

# **FROM CONTEMPLATION TO ACTION**

## **Handbook for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Carmelite Tradition**



### **Carmelite Order General Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (2013-2019)**

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# Abbreviations

## Documents of the Church

AA	<i>Apostolicam Actuositatem</i> , On the Apostolate of Lay People. Second Vatican Council, November 18, 1965.
CA	<i>Centesimus Annus</i> . Encyclical Letter in the 100 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of <i>Rerum Novarum</i> . John Paul II, May 1, 1991.
CSDC	<i>Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church</i> . Justice and Peace Pontifical Council. October 25, 2004.
CV	<i>Caritas in Veritate</i> , Encyclical Letter on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth. Benedict XVI June 29, 2009.
CELAM	Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Bishops
DCE	<i>Deus Caritas Est</i> , Encyclical Letter on Christian Love. Benedict XVI, December 25, 2005.
DV	<i>Dei Verbum</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Second Vatican Council, November 18, 1965.
EG	<i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> , Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today's World. Francis, November 24, 2013.
EN	<i>Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> , Apostolic Exhortation Proclaiming the Gospel. Paul VI December 8, 1975.
JiW	<i>Justice in the World</i> , Synod of Bishops, November 30, 1971.
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creatio.
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Dogmatic Constitution on the Church. Second Vatican Council, November 21, 1964.
LS	<i>Laudato Si'</i> , On the Care of Our Common Home. Francis, May 15, 2015.
PB	<i>Pastor Bonus</i> , Apostolic Constitution on the Roman Curia. John Paul II, June 28, 1988.
MM	<i>Mater et Magistra</i> , Encyclical Letter on Christianity and Social Progress. John XXII, May 15, 1961.
PP	<i>Populorum Progressio</i> , Encyclical Letter on the Development of Peoples. Paul VI, March 26, 1967.
PC	<i>Pacem in Terris</i> , Encyclical Letter on Peace on Earth. John XXIII, April 11, 1963.
RN	<i>Rerum Novarum</i> , Encyclical Letter. Lion XIII, May 15, 1891.

## Documents of the Carmelite Order

Const.	<i>Carmelite Order Constitutions. Carmelite General Curia, Rome, 1971 and 1995</i> . Pub. Middle Park, Victoria: Carmelite Communications, 1996.
Rule	<i>Regula Ordinis Fratrum Beatissimae Virginis Mariae De Monte Carmelo: 800th Anniversary of the Carmelite Rule</i> , Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2007.
RIVC	<i>Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitane, Forming Prophetic Brotherhood: The Carmelite Guide to Formation</i> , Rome, 1988.

<b>RIVC</b>	<b><i>Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitane, Carmelite Formation: A Journey of Transformation, Rome, 2013.</i></b>
<b>TPB</b>	<b><i>Towards A Prophetic Brotherhood: Documents of the Carmelite Order 1972-1982, Melbourne: The Carmelite Centre, 1984</i></b>

#### **Other Abbreviations**

<b>CEDAW</b>	<b>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women</b>
<b>FAO</b>	<b>Food &amp; Agriculture Organization</b>
<b>GCR</b>	<b>Global Compact on Refugees</b>
<b>GCM</b>	<b>Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration</b>
<b>IPCC</b>	<b>Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change</b>
<b>ILO</b>	<b>International Labour Organization</b>
<b>LGBTI</b>	<b>Lesbians Gays Bisexuals Transgender and Intersex</b>
<b>NGOs</b>	<b>Non-Governmental Organizations</b>
<b>SDGs</b>	<b>Sustainable Development Goals</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>United Nations</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>

## Foreword

It is an honour and, indeed, my privilege to introduce this handbook as I come to the end of my term as Prior General. It is the fruit of a long process of discernment, reflection and study carried out by the Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) from 2013 to 2019.

In this process, the members have drawn on the documents and work done by previous commissions. Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude and personal appreciation for all that has been achieved in this particular area over many decades. A JPIC Commission has been active in the Order for a long number of years, and we can say with some confidence that Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is now a significant issue in most of our Provinces. As such, we can see unfolding a particularly Carmelite approach to this important aspect of the Church's life.

I am sure that this handbook will help us as we continue to reflect on and discern around the many questions being raised in the whole area of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. I invite you to use it at personal, community and province level. Perhaps, it might be good to analyse it in a sort of "transversal way" within the Carmelite Family. Such an approach would mean that any study from the friars' point of view could be enriched through dialogue with the other groups of the Family (nuns, sisters, third order, lay Carmelites from different groups, Carmelite schools and so on).

Over the years, the members of the JPIC Commissions have been drawn from the different groups within the Family. This handbook, addressed to the whole Carmelite Family, results from the reflections and work of those members. I suggest that this inclusive approach might be beneficial both to the ongoing development of our theoretical reflection and to our praxis in the area of JPIC. It is likely that different approaches or emphases will emerge from this shared reflection.

I also invite you to adapt and deepen the handbook in the context of the economic, political and social realities of the different geographical areas in which the Carmelite Family is present. It is recognised that there are many common problems and the general principles of JPIC could be considered universal. However, reflections on concrete problems and their practical application have to be carried out locally, taking into account the specific circumstances of each geographical area. In an analogous way, we could say that this book has to be enculturated in the different realms, cultures and problematics.

Some contemporary theologians suggest that, in our reflection on these matters, we have to take into consideration not only the "signs of the times" but also the "signs of the place". For this reason, I hope that the translation of this handbook in the official languages of the Order, but not only in those languages, will be available as soon as possible. It has to be a "living" document and must develop not only by its adaptation in the different geographical areas, but also in response to the new "signs of the times", to emerging situations and problems. In this way, we will be better informed and ready for the challenges which may surface in very dramatic circumstances.

