JPIC IN YOUFRA



Guidance Document on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation for YOUFRA Worldwide.

PRESENTATION

Dear brothers and sisters,

YOUFRA throughout the world, peace and good.

The Franciscan Youth (YOUFRA), as part of the Franciscan Family, is called to live the Gospel by following in the footsteps of Saint Francis and Saint Clare of Assisi. Its vocation is not limited to personal spirituality or to the internal life of the community, but reaches out to the concrete realities of the world, especially wherever humanity and creation cry out for justice, reconciliation, peace, care and fraternity.

From this starting point, the dimension of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) constitutes an essential and transversal dimension of the life, vocation and mission of YOUFRA. The JPIC dimension finds its primary foundation in the Gospel and in the mission of the Church, which recognizes in every person an inherent dignity and a call to live in communion with others.[1] This commitment is expressed in the pursuit of justice, the defense of those who find themselves in situations of vulnerability, the building of peace, the promotion of the common good and the responsible care of creation.[2]

However, JPIC is not known or developed in the same way in all YOUFRA fraternities throughout the world. The diversity of realities makes it necessary to offer a common foundation that helps us understand: What is JPIC? What are its foundations? And why is it part of our Franciscan identity?

This document was created with the purpose of offering the fraternities of the Franciscan Youth an approach to the JPIC dimension, presenting its ecclesial and Franciscan foundations, its presence in the life and mission of the Franciscan Family and YOUFRA, and encouraging each national fraternity to know it, embrace it and develop it according to its own reality. It is not intended to be a complete formation program or to replace the formation processes of each country, but rather to serve as a common orientation that can be deepened and lived from the different local realities, in communion with International YOUFRA, the Franciscan Family and our Holy Mother Church.

YOUFRA is called to ask itself: How can it concretely live its Franciscan vocation and make the Gospel present through fraternity, justice, peace and the care of creation?

[1] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nn. 160-163.
[2] Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, especially nn. 22, 26, 27, 29 and 78.



With this horizon in mind, the document seeks to help fraternities to:

- Understand what JPIC is and why it constitutes a dimension of the life and mission of YOUFRA.
- Recognize its foundations in the Gospel, in the teaching of the Church and in the Franciscan charism.
- Understand how this dimension has developed within the Franciscan Family and YOUFRA.
- Encourage national fraternities to begin, strengthen or deepen JPIC work according to their own reality.
- Discover that justice, peace and the care of creation form part of the same response to the Franciscan call to live the Gospel in the world.

This document is the fruit of the shared journey of the brothers and sisters who formed the international JPIC working team of YOUFRA. From the diversity of their countries, experiences and particular realities during their years of service in YOUFRA and the OFS, each one contributed reflection, commitment and Franciscan sensitivity, making possible the construction of a common vision that seeks to serve and guide YOUFRA fraternities throughout the world.

Fraternally, your brothers and sisters,



International YOUFRA JPIC Commission

Sergio René Alvarado Merlos, JPIC coordinator and International YOUFRA Councilor for North and Central America

Gina Murillo, OFS Colombia

Murillo Torres Lopes, OFS Brazil

Mayra Santos, OFS Brazil

Br. Víctor Treminio OFM, Province of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Central America, Panama and Haiti

Document design: Sergio René Alvarado Merlos
Illustrations: Cristian Camargo, Argentina



PART I. THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

What is JPIC?

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation constitute a transversal dimension of the life and mission of the Church and, in a particular way, an expression proper to the Franciscan charism. In this sense, JPIC gathers and integrates the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church and lives them through a Franciscan sensitivity marked by universal fraternity, minority, peace, closeness to the poor and care for all creation.

From this perspective, JPIC can be understood as a Franciscan way of embodying the Social Doctrine of the Church in everyday life. Its principles do not remain merely as content for reflection, but are embraced through a way of life inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi: recognizing the other as a brother or sister, choosing more just and fraternal relationships, working for reconciliation, living simply and assuming a responsible relationship with all creation.

Therefore, living JPIC means looking at reality through the Gospel, interpreting it in the light of the Social Doctrine of the Church and responding through the Franciscan charism. In other words, JPIC becomes an axis from which young Franciscans learn to live the faith in its personal, fraternal, social and ecological dimensions, making justice, peace and the care of creation a concrete expression of their vocation.

Saint Francis recognized creatures and people as brothers and sisters, so respect and love for all of God's creation is not a separate issue. This vision is also expressed in one of the key insights of *Laudate Deum*: “everything is connected” and “no one is saved alone.”[3] Human life, social relationships and the environment are part of one and the same reality. Therefore, situations of injustice, poverty, exclusion, violence or environmental deterioration cannot be understood in isolation.

Commitment to JPIC invites us to recognize these interconnections and to respond from an integral perspective, seeking the common good and a fraternity that embraces people, communities and all creation.

From this perspective, JPIC is not an activity added to the life of YOUFRA, but a concrete expression of its Franciscan vocation: to live fraternity, defend the dignity of every person, promote peace, respond to injustices and responsibly care for our common home.

[3] Laudate Deum nn. 19



- **Key principles of JPIC:**

-Human dignity: Every person possesses a dignity that does not depend on his or her social, economic, cultural or political condition.[4]

-Preferential option for the poor: The Christian community is called to pay special attention to those living in situations of poverty, exclusion and vulnerability.[5]

-Solidarity: We recognize that persons and peoples are interrelated and that the well-being of some cannot be built upon the exclusion of others.[6]

-Universal fraternity: From the Franciscan charism, we recognize bonds of fraternity with every person and every creature.[7]

-Common good: Social life must be organized in such a way that all persons and communities can attain integral human development.[8]

-Participation and shared responsibility: Every person is called to contribute responsibly to building society and the common good.[9]

-Peace and reconciliation: Peace requires justice, dialogue, respect for human dignity and the constant pursuit of reconciliation.[10]

-Care of creation: Creation is a gift that demands responsibility, respect and a sustainable relationship with our common home.[11]



The following section offers a conceptual breakdown of each of the components that make up the term JPIC, in order to analyze its meaning individually.

