboration with all the Franciscan Family, including the Seculars. We are all of one family and one charism and must continue to be in communion with one another, especially as all our numbers are dwindling.

In attendance with me was my sister and member of the National JPIC Commission, Rosemarie LeClercq,

OFS, from the Saint Thomas More Region in Scottsdale, Ariz.



I also had a conversation with Amanda Lyons from Franciscans International about more Secular

Franciscan involvement. A gathering is scheduled in New York City during the National Chapter.



I was blessed with a scholarship to attend the week-long course at **St. Bonaventure University** in Olean, N.Y., this past July. The course, "Assisi in the Time of

Francis: Birthplace of the Secular Franciscans," was taught by Franciscan scholar Jean-François Godet-Calogeras, PhD. It was wonderful to connect with Franciscans from all over the globe, including two Canadian sisters from Ontario and Nova Scotia; a brother from Japan; and our own Minister General, Tibor Kausar, OFS, from Hungary. Three others from my region, the Brothers and Sisters of St. Francis also attended.



THE JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION ANIMATE PEACE RETREAT

What an incredibly blessed time it was at the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Animate Peace Retreat held August 20–23 at the Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows in Belleville, Illinois.

About 30 Seculars representing 18 regions were in attendance for a weekend of prayer, sharing, skills building and Franciscan joy. The weekend included presentations by the JPIC Vice-Chair, Rhett Engelking, OFS, and National JPIC Commission Spiritual Assistant, Brother David Buer, OFM, who also led our daily Morning and Evening Praise.

Retreatants participated in several Franciscan Sacred Pause Moments – five minutes of falling still and being silent. By the end of the retreat, the five minutes seemed shorter; suggesting that the pause can be as long or as short as needed. Several members shared that they would introduce the Franciscan Sacred Pause into their fraternities and councils.

We were also blessed to have Father Joe Zimmerman, OFM, from Quincey, Ill., who with Br. David gave a presentation on Blessed John Duns Scotus: Human Dignity and Community with the Rest of Creation. They also showed a short video on Father Augustus Tolton, the first Black priest ordained in the United States, a former slave who lived in the 19th century.

One retreatant, Jim Myres, OFS, of the Holy Trinity Region led a small pilgrimage to Ferguson, Mo., to meet with Deacon Al Love of Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Parish, who ministers in the epicenter of



the violence. The group came back and reported on their time with the deacon, as well as what the sense of the area is like today.

Also in attendance were our Youth and Young Adults Commission Co-chairs, Sue and Christy Nelson, who peppered the weekend with upcoming plans and events for engaging youth.

The main undercurrent of the weekend was the Cantic of the Creatures, which was the focus of our Morning and Evening Praise, and Pope Francis' encyclical, Laudato Si. These Morning and Evening Praise segments were the beginning of the prayers for the Season of Caring for Creation — which runs from September 1 to October 4.

Friar Joe celebrated the Sunday Liturgy for us on Saturday evening in the magnificent Christ the King Chapel. My regional sister, Theresa Christie, OFS, of the Brothers and Sisters of Saint Francis Region, gracefully and beautifully led the singing, making our Liturgy a Franciscan joy-filled experience.

I could never have pulled off such a blessed weekend without the dedicated and tireless assistance of my sister Cherryle Fruge, OFS, of the St. Joan of Arc Region. Thank you again, my dear sister! I also want to thank Br. David, who also doubled as chauffeur, doing pickups and drop offs to and from the MetroLink.

Thank you to all who came out to share, laugh, cry, sing, pray and eat together! I am truly full!