As you can see, the handbook begins with a reading of some examples of the “signs of the times”, using the well-known statements from the Second Vatican Council (GS 4, UR 4 and PO 9). It then moves on to the biblical, spiritual and theological foundations of the Catholic approach to the whole area of JPIC. The handbook gives particular attention to the key documents of the social doctrine of the Church. The specifically Carmelite approach to JPIC is then explained through the more recent documents of the Order, our rich spiritual and social tradition, seeking the possibility of a Carmelite methodology in the area.

The final chapter, before the conclusions, looks to the future: how to develop an ongoing Carmelite strategy on JPIC; how JPIC could be expressed in the different ministries of the Order; the importance of formation as well as the need for information and coordination in this whole area.

I am convinced that this reflection can be very useful not only to those who have a particular interest and sensitivity in these matters but also to any Carmelite who wants to face our world with compassion, commitment and responsibility.

I have said many times that our *Rule* develops a sort of *economy* (the governance, the organisation of the house); the *Rule* creates an *ecosystem* ( an environment in which we can grow and live in allegiance to Jesus); our *Rule* makes an *echography* (that is, a description of the house, the living place, the cells); the *Rule* develops an *ecology* (the care of the house, of the dwelling place, of the atmosphere); the *Rule* promotes even a sort of *ecumenism* (the encounter and welcoming hospitality in a common house).

Etymologically, all of those words have a common root, the Greek word *oikos* meaning home, family. It is an environment in stark contrast to the “*non lieu*” (*no places*) of the French philosopher Marc Augé. The *Rule* describes the Carmelite community as a common home, a place in which we can be ourselves, growing psychologically and spiritually. We can share our lives with the brothers and sisters, and we can encounter God.

Perhaps it is time that we, Carmelites of the 21st century, following the counsel of the Church, work with a broader sense of “common home” encompassing our whole world; poor, mistreated and dirty as it is. As Pope Francis suggests to believers and non-believers alike in *Laudato Si’* (promulgated just four years ago), we have to work together in protecting our common home.

I am sure that this handbook will encourage, inform and help shape our Carmelite contribution to the whole area of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. May Mary, our Mother and Sister, help and guide us in this noble, fascinating and stupendous challenge.

Fernando Millán Romeral, O. Carm.  
General Prior

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword

Abbreviations

Foreword

Table of Contents

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Rationale statement
- 1.2. Why a Handbook for JPIC promoters in the Carmelite Family?
- 1.3. The Nature of JPIC

## 2. READING THE SIGN OF TIMES

- 2.1. Injustices against the Earth, Our Common Home
- 2.2. Injustices against Humanity
- 2.3. Interconnectedness: Social and Environmental Injustices
- 2.4. Efforts on Migrants & Refugees from the United Nations (UN)
- 2.5. Global Pastoral Approach on Migrants and Refugees by the Holy See

## 3. BIBLICAL AND SPIRITUAL FUNDAMENTALS

- 3.1. Just relationships in the Bible
- 3.2. The Development of JPIC Ministries
- 3.3. The Role of Contemplation in JPIC
- 3.4. The Spirit of Vatican Council II in JPIC
- 3.5. The Spirituality of JPIC

## 4. THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH IN JPIC

- 4.1. History of JPIC in the Church
- 4.2. Integral Ecology in *Laudato Si'*
- 4.3. Education for Common Home for all Creatures
- 4.4. Celebration of Common Home for All Creatures

## 5. CARMELITE APPROACH TO JPIC

- 5.1. History of JPIC in the Carmelite Tradition
- 5.2. Carmelite JPIC Identity
- 5.3. A Carmelite Methodology of JPIC Work

## 6. THE CARMELITE JPIC MISSION IN THE WORLD

- 6.1. JPIC Structures in the Carmelite Family
- 6.2. JPIC Organs in the Carmelite tradition
- 6.3. The role of the JPIC promoter at the grassroots level
- 6.4. How to Start a JPIC Ministry
- 6.5. Building Bridges: Coordination, Communication, Networking

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The biblical quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible.

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

**“God saw all that he had made, and it was very good...”  
(Genesis 1:31)**

**“The ultimate purpose of other creatures is not to be found in us. Rather, all creatures are moving forward with us and through us towards a common point of arrival, which is God, in that transcendent fullness where the risen Christ embraces and illumines all things.”  
(Pope Francis, *Laudato Si'*, 83)**

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free” –  
(Luke 4:18, Isaiah 61:1)**

## 1.1. Rationale Statement of the Carmelite Commission For Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation

The 2013-2019 Carmelite Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Commission was set up after the General Chapter in September 2014, composed by members of the Carmelite Family: friars, sisters and a lay.

The Commission deliberated, shared and dialogued from our diverse and rich contextual experiences. They committed themselves for the duration of this sessennium (2013-2019), to focus on helping Carmelite brothers and sisters in sensitizing, animating and participating in the promotion of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation throughout the Carmelite Family. It drew up a strategic plan that is an instrument to help our communities, and especially those working in the ministry of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, to deepen their reflection, promote advocacy of pertinent issues and motivate each other to appropriate context-based action.