[4] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nn. 105-159, especially nn. 107-112.
[5] Ibid. nn. 182-184
[6] Ibid. nn. 192-196
[7] Laudato Si', nn. 10-12; Fratelli Tutti, nn. 1-8
[8] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nn. 164-170, especially n. 164
[9] Ibid. nn. 189-191
[10] Gaudium et Spes, nn.77-82, especially n.78; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,nn.494-520
[11] Laudato Si', nn. 13-16, 137-162; Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nn. 451-487



JUSTICE



Justice means recognizing the dignity of every person and promoting relationships based on equality, fraternity and respect. It also involves a commitment to paying special attention to those who find themselves in situations of poverty, exclusion or vulnerability.

Laudate Deum points out that the effects of the crisis particularly affect the most vulnerable populations, while responsibility for its causes is not distributed in the same way among persons and countries.[12]

In Chapter II, "WAY OF LIFE," Article 15 of the Rule of the OFS tells us: "Let them be present by the testimony of their human life and also by effective initiatives, both individual and communal, in the promotion of justice, particularly in the sphere of public life; let them commit themselves to concrete choices consistent with their faith." (Article 15)[13]

"You have been told, O man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you: only to do justice, to love faithfulness and to walk humbly with your God."
Book of Micah 6:8

Christian justice begins with recognition of the dignity of every human person. Therefore, it cannot be reduced merely to compliance with rules or to the distribution of goods; rather, it involves promoting social conditions that allow each person to develop integrally and to participate in the life of the community.[14]

From the perspective of the Social Doctrine of the Church, human dignity constitutes the foundation of the other principles of social life. Promoting justice therefore means defending human rights, confronting situations of exclusion and promoting social relationships oriented toward the common good.[15]

[12] Laudate Deum, nn. 2-5 and 9-13
[13] Rule of the OFS
[14] Gaudium et Spes, nn. 26-29.
[15] *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, nn. 105-159



PEACE

Franciscan peace goes beyond the simple absence of conflict or violence. It is connected with reconciliation, dialogue, respect and fraternity.



Saint Francis is known for the way he approached people with humility and dialogue. Therefore, from the Franciscan charism, this commitment is expressed especially through fraternity, listening, dialogue and an attitude of reconciliation.

In Chapter II, "WAY OF LIFE," Article 19 of the Rule of the OFS tells us: "As bearers of peace and mindful that peace must be built unceasingly, let them seek out ways of unity and fraternal understanding." (Article 19)[16]

"Blessed are those who work for peace, for they will be called children of God."
Gospel according to Saint Matthew 5:9

For the Church, peace cannot be understood simply as the absence of violence or war. Peace requires conditions of justice, respect for human dignity, dialogue, reconciliation and the pursuit of the common good.[17]

Building peace is therefore a permanent task. It means learning to resolve conflicts through dialogue, overcoming indifference, recognizing the dignity of others and working for social conditions that make genuinely human coexistence possible.[18]

[16] Rule of the OFS
[17] Gaudium et Spes, nn. 77-82
[18] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, Chapter XI, on the promotion of peace.



INTEGRITY OF CREATION

It expresses the relationship of fraternity that Franciscan thought establishes between the human person and all creation. It is not merely a matter of "caring for the environment," but of understanding that nature has value in itself and that human beings are part of it.

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of
Eden to cultivate it and care for it."
Genesis 2:15



The integrity of creation means recognizing that human life and the life of all creation are profoundly interconnected.[19] Care for our common home cannot be separated from concern for the dignity of persons, especially those who suffer the consequences of poverty, environmental degradation and social inequalities.[20]

In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis develops the concept of integral ecology, pointing out that environmental, economic, social, cultural and human dimensions are closely interrelated.[21] Therefore, responding to the ecological crisis also requires transforming lifestyles, economic relationships, patterns of consumption and social structures that affect both people and the environment.[22]

For Franciscan spirituality, this commitment finds a particular expression in universal fraternity and in the recognition of all creation as a gift from God.[23]

This dimension invites us to assume an ethical responsibility toward nature and everything created by God, promoting ways of life that respect natural resources, animals, ecosystems and future generations.

In Chapter II, "WAY OF LIFE," Article 18 of the Rule and General Constitutions of the OFS tells us: "Moreover they should respect all creatures, animate and

[19] Laudato Si', nn. 10-11, 49
[20] Ibid. n. 49
[21] Ibid. nn. 137-162
[22] Ibid. nn. 163-181
[23] Laudato Si', nn. 10-11; General JPIC Office, OFM

inanimate, which 'bear the imprint of the Most High"[24] and they should strive to move from the temptation of exploiting creation to the Franciscan concept of universal kinship.

Keys to integrating the Social Doctrine of the Church, JPIC and the Franciscan charism:

THE COMMON GOOD

The Social Doctrine of the Church understands the common good as the set of social conditions that allow persons and communities to attain their development more fully.[25] It is not simply the sum of individual interests, but that which belongs to everyone and can only be achieved and protected through shared responsibility.[26]

From the perspective of JPIC, the common good invites us to overcome an individualistic view of reality and to ask how our personal and community decisions affect others, especially those in situations of greater vulnerability, as well as future generations.[27] From a Franciscan perspective, seeking the common good means recognizing that we belong to one family and that care for people and care for creation cannot be separated.

