



JUSTICE, PEACE AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION



Franciscan Compassion in Action

Carolyn D. Townes, O.F.S., National JPIC Animator



One question that I am most frequently asked is, “*What is the job description of a JPIC Animator?*” This question tickles me as I think back about ten years ago. As a new Animator for **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation** for the Church of St. Francis of Assisi in New York City, I asked that very same question. With the help of the Master Animator, the Holy Spirit, I discovered an answer. Perhaps it is not a definitive answer, but it was an answer that became my mission for the next ten years. An animator is one who brings life to something; in this case, that something would be the issues of peace and social justice. This is my “job description” for a JPIC Animator – one who, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, brings life to the issues of peace and justice in our world, inviting others to take action on those issues.

So, how do we “bring life” to the issues? First, through contemplation. More than prayer, this is a deeper reflection, where we fall still and quiet and question our inner soul about what is ours to do. Second, awareness and education. We cannot

change what you are not aware of. After contemplating about what is ours to do, we educate ourselves. Education is not merely picking up a few books and reading them. It also includes stepping outside of ourselves to ask questions of those involved and affected by the issues. This is about listening to stories and sharing life experiences. If the Spirit led us to a particular issue, it is because somewhere deep within, we have been touched by that issue. How have we been touched? This is where contemplation comes around again. These principles are not linear; they are circular. When we are broken open and emptied, the Spirit moves in to fill us with exactly what we need.

After we have deeply reflected and questioned, after we have educated ourselves through stories and dialogue, then we animate. We bring all of this experience to life by taking action inspired by the power and the grace of the Holy Spirit. Not my will, but the will of the One who calls me to this action.

Allow me to share two such examples from members of our National JPIC Commission. The first is a moving reflection by **Sandra Thompson, OFS**, from the Saint Elizabeth of Hungary Region in Maine. The second is an inspired action by **Roger Yockey, OFS**, from the Troubadours of Peace Region in Washington State. Our National JPIC Commission is an extraordinary group of Seculars doing amazing work across this nation. Over the coming issues, I hope to share their hearts and souls through contemplation, education and animation.

May the Lord bless you and give you peace.



A reflection of God’s love for us for the world

Sandra Thompson, OFS

“Am I open to new ways of loving and being loved?”

This was one of the heart-searching questions asked at our May retreat.

Mary’s visit to Elizabeth provided me with an opportunity to make the connection between JPIC and this question. A reflection on the visitation in the publication *Word Among Us* (5/31/14), describes this meeting between Mary and Elizabeth both as unique and as something that we can all experience. “As baptized believers, each of us is capable of bearing Christ to the world. If our eyes were open to the truth we too would rejoice and be humbled in the presence of so holy a vessel as a sister or brother in Christ.”

Like Mary, I carry Christ to those who come into my life each day. The cashier, the person that just cut me off, the person asking for money at the intersection, the immigrant, the homeless, my boss, parents and friends. Like Elizabeth, if I am truly open to new ways of being loved, my heart would skip a beat when these people come into my day. If I were truly open to new ways of loving I would be humbled by the very presence of Christ in them visiting with me.

Article 13 of our Rule calls us to see Christ in our brothers and sisters, to accept all people as gifts from the Lord and to create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ. I believe that when we open ourselves up to love and to be loved, we are stirred to action. Like Mary’s journey to Elizabeth, our love should stir a deep desire to “create conditions of life worthy of people redeemed by Christ.”

As we open ourselves to loving in new ways, what initiatives call us to action: Immigration reform, dignity of life, human trafficking,

working conditions, homelessness...? Charity and Justice, a new way to love and be loved, in action: pray about it.

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Mother’s Day Vigil at Tacoma Detention Center

Roger Yockey, OFS

Secular Franciscans were among the estimated 200 people who gathered outside the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, Washington, on Saturday, May 10, for a **Mother's Day Vigil**. The messages were clear: "Stop the Detentions," "Stop the Deportations" and "Keep Families Together."

This was one of many demonstrations at the detention center, where more than 1,000 immigrants are detained in this for-profit prison. The Secular Franciscans, together with many from the faith and immigrant communities, walk in solidarity with the detainees, their families, and all immigrants.

In the photo, left to right, Dianne Aid, TSSF, Marilyn Yockey, OFS, Roger Yockey, OFS, Mary Powell, OFS, and Inquirer Makalina Langi. Both Dianne and Roger are also Action Commissioners on the **Franciscan Action Network**.