The Commission recognizes that action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel.<sup>1</sup> The whole ministry of Jesus and his return to the Father can be seen as geared towards the building up of the Kingdom of God - through proclamation, attitude and action - which is essentially a reign of justice and truth, holiness and peace, grace, unity and love. Pope Francis has stressed that, 'Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society' and that 'all of us, as Christians, are called to watch over and protect the fragile world in which we live, and all its peoples'.<sup>2</sup>

We note that we, Carmelites, from our inception, inspired by Mary in her welcome and contemplative attitude towards the Word, and the Prophet Elijah in his zeal for and living in the presence of the Lord, as people of prayer and community, are also people sensitive to the needs of those around us true to our Mendicant roots. In the post-Vatican II era, we recognize that a lot of reflection took place at such fora as the Council of Provinces and General Congregation and General Chapters. One of the most significant development has been an openness to justice and peace issues. For example, the Order has reflected on issues of poverty and our need to identify with the poor in documents such as the following: *In the Midst of the People*<sup>3</sup>, *A Return to the Sources*<sup>4</sup>, *Called to Account by the Poor*<sup>5</sup>. We recognize that our world has become more complex and grave challenges have arisen that threaten the very existence of creation. Some of those challenges include loss of biodiversity, which is

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<sup>1</sup> Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World* (JM). Rescript of the audience granted by the Holy Father to the Cardinal Secretary of State. Rome, November 30, 1971. In Portuguese only, available at [http://www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/synod/documents/rc\\_synod\\_doc\\_19711130\\_giustizia\\_po.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/synod/documents/rc_synod_doc_19711130_giustizia_po.html)

<sup>2</sup> Francis, EG, 187 and 216.

<sup>3</sup> Third Council of Provinces, *In the Midst of the People: Small Religious Communities and Basic-Communities*, Dublin, 1975, in Kevin Mark, O.Carm., ed., *TPB*, pp. 43-55

<sup>4</sup> Fifth Council of Provinces, *A Return to the Sources: An Examination of the Biblical Significance of Mary and Elijah*, 1979, in Kevin Mark, *TPB.*, pp. 68-81

<sup>5</sup> Order of Carmelites General Congregation, *Called to Account by the Poor*, 1980, in K.Mark, *Ibid.*, pp. 81-96

currently a thousand times higher than natural extinction rate<sup>6</sup>; energy depletion, which means that we are consuming more than we need and the current possibility for the earth to recover<sup>7</sup>; climate change, which is currently affecting millions of people worldwide through extended droughts in some areas and sea level rise and floods in other areas<sup>8</sup>; and global population growth with a distinctive pattern of unequal affluence, deeply interconnected with the previous issues<sup>9</sup>. We propose that we, Carmelites, rooted in our 800-year-old tradition of brotherhood, of intimacy with the Lord God under the contemplative example of Mary and the zealous drive of the Prophet Elijah, renew, rekindle and promote the life-giving values of the Kingdom of God through deeds, advocacy and action.

There are many laudable causes for us to promote, but these seem to us to be pressing in the context of our world situation of spiritual apathy, globalization of inequality, injustice, materialist consumerism and growing religious fundamentalism and intolerance. We commit ourselves to promoting, advocating for, and working to change for the better in our localities, the lives of real people in the following areas: human rights from conception to end of life; community building, understanding and tolerance; promotion of Kingdom values and Carmelite spirituality with special emphasis on right relationship with others and the environment; awareness of environmental change through advocacy and helping communities to respond positively to that change.

In order to have an impression of the work Carmelites are doing in the area of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, a questionnaire was sent to all of our Provinces, Commissariats and Delegations. The questionnaire was a tool to help plan for the production of the Carmelite Order's Handbook on the animation of Justice, Peace and Integrity on Creation. The Carmelite Order has a strong history of meaningful adaptation to changing circumstances so as to be an effective player and contributor to issues. In the face of our contemporary world challenges, may we rise to offer our modest assistance to the world from the Carmelite tradition of respecting all in community, of fostering intimacy with God to be expressed in reaching out in service of the Church and the world. As the 2013 General Chapter Final Statement says: 'People will be drawn to Christ when they notice our gospel-based lives of simplicity, solidarity with the marginalized, celebration of unity in diversity, and the creation of safe environments for the children, teens and adults to whom we minister'<sup>10</sup>. The world needs our faith-based approach to ministry as one avenue of establishing right relationships with God, other human beings and all creation!

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<sup>6</sup> United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP). Cf. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), *Global Biodiversity Outlook 3*, Montreal (2010). (<http://www.iucn.org>).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. World Watch Institute, *Green Economy Program*, ([http://www.worldwatch.org/programs/global\\_economy](http://www.worldwatch.org/programs/global_economy))

<sup>8</sup> Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC), *Fifth Assessment Report 2013*. (<http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar5/wg1>).

<sup>9</sup> Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). (<http://www.fao.org>)

<sup>10</sup> 'A Word of Hope and Salvation (Const. 24)', in *Consilium Generale O.Carm., Global Plan of the General Council 2013-2019*, Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2014, pp.8-12, no. 4f.

## 1.2. Why a Handbook for JPIC Promoters in the Carmelite Family?

Over the centuries, members of the Carmelite Family – lay, consecrated and ordained - have worked in diverse JPIC related ministries for the building up of the reign of God without these ministries referenced as JPIC. These ministries are: prayer, intercession and contemplation; pastoral and spiritual care; education; health care; and advocacy activities. This means that there has always existed in Carmelite consciousness the desire to be of service to God and one's neighbour.

The Second Vatican Council called the whole Church to spiritual renewal and constructive engagement with the world. In the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council Fathers proclaimed that “the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or afflicted, are the joys and hopes, the grief and anguish of the followers of Christ as well”<sup>11</sup>. The implications of this and other documents of the Council such as *Lumen Gentium*, *Apostolicam Actuositatem* and *Perfectae Caritatis*, to mention a few, breathed new life and vitality in the way of being Church. Shortly after the Council, Religious Orders entered into a phase of updating the *Constitutions* and aligning ways of life to the vision and principles of Vatican II.

Following the Council mandate in *Gaudium et Spes*, the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace was formed in 1967 to “stimulate the Catholic Community to foster progress in needy regions and social justice on the international scene”<sup>12</sup>. The body, popularly called “Justitia et Pax” focused on ‘action-oriented studies’ for the international promotion of justice, peace, and human rights from the perspective of the Church. A significant development in the Church was the publication of *Justice in the World* by the 1971 Synod of Bishops which dealt with the issues of justice and liberation of the poor and oppressed. A widely quoted statement from the Synod states: “Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church’s mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation”<sup>13</sup>.