In this sense, working for justice, peace and the integrity of creation constitutes a concrete way of contributing to the common good.[28]

SOLIDARITY

Solidarity expresses the recognition that persons and peoples are deeply interconnected.[29] It does not consist merely in occasional acts of assistance, but in making the challenges and sufferings of others our own and responsibly committing ourselves to the transformation of those situations that generate exclusion, poverty or inequality.[30]

[24] Canticle of the Creatures
[25] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, n. 164
[26] Ibid. nn. 164-165
[27] Laudato Si', nn. 48-52, 156-162
[28] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nn. 164-165; Laudato Si', nn. 156-162
[29] Ibid. nn. 192-193
[30] Ibid. nn. 193-194



For young Franciscans, solidarity is expressed through a fraternity that goes out to meet others, listens to concrete realities and seeks shared responses.[31] In this way, solidarity becomes a permanent attitude that unites formation, fraternity and action.[32]

PARTICIPATION AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

The promotion of justice, peace and the integrity of creation requires the active participation of persons and communities.[33] The Social Doctrine of the Church recognizes participation as a responsibility through which people contribute to the social, cultural, economic and political life of their communities.[34]

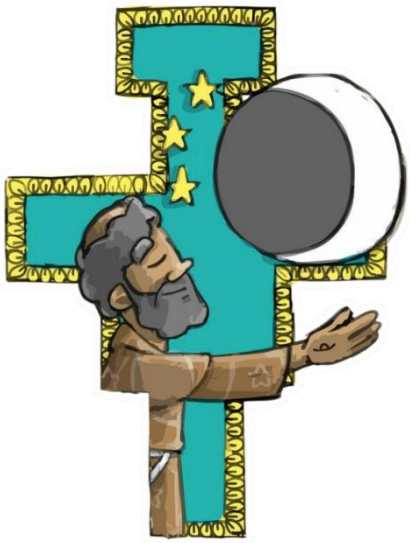
Within YOUFRA, this participation is expressed through the shared responsibility of every fraternity and every young person in living JPIC.[35] It is not a matter of delegating this dimension solely to one person or commission, but of having those responsible who help animate and coordinate a responsibility that belongs to the entire fraternity (cf. YOUFRA documents and guidelines on the life and responsibility of the fraternity).



[31] Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, nn. 194-196; Fratelli Tutti, nn. 114-127
[32] Ibid. nn. 194-196.
[33] Ibid. nn. 189-191.
[34] Ibid. nn. 189-190
[35] Ibid. nn. 189-191

PART II. THE IMPORTANCE OF JPIC FOR THE FRANCISCAN LAITY

Franciscan lay people are called to embody the Gospel in the world: in family life, work, society and politics. JPIC offers them a framework for uniting spirituality and social action, as requested by the Rule of the OFS (Arts. 14-19). It makes it possible to give concrete witness to fraternity and justice in everyday life. *Christifideles Laici* reminds us that the lay faithful personally receive a mission for the sake of the Church and the world, and that this call reaches young people in a particular way.[36]



From this perspective, JPIC helps the Franciscan lay person to live faith and daily life as one. It is not only a matter of taking part in campaigns, social projects or ecological activities, but of embracing justice, peace, human dignity, fraternity and care for creation as criteria that guide relationships and decisions. The Church warns precisely against the danger of separating faith from life and of neglecting Christian responsibility in professional, social, economic, cultural and political spheres.[37]

For the Franciscan lay person, therefore, JPIC becomes a concrete way of living his or her vocation in the world according to the charism of Saint Francis. Wherever a person studies, works, forms a family, builds relationships and participates in society, he or she is called to act as leaven of the Gospel, seeking the Kingdom of God from within everyday realities.[38] In this way, Franciscan spirituality and commitment to reality are not separate paths, but expressions of the same vocation.

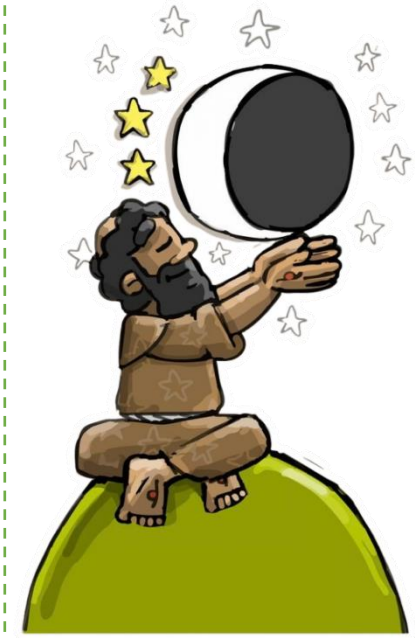
Professional, social and everyday life is not a sphere separate from spiritual life, but a concrete place of encounter with God, fulfillment of his will and service to others.[39] From this perspective, JPIC helps the Franciscan lay person integrate faith and life, so that justice, peace, fraternity and care for creation are expressed in daily decisions, relationships and responsibilities.

[36] Christifideles Laici, n. 2.
[37] Ibid. n. 2
[38] Ibid. n. 15
[39] Ibid. n. 17



- **The Spirit who moves the Church throughout history**

The history of the Church can also be read as a journey in which the Holy Spirit urges her to listen to the signs of the times and to respond, from the Gospel, to the concrete realities of humanity. The path of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) did not appear all at once. It is the fruit of a process in which the Church progressively deepened her mission in the world, her commitment to human dignity, justice, peace and, increasingly, the care of all creation.



Before the publication of *Rerum novarum*, Pope Leo XIII had already recognized in the Third Order of Saint Francis a force capable of contributing to Christian and social renewal. In *Auspicato concessum* (1882), he highlighted its contribution to peace, concord, care for the poor, and the stability of society; and in *Humanum genus* (1884), he called for it to be promoted and strengthened, emphasizing values such as fraternity, justice, and charity.

A decisive moment in this journey was the publication of Pope Leo XIII's encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, considered a fundamental point of reference for the modern development of the Social Doctrine of the Church. Faced with the profound economic and social transformations brought about by industrialization, the Church directly addressed the situation of workers, inequality, relations between capital and labor and the defense of human dignity. In this way, the Church began to formulate more systematically a social response rooted in the Gospel and guided by truth, justice and the good of persons.[40]

- **A Church that listens to the world: the Second Vatican Council**

The Second Vatican Council, held between 1962 and 1965, opened a time of renewal and listening for the Church. Among the questions present during this process was how to live the Church's mission in the midst of the world: How should we respond to humanity's anxieties and hopes? How should the Gospel be proclaimed within the concrete realities of peoples? How should we work for the dignity of every person, for justice and for peace?

A privileged expression of this journey was the Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, approved on December 7, 1965. In it, the Council affirms that the Church shares the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of humanity, especially of those who suffer. The mission of the Church cannot be lived apart from history, because

[40] Rerum Novarum (1891), n. 1.



the disciple of Christ is called to recognize God's presence and to collaborate in building a more humane world. [41]

Gaudium et Spes also places the dignity of the human person at the center and points out that social and economic inequalities that violate this dignity are contrary to justice and peace. Thus, concern for justice and peace is not reduced to a social issue external to faith, but forms part of the responsibility of Christians toward the world.[42]

In response to this request, Pope Paul VI established the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace on January 6, 1967, through the Motu Proprio *Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam*. Its mission was related to the promotion of the development of peoples, social justice and peace. [43]

That same year, Paul VI published the encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, in which he linked the development of peoples with justice and human dignity. The expression “Justice and Peace” thus began to acquire particular force within the Church's social mission.[44]

- **1971: Justice as a dimension of the Gospel**

This journey continued with the 1971 Synod of Bishops, whose theme included “Justice in the World.” The bishops reflected on the mission of the People of God in the face of situations of injustice and on the need for commitment to justice to become a reality in the life of local Churches.



The document *Justice in the World* expresses an affirmation of particular importance for our journey: action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world form part of the Church's evangelizing mission. The document also invites these concerns not to remain only in documents, but to reach the concrete lives of communities and Christians.[45]

[41] Gaudium et Spes, especially nn. 1, 4, 26, 29 and 30.
[42] Gaudium et Spes especially nn. 1, 4, 26, 29 and 30.
[43] Catholicam Christi Ecclesiam. 6 january 1967Document by which the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et Pax* was established.
[44] *Populorum Progressio*, on the development of peoples, March 26, 1967.
[45] Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, Rome, 1971.



In this way, one conviction becomes increasingly clear: evangelizing also means working for human dignity, justice, peace and the transformation of those realities that generate exclusion and suffering.

- **The Franciscan journey: Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation**

This process of the Church finds a profound resonance in the charism of Saint Francis of Assisi. Francis discovered in the Gospel a new way of relating to God, to his brothers and sisters, to the poor and to all creation.



Therefore, when we speak of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Franciscan Family, we are not introducing a concern foreign to the charism. Rather, we are discovering how to express today, in the face of the realities of our time, elements that belong to the heart of Franciscan spirituality: fraternity, minority, closeness to the poor, reconciliation, peace and care for creation.

Along this journey, the dimension of Justice, Peace and Ecology progressively gained a place within the Franciscan Family, until it developed into the present perspective of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).[46]

The Extraordinary General Chapter of the Friars Minor in Medellín, Colombia, in 1971 was one of the important moments in the process that would later lead to a more explicit formulation of JPIC within the Order. The Franciscan Order has traditionally promoted these values and, in that context, called the friars to be agents of change in this regard by promoting social justice and the protection of the environment.

Thus, JPIC should not be understood merely as a set of social or environmental activities. It is a way of looking at reality through the Gospel and the Franciscan charism, recognizing that justice, peace and care for creation are profoundly interconnected.

- **YOUFRA and JPIC in the Franciscan mission: a shared mission**

YOUFRA inherits JPIC as an essential part of its mission, reflecting the way of life of Saint Francis of Assisi: centered on fraternity, love for the poor, the pursuit of

[46] JPIC Resource for Lay Teams, JPIC Team El Salvador

peace and care for creation. Through JPIC, young Franciscans work for social transformation through commitment to justice, dialogue and integral ecology.



Participation in society also forms part of the commitment to JPIC. *Laudate Deum* recognizes the value of personal and family actions, but reminds us that the most effective responses to certain crises also require important decisions at the national and international levels.[47]

Today we face challenges such as the environmental crisis, violence, migration and inequality. JPIC offers an educational and missionary path for responding with creativity and youthful dynamism. The OFM document (2009) reminds us that JPIC is not just another activity, but an essential dimension of our vocation, at the same level as prayer, fraternity and evangelization, specifically, section 4.3, "MISSION OF THE JPIC ANIMATOR AND COMMISSION[48] states*: "According to what we said above concerning the mission of the Order's JPIC Office, the fundamental mission of the JPIC Animator and Commission of an Entity is to ensure that the values of JPIC, as they appear in the General Constitutions (especially Chapters IV and V), form part of the life and mission of the brothers and of the Fraternities, 'collaborating for this purpose with the Secretariat for Formation and Studies and with the Secretariat for Evangelization' (General Statutes, Art. 39, 1)."*

The following part of section 4.3 explicitly involves YOUFRA in the work of the mission of the animator and the JPIC commission together with the Friars Minor:

"To foster the embodiment of these values in the 'shared mission' with the laity, especially with the OFS and YOUFRA."