Shortly after, the Carmelite General Commission for Justice and Peace was formed. The Friars’ documents – the subsequent editions of the *Constitutions*, the *Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitanae* – incorporated the new language. Various attempts were made to publish a Carmelite handbook for Justice and Peace ministries. Significant reflection on the JPIC values of the Kingdom of God has been ongoing among the Friars and within the Carmelite Family generally. For example, Fr Carlos Mesters reflected on the figure of the prophet Elijah and how he is an inspiration for justice work. Mesters wrote about a three-fold way of realizing the work of justice at the grassroots: *the walk of justice* against false ideologies and towards concrete experience of Yahweh; *the walk of solidarity* with the victims of injustice; *the walk of the mystic* in which the prophet tried to restore the self-confidence of the poor by challenging the consciousness of all by stating that God is with the poor and the oppressed<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Vatican II, GS 1.

<sup>12</sup> GS 90.

<sup>13</sup> O.c. JM, paragraph 6.

<sup>14</sup> Carlos Mesters quoted in Tenth Council of Provinces, *Justice and Peace: An Invitation to Make a Preferential Option for the Poor*, Melbourne: Carmelite Communications, 1987, p. 64.

Through such fora as Council of Provinces, General Congregation and General Chapter Meetings, the issues of justice, peace and integrity of creation have been discussed.

In light of the great diversity of practices in the ministries of JPIC in the Carmelite Family, the handbook is offered as a resource for those who are engaged in JPIC work. This resource is therefore targeted at JPIC promoters, pastoral and spiritual care practitioners in the JPIC mould - friars, sisters and lay persons. It is our hope that the resource becomes a hands-on tool kit which provides information on the nature of JPIC work; the history of JPIC in the Church and the Order; the spirituality and dynamics involved in applying the JPIC approach to life in diverse contexts.

The need for a handbook has been expressed for a long time, as noted during the Carmelite JPIC International Congress in Fatima<sup>15</sup>. Often the experience was true that brothers, sisters and lay persons who had been appointed to the ministry of coordinating JPIC work in communities, parishes, provinces or regions did not have the means and resources to begin their ministry. Many of those appointed to JPIC ministries felt a sense of being overwhelmed by the tasks they had to face. They also felt a sense of isolation as JPIC ministries are often experienced as peripheral.

Consequently, this handbook aims at providing information based on the foundation, history and the nature of Carmelite JPIC (biblical, spiritual, tradition) and the procedures/methodology that have been used in doing the Carmelite JPIC mission in the world. It is hoped that this handbook will be a companion volume providing the rationale for engaging in JPIC ministry, the mechanics of setting up and supporting the ministers at the grassroots. The handbook encourages collaboration at local and international levels in an effort to promote best practices in the ministry.

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<sup>15</sup> See final Message of the Carmelite Family International Congress on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Fatima, Portugal, 28 July 2017 in Appendix.

### 1.3. The Nature of Justice Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)

*The breastplate of justice is to be put on, that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and your neighbour as yourselves (Carmelite Rule ~ 19).*

The Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Commission has its roots in the Pastoral Constitution, *Gaudium et Spes*:

The Council...regards it as most opportune that an organism of the universal Church be set up in order that both the justice and love of Christ toward the poor might be developed everywhere.<sup>16</sup>

The organizational structure of JPIC ecclesiastical or congregational organization is to engage in two basic and complementary activities: engage in prayer and commitment to transformative action in the world that is inspired by the spirit of the Gospel by living lives of justice, peace and care for the integrity of creation. For Carmelites, the figure of our leader and father, the prophet Elijah, is very inspirational in our approach to incarnating the values of Kingdom in our communities and societies. Zealous for Yahweh, the prophet Elijah was keen to call back the people of Israel to right relationships founded on the covenant and worship of the living God of Hosts. Our involvement in JPIC ministry is a sharing in the dream of Elijah, the dream of cooperating with God in the building up of the kingdom of God through personal conversion to the person of Jesus and embracing the values of the Kingdom which are values of “the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life”.<sup>17</sup>

In the contemporary world situation, our fundamental thrust is to foster a relationship of faithfulness to the God of the Covenant and the Father revealed by Jesus the Christ which manifests itself in “three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself”.<sup>18</sup> Pope Francis has been very emphatic in his insistence that “everything is interconnected and that genuine care for our own lives and our relationships with nature is inseparable from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others”.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, JPIC work is not only about maintaining a private prayer relationship with God, but also simply about engaging in action for change of the way things are in the world. JPIC work will be balanced when our ministry – our transformational action - flows from our encounter with the God of our contemplation. JPIC ministry has two supports: prayer (contemplation) and transformational action. The goal of JPIC involvement is to bring about change in the world. But that change will be believable and catch the imagination of others when we ourselves become the change we wish to see in the world. What inspires our confidence is that we are not alone in this project. We believe God is on our side. We believe that we are participating in the project of God. The God of our contemplation is involved in and committed to the

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<sup>16</sup> GS 90

<sup>17</sup> Francis, LS 207.

<sup>18</sup> LS 66.

<sup>19</sup> LS 70

project of constructing “an eternal and universal kingdom, a kingdom of holiness and grace, a kingdom of justice, love and peace”.<sup>20</sup>

The focus of JPIC ministry is the promotion and nurturance of God’s reign in the world. A reading of the Scriptures confirms the understanding that God is always close to His people. In the history of salvation, He proves Himself to be the God who saves, who frees, who is just and merciful (Ps 103). God continually demonstrates His protection and solicitude for the poor, the widow and the orphan (Ps 72) and guides all people to a future of hope, peace and reconciliation. At the start of His ministry, Jesus is consecrated by the Spirit to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives, recovery of sight to the blind, to free the oppressed and announce a year of favour from the Lord (Lk 4:18-19). According to the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus also proclaims the beatitudes of the Kingdom of God:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for there is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus, they persecuted the prophets who were before you (Mt 5:1-12).