This statement is especially significant for the Franciscan Youth. It reminds us that YOUFRA is not outside the mission of JPIC, but is called to participate actively in it from its own youthful reality.

[47] Laudate Deum, nn. 69-70

[48] *Guidelines for JPIC Animation*, Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Order of Friars Minor OFM, 2009



- ***Laudato si'* and integral ecology**



This journey received new depth with Pope Francis and his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, published in 2015.

In Chapter IV, entitled "Integral Ecology," Pope Francis reminds us that everything is connected and that environmental problems cannot be separated from social, economic, cultural and human problems. Therefore, integral ecology invites us to overcome a fragmented way of seeing reality and to recognize the relationship between the person, society and our common home.[49]

For those of us who live the Franciscan charism, this proposal has a particular resonance. Care for creation cannot be separated from care for our brothers and sisters, especially those who find themselves in situations of poverty, exclusion or vulnerability.

From this perspective, we can approach several dimensions of integral ecology:

- ✓ **Environmental, economic and social ecology:** The environment cannot be separated from how we produce, consume and organize society. JPIC translates this into commitments to a more just and solidary economic model. Lay people, through their work and lifestyle, can bear witness to responsible and just consumption.

- ✓ **Cultural ecology:** Peoples, their traditions and languages must also be cared for as part of creation. Here the contribution of lay people is important: valuing and defending local cultures in the face of consumerist homogenization.

- ✓ **Ecology of everyday life:** The way we live in cities, in our local communities and in the family directly affects creation and human dignity. Lay people embody JPIC through the small things of everyday life: recycling, reusing, caring for community spaces and promoting fraternal relationships.

- ✓ **The principle of the common good:** Everything we do should seek the good of all, not of a few. JPIC finds its heart here: social justice and

[49] *Laudato Si'* (2015), Pope Francis, especially Chapter IV, "Integral Ecology."

solidarity. Lay people are called to participate actively in public life, seeking more just structures.

- ✓ **Justice between generations:** The earth is a shared inheritance that we must hand on to those who come after us. Lay people, as fathers, mothers, educators and workers, transmit this awareness in everyday life and in the education of children.

JPIC helps us to look at reality through the eyes of Francis of Assisi: to discover the brother or sister, draw near to those who suffer, seek paths of reconciliation, defend the dignity of every person and recognize creation as a gift from God.

Therefore, for YOUFRA, JPIC cannot be reduced to an occasional activity. It is a dimension that can permeate formation, fraternity, mission and everyday life.

- **Contributions of the Church and the Franciscan Family**



The Social Doctrine of the Church offers principles and criteria for discerning social realities; the Franciscan charism, for its part, offers a particular way of living these principles through fraternity, minority, closeness to the poor, peace and care for creation.

For this reason, the documents of the Franciscan Family constitute a proper source for understanding how the JPIC dimension has developed within the charism and how it can be animated in the concrete life of our fraternities.

The OFM General JPIC Office confirms that its mission consists in animating and coordinating these values as a fundamental part of the Franciscan charism.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* emphasizes the inseparability of care for creation and social justice. The *Study Guide for Laudato Si'* invites community reflection through encounters structured around prayer, reading, dialogue and commitment. This enriches JPIC formation in YOUFRA by proposing concrete dynamics and questions for action.

For his part, the Minister General of the Order of Friars Minor, Michael Perry, OFM (2018), stated that "JPIC is part of the identity and the heart of the Franciscan

charism; it is not an external or optional addition, but a concrete expression of fraternity, minority, closeness to the poor, peace and care for creation."[50]

- **2022 and 2023: YOUFRA embraces JPIC as a priority**

In 2022, the International Assembly of YOUFRA was held in Mexico, where priorities and commitments for the 2022-2027 period were established. With regard to the JPIC dimension, the following points were agreed:

Section 2. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

2.1 In order to improve formation in the dimensions of justice, peace and integrity of creation, National Councils shall work on analyzing the JPIC theme.

2.2 National Councils shall seek concrete common actions with other National Councils, with the Franciscan Family or with other institutions.

2.3 The International Coordination of YOUFRA shall create a specific commission or service to respond to the animation of the JPIC dimensions.[51]

In 2023, during the Extraordinary Assembly held in Lisbon, Portugal, within the framework of World Youth Day and the International YOUFRA Gathering, the International Regulations of the Franciscan Youth *ad experimentum* were voted on and approved.

In Chapter III, dedicated to International Coordination, the Regulations establish the different services distributed among its members. Among them, point "g" expressly includes:

g. A coordinator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC).

Chapter IV, "Responsibilities and Competences," Point C, concerning the members of the International YOUFRA Coordination and their services, was also approved:

Section 37. The coordinator for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC):

a. *animates awareness and commitment to the JPIC Dimension of the Franciscan Charism.*

b. *works in close collaboration with the person responsible for Formation on proposals for an integral formation in this dimension.*

[50] Challenges of JPIC for OFM Today, Bro. Michael Perry, OFM (2018).
[51] Concluding Document of the Third International YOUFRA Assembly, Mexico 2022



c. *organizes, collaborates in and disseminates actions of its own or of other entities in favor of life and all creation, especially together with the Franciscan Family.*[52]

YOUFRA does not regard JPIC as an addition, but as an essential part of its Franciscan and youthful identity. This is shown by the documents of the Order, the agreements of the 2022 International Assembly in Mexico and the 2023 Extraordinary Assembly in Lisbon: in all of them JPIC appears as a transversal dimension that inspires formation, shared mission with the OFS and the Franciscan friars, and the internal organization of the International Coordination.