While the Church has always had concern for the kingdom of God and respect for human and peoples’ rights over the centuries, the Second Vatican Council became a watershed moment for the rediscovery and deepening of our appreciation of the themes that dominate Catholic Social Teaching. The formation of the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace (now the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development) led to the adoption of similar commissions by Congregations and Episcopal Conferences throughout the world. The document of the 1971 Synod of Bishops spurred many to prayer, reflection and action when it stated in clear terms that “action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel”.<sup>21</sup> In the wake of the rise of the Latin American approach to a new form of doing theology called the Liberation Theology, the principle of the preferential option for the poor was brought to the centre. The fundamental insight of liberation theology is that the doing of theology leads people to liberative action in the mould of Jesus Christ. This brand of theology is still alive and kicking today in the pronouncements of Pope Francis when he emphasizes the inseparability between the profession of our faith and the poor:

We have to state, without mincing words, that there is an inseparable bond between our faith and the poor. May we never abandon them...

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<sup>20</sup> Preface of Christ the King.

<sup>21</sup> JM, o.c., paragraph 6. See footnote 13.

I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security. I do not want a Church concerned with being at the centre and which then ends by being caught up in a web of obsessions and procedures... Money must serve, not rule! The Pope loves everyone, rich and poor alike, but he is obliged in the name of Christ to remind all that the rich must help, respect and promote the poor. I exhort you to generous solidarity and to the return of economics and finance to an ethical approach which favours human beings.<sup>22</sup>

Pope Francis also defends the principle of the Church's option for the poor in *Evangelii Gaudium*:

For the Church, the option for the poor is primarily a theological category rather than a cultural, sociological, political or philosophical one. God shows the poor "his first mercy". This divine reference has consequences for the faith life of all Christians, since we are called to have "this mind ... which was in Jesus Christ"(Phil 2:5). Inspired by this, the Church has made an option for the poor which is understood as a "special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the Church bears witness". This option – as Benedict XVI has taught – "is implicit in our Christian faith in a God who became poor for us, so as to enrich us with his poverty". This is why I want a Church which is poor and for the poor. They have much to teach us. Not only do they share in the *sensus fidei*, but in their difficulties they know the suffering Christ. We need to let ourselves be evangelized by them.<sup>23</sup>

Both in *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si*, Pope Francis is keen to confront the globalization of indifference towards "both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor".<sup>24</sup> Thus JPIC ministry is the integration of prayer, reflection and action inspired by God's own commitment to human wellbeing. JPIC is a commitment to lead our prayer and theological reflection into transformative action, that is, practical love of people. If our prayer and theology do not lead us to love people more, we ought to question their authenticity. Hence Pope Francis can say:

An authentic faith – which is never comfortable or completely personal – always involves a deep desire to change the world, to transmit values, to leave this earth somehow better than we found it. We love this magnificent planet on which God has put us, and we love the human family which dwells here, with all its tragedies and struggles, its hopes and aspirations, its strengths and weaknesses. The earth is our common home and all of us are brothers and sisters... All Christians, their pastors included, are called to show concern for the building of a better world.<sup>25</sup>

The three pillars of our Carmelite Charism – prayer, community and service – are the fruits of contemplation which is "the dynamic element which unifies them all".<sup>26</sup> The setting up of the JPIC General Commission of the Order was intended to serve the Order and the whole

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<sup>22</sup> EG 48, 49 and 58.

<sup>23</sup> EG 198.

<sup>24</sup> LS 49.

<sup>25</sup> EG 183.

<sup>26</sup> RIVC 2013, 28.

Carmelite Family to promote greater awareness, clearer analysis and more effective action in matters of justice, peace and integrity of creation. Its inspiration is the preferential option for those on the existential peripheries. The values that energize the Carmelite JPIC animation are prayer, service, sharing, participation, communication and collaboration. In our commitment to JPIC service we must be willing to be open to continual learning through observation, reflection and action.

# CHAPTER 2

## READING THE SIGNS OF TIMES

**“You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky; why do you not know how to interpret the present time?”**

**(Luke 12:56)**

**The Church has always had the duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.**

***(Gaudium et Spes, 4)***

**“Human dignity is the same for all human beings: when I trample on the dignity of another, I am trampling on my own.”**

**(Pope Francis, Message for the Lenten Fraternity Campaign, Brazil, 2014.)**

## 2.1. Injustices against the Earth, Our Common Home

Environmental data and analysis document that our *Sister, Mother Earth*<sup>27</sup>, is facing significant environmental concerns and she *now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her*<sup>28</sup>. Environmental problems, such as global warming, air pollution, waste disposal, water and soil pollution affect every human being and animal on this common home, the earth. Over the last century, the exploitation of our earth and degradation of our environments have increased at an alarming rate. Our actions have been not in favour of protecting the common home. Consequently, there have been more intense natural disasters striking all areas of our common home. Examples are flash floods due to localized heavy precipitation, changes in river levels, the rise of sea levels and the shifting of tropical cyclone patterns.