Conclusion: YOUFRA embraces JPIC as a formative, missionary and organizational path for the coming years. It is not one more task, but a concrete way of living the Gospel through Franciscan spirituality, responding to current challenges - environmental crisis, violence, migration and inequality - with creativity and youthful commitment according to the different realities in which people live.



[52] International YOUFRA Regulations *ad experimentum*, Lisbon 2023

PART III. PEDAGOGICAL ORIENTATION: JPIC FORMATION FOR YOUFRA

What does it mean to be a JPIC councilor today?



The JPIC coordinator or councilor does not replace the responsibility of the whole fraternity; rather, he or she animates, accompanies and articulates it. This service consists in fostering processes of formation, awareness and action, helping the fraternity to read the realities of its context through the Gospel, the Franciscan charism and the Social Doctrine of the Church.

The mission includes promoting spaces for formation, facilitating the analysis of local realities, encouraging concrete initiatives, fostering networking and maintaining communication with other levels of YOUFRA and with the Franciscan Family.

For this reason, the JPIC councilor should be a person committed to service, sensitive to situations of injustice, violence, poverty, exclusion and deterioration of creation. This sensitivity should lead the person to listen, draw close to concrete realities and foster fraternal and responsible responses. The councilor also needs a disposition for communication and dialogue, the ability to work with others and openness to creating bonds within the fraternity, with the Franciscan Family and with other ecclesial or social realities.

For Secular Franciscans, JPIC is a way of living our vocation; it is our mission and encompasses every aspect and dimension of life, from individual prayer to fraternal action, from formation to carrying out our mission in the world (see OFS General Constitutions, Title II - Active presence in the Church and in the world for a just and fraternal society - Art. 18).

In this regard, we joyfully recognize that some countries have strengthened the presence of JPIC within their organization of animation and service, with brothers and sisters accompanying this dimension at the different levels of councils: national, regional and local. This experience is a valuable opportunity to foster greater awareness, formation and participation of young people in the challenges related to social justice, peacebuilding and care for creation.



At the same time, we recognize that not all national fraternities currently have a person who specifically animates or accompanies the JPIC dimension. This diversity of realities invites us, in fraternity and shared responsibility, to continue progressively strengthening this presence.



For this reason, it is proposed that consideration be given to appointing a JPIC coordinator or councilor at the different organizational levels of YOUFRA, according to the possibilities and structures of each country. This proposal does not seek to establish a uniform structure for all fraternities, but rather to foster greater articulation and continuity in commitment to this dimension.

The existence of an international JPIC coordinator within the International Council constitutes an important point of reference for this journey of communion and coordination. The presence of coordinators at national, regional and local levels would strengthen communication among different realities, facilitate formation and the exchange of experiences, promote common initiatives and help ensure that the JPIC dimension is integrated transversally into the life and mission of YOUFRA.

Thus, rather than speaking of an additional structure, the aim is to strengthen a responsibility that already belongs to the entire fraternity, creating channels that make it possible to animate it, accompany it and make it more visible in our communities.

In this way, JPIC can be lived as a true expression of our Franciscan vocation: a shared responsibility born of fraternity and translated into concrete actions for justice, peace and the integrity of all creation.

- **Formation and awareness**

-Promote ongoing formation.

-Organize spaces for reflection.

- **Animation and coordination**

- Encourage young people to participate actively in solidarity initiatives, social and ecological campaigns, and to defend the inherent dignity of every person as a son or daughter of God, especially where this dignity is violated or ignored, promoting human rights and the care of all creation.

-Coordinate with other areas of YOUFRA (formation, evangelizing action, etc.) in order to integrate JPIC into the whole of fraternal life.

- **Living and promoting the Franciscan charism**

-Bear witness to a simple and solidary life, committed to the poorest and to creation.

-Foster the spirituality of Saint Francis of Assisi as a model of peace, dialogue, humility and universal fraternity.

WHAT CAN WE ACHIEVE BY WORKING ON THE JPIC DIMENSION WITH YOUFRA FRATERNITIES?

GENERAL OBJECTIVE: To form the Franciscan Youth in the JPIC dimension so as to integrate Franciscan spirituality with the practice of justice, peace and care for creation, adapted to each local reality.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES:

- To reflect deeply on a personal level and then move to the group level.
- To act in our own surroundings (family, work, friends and acquaintances).
- To go beyond our locality and reach the peripheries in order to share the message.

GOAL: That the young Franciscan live the JPIC dimension as an expression of his or her commitment to an evangelical way of life.

The experience of JPIC takes on different expressions according to the political, social, cultural, economic and ecclesial reality of each country. Therefore, the following criteria are suggested for working in this Franciscan dimension:

1. Analyze the main challenges and opportunities in each country.
2. Adapt JPIC and the concrete actions to be carried out according to the realities present in each country or locality.
3. Create virtual formation spaces so that those who do not yet work in this dimension may come to know it and learn from the experiences of those who have already developed it.
4. Strengthen the relationship and joint work with the Franciscan Family, promoting shared initiatives with the OFS, the friars, Franciscan congregations and other expressions of the charism, so that JPIC may be lived as a common mission and not as an isolated task of YOUFRA.



JPIC is the expression of our evangelical commitment as YOUFRA: to believe that another world is possible and to work to make it a reality. As we delve into these themes, we take on the challenge of living our faith coherently, defending human dignity, caring for our common home and promoting solidarity among peoples. We want to be young people of hope in the midst of a wounded world.

"Blessed are the members of YOUFRA involved in the works of Mercy, for they shall be called true children of Saint Francis."[53]

The recommended pedagogical method is that of the Social Doctrine of the Church:

1. **See:** We begin with concrete reality, observing situations that affect persons, communities and creation: poverty, exclusion, violence, migration, discrimination, environmental deterioration, inequality or other situations present in our context.

2. **Judge:** It is not enough to identify a problem. We are called to understand its causes and consequences. To do so, we shed light on reality from three sources: the Gospel, the Franciscan charism and the Social Doctrine of the Church.

3. **Act:** Christian discernment leads to commitment. Each fraternity is called to identify possible, realistic and transformative actions according to its context and capacities.

The Social Doctrine of the Church offers us a method for reading reality; the Franciscan charism teaches us from where to look at it, how to allow ourselves to be transformed by it and how to respond in an evangelical way.

A Franciscan perspective that deepens the method of the Social Doctrine of the Church

The experience of Francis shows us precisely this itinerary. Francis did not begin with a previously prepared program; his journey was born from concrete encounters that gradually changed his way of seeing, thinking and living. His encounter with the leper, listening to the Crucified Christ of San Damiano, stripping himself of his possessions, fraternity with the poor, his reconciled relationship with creation and, finally, his life transformed into praise reveal a continuous process of transformation.

[53] International YOUFRA Gathering, Krakow, Poland, July 2016



For this reason, we propose deepening the pedagogical journey of JPIC through four spiritual steps that are profoundly interconnected: contemplate, discern, restore and celebrate.

1. **Contemplate: allowing reality to touch our lives**

From a Franciscan perspective, contemplation is much more than looking at a situation from the outside. It means drawing close enough for what is happening to cease being someone else's reality and to touch our own existence.



Francis experienced this decisively in his encounter with the lepers. In his Testament, he himself recalls that what had once seemed bitter to him changed when the Lord led him among them and he began to show mercy.

Conversion did not take place because Francis first received an intellectual explanation about exclusion, but because he allowed himself to come into contact with a reality he had previously rejected.

To contemplate therefore means: **to draw near, to listen, to remain and to allow ourselves to be affected.**

Contemplation also frees us from a utilitarian way of looking at creation. Francis can call the sun his brother, water his sister and our mother earth his sister because he learned to contemplate creatures not merely for what they produce for human beings, but as gifts that speak of their Creator. Even at the end of his life, ill and with greatly impaired sight, Francis was able to transform his relationship with creation into praise through the *Canticle of the Creatures*.

Therefore, to contemplate within JPIC means gradually learning to see as Francis did:

To look without possessing; to draw near without dominating; to listen before responding; to recognize before intervening; to discover a brother or sister where others see only a problem.



2. Discern: allowing the Gospel to transform our way of thinking

Contemplation necessarily leads to discernment.

When a reality truly enters our life, questions arise:

Why is this happening?

What is producing this suffering?

What does the Gospel tell us?

What needs to change in us?

From a Franciscan perspective, discernment does not simply mean deciding what activity to carry out. It means allowing the encounter with Christ and with reality to **bring about a change of mentality, criteria and direction.**

The story of Francis is marked by this transformation. One of its deepest signs appears at San Damiano: Francis enters that small ruined church and finds himself before the Crucified Christ.

The experience of hearing the call to repair the Church immediately awakens a response in him. At first, he understands the call concretely and begins rebuilding the building; gradually he will understand that the call concerns his whole existence.

Authentic discernment always begins with conversion.

3. Restore: giving back to God and to our brothers and sisters what we have received

When we contemplate a reality and discern it through the Gospel, a responsibility inevitably arises.

Here we find one of the most deeply Franciscan elements of the itinerary: **restitution.**

To restore means recognizing: **“What I have received does not end with me.”** It must return to God through praise and must reach our brothers and sisters through service, justice, solidarity and fraternity.

One of the strongest symbols of this transformation in Francis appears in his stripping before his father and the Bishop of Assisi.

Beyond the outward gesture of giving up his clothing, a much deeper rupture takes place: Francis begins to abandon a way of constructing his identity around possession, prestige and security, and gradually enters into a life founded on God, minority and fraternity.



To restore therefore means **moving from conversion to responsibility**.

Franciscan restitution also has an important characteristic: it does not need to begin with great actions. Francis begins with small but profoundly radical gestures: he draws near, embraces, shares and builds fraternity. Each step seems small, but expresses a profound transformation.

After what we have contemplated and discerned, a fraternity can ask itself from this perspective:

What are we called to give back, repair, transform, share or reconcile? This question turns JPIC into life.

4. Celebrate: recognizing that the final word belongs to life

The Franciscan itinerary does not end with action. If JPIC ended only in carrying out projects, campaigns, activities or social interventions, it could easily become activism.

Franciscan spirituality introduces one more movement: **celebration.**

To celebrate means recognizing that we are not the owners of history nor the only ones responsible for transforming it.

"*God is already at work; we take part in his work.*"

Therefore, after walking, serving, reconciling, caring and restoring, the fraternity once again pauses before God.

Not to say: "We are finished."

But to say: **"Thank you for allowing us to be part of this journey."**

This reveals something profoundly Franciscan: **celebrating does not mean denying suffering;** it means discovering that suffering cannot completely erase the possibility of giving thanks, praising, reconciling and hoping.

Celebration can be expressed in the Eucharist, prayer, song, testimony, fraternal sharing, symbols, gratitude and also through remembering what God has accomplished during the process.

But celebrating does not mean closing the journey. On the contrary, after celebrating, our gaze is no longer the same: we have been transformed by what we have lived, and from this new way of seeing we are able to contemplate once again.



AN ITINERARY OF CONVERSION

The itinerary could be expressed in this way:



Contemplate: so that we may allow ourselves to be encountered.
Discern: so that we may allow ourselves to be converted.
Restore: so that we may allow ourselves to become committed.
Celebrate: to recognize and give thanks for new life.