If we look at the environment around us, we can see that there are several issues that come to our attention. Climate change is a humanitarian crisis. Environmental issues greatly impact the poor who have the greatest vulnerability to environmental changes. Among important global environmental concerns in the world are:

### 1. Air, water and land pollution:

Pollution of air, water and soil take a huge number of years to recover. Industry and engine vehicle fumes are the most obvious source of air toxins. Substantial metals, nitrates and plastic are poisons in charge of pollution, among other natural particulate matters. Water contamination is brought about by oil slicks, acid rain, and urban sprawl. Air contamination is created by different gasses and poisons discharged by burning fossil fuels from industries. Soil contamination is created by mechanical waste that removes supplements from the soil. In turn, land pollution is the degradation of earth's surface as a result of human activities such as mining, littering, deforestation, hydrocarbon industries, construction and agricultural activities. Land pollution can have huge environmental impact in the form of air pollution and soil pollution which in turn can have adverse effect on human health.<sup>29</sup>

### 2. Water scarcity:

Clean drinking water is becoming rare in many parts of the world. Water is turning into a monetary and political concern as humans battle for this need. Waste from industries, such as mining and hydrocarbon, and agricultural activities pollute the water used by humans, animals and plants. It is becoming a serious problem worldwide to guarantee the quality of water available to the poor.<sup>30</sup>

### 3. Climate Change:

Climate change is yet another environmental concern that embraces both the roots and solutions of many global environmental concerns. Climate change is a manifestation of the global warming of the earth's near-surface temperature due to burning of fossil fuels (Oil, coal and natural gas) which currently drive our patterns of production and consumption in

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<sup>27</sup> LS 1.

<sup>28</sup> LS 2.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. World Health Organisation. <http://www.who.int/en/>

<sup>30</sup> Cf. UN Water, Assessment Report 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/water/>;  
[http://www.unwater.org/publication\\_categories/world-water-development-report/](http://www.unwater.org/publication_categories/world-water-development-report/)

most societies. Climate change has different destructive impacts that include, but are not limited to, the melting of polar and continental ice, change in seasons, sea level rise, floods, and changes in general precipitation patterns (droughts and excesses), leading to water scarcity in many populated regions. Fossil fuel utilization brings about discharge of greenhouse gases, which causes the earth to warm up. Moving forward by the global Climate Movement driven by Social Civil and Business Organizations and Governments at the United Nations, most Nations and individuals are taking endeavours to move to renewable energy sources. We need to assume with courage and creativity, the end of the "era of fossil fuels", that is, the gradual but forceful use of oil, natural gas and coal as primary sources of energy in our nations, according to the context given by the Paris Agreement (2015) and its implementation within coming years. We have to support the transit towards alternative paths of integral human development, that really generate a flourishing of our communities and nations in sustainable balance with the environment.<sup>31</sup>

#### **4. Deforestation:**

Our forests create new oxygen and help in managing temperature and precipitation. Forests play a fundamental role in combating rural poverty, ensuring food security and providing people with livelihoods. And they deliver vital environmental services such as clean air and water, the conservation of biodiversity and combating climate change. Compared to the early 1990s, the world's forests continue to shrink as populations increase and forest land is converted to (mostly industrial) agriculture and other uses. Good news is that the rate of net global deforestation has slowed down since then. Success in reducing the impact of climate change and promoting sustainable development is under risk if we do not preserve our forests and sustainably use the many goods, they offer us.<sup>32</sup>

#### **5. Effect on Marine Life:**

The increasing amount of carbon dioxide, a major greenhouse gas released by burning fossil fuels, in the water and the atmosphere is continuing to be a problem in the oceans. The primary effect is on shellfish and microscopic fish, due to a chemical process called acidification of seawater. Acidification of oceans provokes a saturation state of mineral causing biological death of life in oceans.<sup>33</sup> In addition, natural reefs are very sensitive to sea temperature rise due to human-induced global warming. They have played an important role in storing carbon dioxide within the Pacific Ocean for millennia. A global warming over 1.8°C will cause their death.<sup>34</sup>

#### **6. Loss of Biodiversity:**

Biodiversity is the result of over 3.5 billion years of evolution of life on earth. Habitat destruction as direct impact of human activities is a major cause for biodiversity loss. Habitat loss is caused by deforestation, overpopulation, pollution and global warming. Thus, humans are prompting the elimination of some species and environmental surroundings and the loss of various biomes, as is happening in many tropical forest areas (Amazonia, Indonesia,

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Sixth Assessment Report on climate change, IPCC, 2017. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Global Forest Assessment, FAO, 2015. <http://www.fao.org/forest-resources-assessment/en/>

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Ocean Acidification Program. <https://oceanacidification.noaa.gov>

<sup>34</sup> Sixth Assessment Report on climate change, IPCC, 2017. <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Congo). For instance, the extinction rate in the Amazonia is one thousand higher than the natural background rate, owing to human activities.<sup>35</sup>

### **7. Explosive Global population:**

The number of inhabitants in the planet is increasing to an estimated 11 billion people by 2100. Three quarters of the current number of 7.5 billion people confront deficiency of assets like water, energy and food. The environmental concern is in fact a matter of fair distribution of affluence and welfare, currently only one quarter of the global population consumes 80% of goods of the earth<sup>36</sup>.

### **8. Household and Industrial Waste:**

The over utilization of resources and formation of plastics create worldwide emergency of waste transfer. Rich nations have created an unreasonable measure of waste and junk that is dumped into the oceans and transferring old equipment to poorer nations.<sup>37</sup> Household waste is also an increasing great concern.

### **9. Natural Goods (Resource) Depletion:**

Non-renewable resources are limited and will be depleted one day. Consumption of fossil fuels at the current pace can lead us to overpass 2°C threshold of global warming which can further result in catastrophic climate change induced impacts by 2036. Our world currently consumes annually four times more goods that nature can provide in a year. The world's richest countries consume 10 times as many materials as the poorest<sup>38</sup>.

### **10. Agricultural Pollution:**

Modern day agriculture practices make use of chemical products like pesticides and fertilizers to deal with local pests. Some of the chemicals when sprayed do not disappear and in fact seeps into the ground and thereby harms plants and crops. Also, contaminated water is used for irrigation by farmers due to disposal of industrial and agricultural waste in local water bodies. Health of humans and animals are being affected.<sup>39</sup>

### **11. Genetic Modification:**

Genetic modification utilizing biotechnology is called genetic engineering. Genetic engineering of food has the potential to cause expanded poisons and sickness. Although no conclusive proof exists that Genetic Modification cereals may be harmful to human beings, and in some regions their use has brought about economic growth which has helped to resolve problems, there remain a number of significant difficulties which should not be underestimated.<sup>40</sup> The issue requires constant attention and a concern for their ethical

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. Global Biodiversity Outlook, 4 2011 -2020, <http://web.unep.org/regions/rolac/biodiversity> . A new research has shown that the human induced extinction rate is ten times worse than previously thought, cf. <https://news.brown.edu/articles/2014/09/extinctions>

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Population Prospect 2017. <https://population.un.org/wpp/>

<sup>37</sup> Cf. <https://www.unenvironment.org/explore-topics/resource-efficiency/what-we-do/cities/solid-waste-management>.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. UN Resource Programme reports. <http://www.resourcepanel.org/>

<sup>39</sup> Cf. More People, More Food, Worse Water? A Global Review of Water Pollution from Agriculture, FAO, 2018. <http://www.fao.org/policy-support/resources/resources-details/en/c/1144303/>

<sup>40</sup> Further information available at <https://gmwatch.org/en/>

implications. A broad, responsible scientific and social debate needs to take place, one capable of considering all the available information and of calling things by their name (Cf. LS 133-134).<sup>41</sup>

## **12. Mining and extractive industries:**

Industrial activities for the exploration and exploitation of minerals and hydrocarbons generate the release, dispersion, and dissemination of chemical products and wastes of various kinds. These include sodium cyanide, lead, arsenic, uranium, mercury and other heavy metals that contaminate, either directly or through filtration, the water supply (glaciers, lakes, rivers, and underground water), the air and the soil. This fact is coupled with the destruction of soil (leaching) and landscapes which significantly impairs the quality of human, animal and plant life. In many countries where legislation is easily overcome, violation of human rights is the rule.<sup>42</sup>

Besides global environmental hazards there also are local city-scale concerns related to littering and landfills. Littering is disposal of garbage or debris improperly or at wrong location usually on the ground instead of disposing them at trash container or recycling bin. Landfills are massive garbage dumps near cities. Landfills produce toxic gases, soil and water pollution, that are potentially fatal for humans and animals. Landfills are generated due to large amount of waste that is generated daily by households, industries and healthcare/ medical. In many parts of the world, this stressful situation impacts mostly the poor, who live outside of cities.

As members of the Carmelite Family, we cannot be indifferent to the advocacy activity performed by a diverse number of environmental and social initiatives around the world which educate people about how their individual actions, when combined with other actions, can play a major role in preserving the earth and the quality of life on it.

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Genetically modified foods and health: a second interim statement. British Medical Association, 2004, retrieved from Argentine GM Council website, <http://www.argenbio.org/adc/uploads/pdf/bma.pdf>

<sup>42</sup> Further information can be retrieved at <https://www.righttofoodandnutrition.org/>. This kind of destructive mining is known as open-cast mining, open-pit mining or mountaintop mining, able to physically destroy a mountain and make a whole biome disappear, cf. The Environmental Price Tag on a Ton of Mountaintop Removal Coal by Brian D. Lutz, Emily S. Bernhardt, and William H. Schlesinger, 2013 (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3770658/>); The Overlooked Terrestrial Impacts of Mountaintop Mining by James Wickham and co-authors, *BioScience*, 63: 5, 1 May 2013, Pages 335–348, <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2013.63.5.7>

## 2.2. Injustices against Humanity

Injustices against humanity are acts that are deliberately committed against an individual or a widespread or systematic attack against any civilian or an identifiable part of a civilian population. These kinds of injustices may happen during times of peace or war. Injustice against humanity includes crimes against humanity.<sup>43</sup> Injustices against humanity include acts that make human beings unable to achieve their fulfilments as human beings: murder; extermination; human trafficking and enslavement; forcible transfer of population; discrimination and persecution against any identity or collectively (race, religion, and gender); unequal access to clean water, food, work, health and education; poverty; genocide and ethnic cleansing; unethical human experimentation; extrajudicial punishments, military use of children, and other human rights abuses.

As Christians we are all called to love God and our neighbours. One is so closely connected to the other that to say that we love God becomes a lie if we are closed to our neighbours or hate them. Pope Benedict XVI stresses that love of neighbour is a path that leads to the encounter with God, and that closing our eyes to our neighbour also blinds us to God<sup>44</sup>. Pope Francis has also renewed our fervour in *Evangelii Gaudium* by stressing that “each individual Christian and every community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor<sup>45</sup>, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society ... it means working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter.”<sup>46</sup> This Christian calling to work against injustice against humanity urges our response.

### 1. Transnational/multinational economic and power expansion in globalized world

Through globalization, the economic growth in many countries can be accelerated but the economic activity has not been shared evenly across countries and regions. The uneven pace of global economic recovery continues to raise concerns regarding prospects for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>47</sup> Many countries have even suffered recent setbacks. Moreover, economic prospects remain vulnerable to changes in trade policy, a sudden deterioration in global financial conditions and rising geopolitical tensions. The victims of this situation are the poor people in poor countries.

### 2. Poverty

Poverty is more than the lack of income and resources to ensure a sustainable livelihood. Its manifestations include hunger and malnutrition, limited access to education and other basic services, social discrimination and exclusion as well as the lack of participation in decision-making.<sup>48</sup> There is growing consensus that economic growth is not sufficient to reduce

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<sup>43</sup> About crimes against humanity, please see Rome Statute of the International Court, article no. 7.