This dynamic prevents JPIC from being reduced to a succession of activities.

JPIC thus becomes a spiritual and formative journey in which the young person gradually learns to see differently; to think differently; to relate differently; to act differently; and, finally, **to live differently.**

In this sense, the true pedagogical objective of JPIC does not consist merely in forming young people who know what justice, peace and integrity of creation are.

It seeks to form young people capable of experiencing reality through an evangelical and Franciscan perspective and allowing that experience to generate conversion.

This is what happened with Francis:

- The leper transformed his way of seeing.
- San Damiano transformed his way of listening and discerning.
- His stripping transformed his relationship with what he possessed.
- The Canticle transformed his existence into praise.

This method is enriched by the proposal of the *Study Guide for Laudato Si'*: structured encounters that include prayer, reflection, reading of the encyclical and community commitments [54]

GUIDELINES:

- **Formation:** Deepen the biblical, Franciscan and Social Doctrine of the Church foundations related to JPIC.

- **Franciscan spirituality and ecology:** Promote a contemplative and fraternal relationship with all creation, inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi,

[54] *Study Guide for Laudato Si'*, Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission

recognizing every creature as a gift from God and part of our common home. This spirituality should lead to simpler, more responsible and respectful lifestyles, in which care for creation becomes a concrete expression of faith and universal fraternity.

- **Common action:** Promote shared initiatives among national and international fraternities to respond to the challenges of social justice, peace and care for creation.

- **Contextualization:** Adapt JPIC proposals to local realities, integrating the testimonies and experiences of young people in each country.

- **Networking:** Strengthen the shared mission with the Franciscan Family and with other related institutions in order to increase the impact of actions.

- **Global awareness:** Foster among young Franciscans an integral vision that links personal, community and social life with commitment to a more just, fraternal and sustainable world.

The following evaluation and follow-up are proposed in order to foster a progressive and full experience of the Franciscan charism through the JPIC dimension:



1. **Short term:** Each fraternity presents a simple JPIC project from its local context, using the resources available to it.

2. **Medium term:** National YOUFRA teams develop a JPIC action plan adapted to their national reality, taking into account the proposals of local fraternities.

3. **Long term:** Integration with global campaigns of the Franciscan Family (JPIC International, Franciscans International with a presence at the United Nations, Laudato Si' Movement).



A JOURNEY THAT CONTINUES

This guidance document on Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) seeks to accompany YOUFRA fraternities in understanding and living this dimension as an essential part of their Franciscan vocation and their mission in the Church and in the world.

Throughout this journey we have recognized that JPIC is not an added task, but a concrete expression of the Gospel lived through the Franciscan charism. Its foundations in the Social Doctrine of the Church, Franciscan spirituality and the experience of the Franciscan Family show us that justice, peace, fraternity and care for creation form part of the same response to God's call.

YOUFRA is called to live this dimension from the concrete realities of each country and fraternity, learning to see, discern and respond to the challenges of our time with creativity, commitment and hope. Poverty, violence, migration, inequality and the environmental crisis are places where the Gospel continues to challenge us.

For this reason, JPIC cannot remain merely within formation, a commission or particular activities. It is called to become a way of life: recognizing the other as a brother or sister, defending human dignity, building paths of reconciliation, working for justice and responsibly caring for all creation.

The journey that the Spirit has been raising up within the Church, the Franciscan Family and YOUFRA continues today in us, who are called to embrace and renew it in the face of the challenges of our time. As young Franciscans, we are called to continue it from our own realities, making the Gospel present wherever we are and being instruments of justice, builders of peace and guardians of creation.



REFERENCES FOR FURTHER STUDY OF THIS DOCUMENT

- **Library:**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Luu03EjnbyccmAqRc46eXZM1kI3IS20t?usp=sharing

- **Biblical study:**

Human dignity:	Gen 1:26-27; Jas 3:9
Common good:	Phil 2:3-4; 1 Cor 12:12-27
Solidarity:	Gal 6:2; 1 Cor 12:25-26
Option for the poor:	Isa 58:6-10; Lk 4:16-21; Mt 25:31-40
Participation:	1 Cor 12:4-7; Rom 12:4-8
Peace and reconciliation:	Mt 5:9; Jn 20:19-21; 2 Cor 5:18-20
Care of creation:	Gen 2:15; Ps 24:1; Rom 8:19-23
Universal fraternity:	Gen 4:9; Lk 10:25-37; Jn 13:34-35

- **Documents of the Franciscan Family:**

JPIC Resource for Lay Teams, JPIC Team El Salvador.

JPIC Manual - GPSC, Secular Franciscan Order.

Guidelines for JPIC Animation, Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Order of Friars Minor OFM, 2009.

Study Guide for Laudato Si', Inter-Franciscan JPIC Commission.

Challenges of JPIC for OFM Today, Br. Michael Perry, OFM (2018).

- **Official documents of our Holy Mother Church, encyclicals and apostolic letters:**

Rerum Novarum (1891), Pope Leo XIII.

Gaudium et Spes (1965), Second Vatican Council.

Christifideles Laici (1988), Saint John Paul II.

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Laudato Si' (2015), Pope Francis.

Fratelli Tutti (2020), Pope Francis.

Laudate Deum (2023), Pope Francis.

- **Legislative documents of the OFS and YOUFRA:**

Rule and General Constitutions of the OFS.

Concluding Document of the Third International YOUFRA Assembly, Mexico 2022.

International YOUFRA Regulations ad experimentum, Lisbon 2023.



YOUJUGIJEFRA

youfra.net/

https://youfra.net/

YouFra-Jufra-Gifra-Jefra

https://facebook.com/youfraworld

youfraworld

https://instagram.com/youfraworld