<sup>44</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, DCE 16-18.

<sup>45</sup> The term ‘poor’ and ‘poverty’ here do not refer only to financially poor and financial poverty but to the condition of lack something needed to develop.

<sup>46</sup> Francis, EG 187.

<sup>47</sup> See UN Documents on MDGs and SDGs at [United Nations Sustainable Development – 17 Goals to Transform Our World](#)

<sup>48</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/poverty>

poverty if it is not inclusive and if it does not involve the three dimensions of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental.<sup>49</sup>

### **3. Forced migration and displacement**

Forced migration of population may happen due to economic<sup>50</sup> or safety reasons. Large gaps in incomes and wages a magnet for migration. This migration may socially, culturally, economically and politically affect both groups of countries: the source and the target. Those who migrate due to safety reasons (such as feared persecution, conflict, generalized violence, or other circumstances that have seriously disturbed public order) suffer more and raise more challenges that can impact the infrastructure of the receiving country.

### **4. Discrimination**

Discrimination is unjust or prejudicial treatments of different categories of people such as race, gender and religion. Article 1 of the United Nations (UN) Charter stipulates that one of the purposes of the UN is to promote respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms “without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion”.

#### **a. Racial discrimination**

Racial discrimination rises due to the belief that members of each race possess characteristics, abilities, or qualities specific to that race, that distinguish it as inferior or superior to another race or races. According to article No. 1 of the document of International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, racial discrimination is any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.<sup>51</sup>

#### **b. Gender discrimination**

Gender discrimination refers to unequal treatment or perceptions of individuals wholly or partly due to their gender. Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.<sup>52</sup>

#### **c. Religious discrimination**

Religious discrimination refers to the unduly restriction in the enjoyment of human civil, cultural, economic, political and social right due to one’s religion or lack of religious belief. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, states: 1) everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have a religion or whatever belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2) No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his /her freedom to have a religion or belief of his

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<sup>49</sup> <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/inequality/>

<sup>50</sup> <https://dudh.es/universal-declaration-of-human-rights>

<sup>51</sup> Please see <https://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cerd.aspx>

<sup>52</sup> Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), article no. 1, retrieved from <https://www.ohchr.org/SP/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CEDAW.aspx>

/her choice. 3) Freedom to manifest one's religion or belief may be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary to protect public safety, order, health or morals or the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.<sup>53</sup>

## 5. Child Abuse

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimated that each year 1.2 million children are trafficked worldwide. Children were exploited for various forms of pornography, again distributed globally.<sup>54</sup> Children's rights violations through aggression and sexual violence continue to plague many countries around the world. Under-reporting and lack of data aggravate the problem.<sup>55</sup>

## 6. Human Trafficking

Trafficking in Persons is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability or giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.<sup>56</sup> Trafficking in persons is a vile crime that feeds on inequalities, instability and conflict. Human traffickers' profit from peoples' hopes and despair. They prey on the vulnerable and rob them of their fundamental rights.<sup>57</sup>

## 7. Climate Change

The climate change brings disastrous consequences, endangering the survival of human beings. Its worst impacts include the melting of the ice mass of poles, which in turn causes rising sea level, producing flooding and threatening coastal environment which makes people lose their place to live. Climate change also increases more violent environmental problems, such as droughts, fires, and floods. It also creates climate refugees and disrupts or destroys the food chain.

## 8. Unequal Access to Clean Water, Work, Health and Education

### a. Clean Water

Clean, accessible water for all is an essential to live in every part of the world. There is sufficient fresh water on the planet to achieve this.<sup>58</sup> However, 3 in 10 people lack access to safely managed drinking water services. This is due to bad economics or poor infrastructure; millions of adults and children die every year from diseases associated with inadequate water supply.

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<sup>53</sup> Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief, proclaimed by General Assembly resolution 36/55 of 25 November 1981, article no. 1. See link in footnote 52.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. Ben-Arieh, A., Casas, F., Frones, I., and Korbin, J. E. Eds. (2014), *Handbook of Child Well-Being Theories, Methods and Policies in Global Perspective*, Volume 5, London: Springer Science + Business Media Dordrecht

<sup>55</sup> Find out more at <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

<sup>56</sup> Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, article 3, paragraph (a)

<sup>57</sup> Find out more at <https://www.un.org/press/en/2018/sgsm19146.doc.htm>

<sup>58</sup> SDG 6, cf. [Water and Sanitation – United Nations Sustainable Development](#)

**b. Food**

Globally, one in nine people in the world today (815 million) are undernourished. The majority of the world's hungry people live in developing countries, where 12.9 per cent of the population is undernourished.<sup>59</sup>

**c. Work**

The UN Sustainable Development Goal 8 aims to promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all. Everybody has the right to have a decent work, but we cannot deny that there is still continued lack of decent work opportunities, insufficient investments and under-consumption. Roughly half the world's population still lives on the equivalent of about US\$2 a day with global unemployment rates of 5.7% and having a job doesn't guarantee the ability to escape from poverty in many places.<sup>60</sup>

**d. Health**

According to the UN, the highest attainable standard of health is a fundamental right of every human being.<sup>61</sup> Sadly, 17,000 fewer children die each day than in 1990, but more than five million children die before their fifth birthday each year. Maternal mortality has fallen by 37% since 2000, but the maternal mortality ratio – the proportion of mothers who do not survive childbirth compared to those who do – in developing regions is still 14 times higher than in the developed regions.<sup>62</sup>

**e. Education**

When people have access to quality education, they can break from the cycle of poverty. Over 265 million children are currently out of school and 22% of them are of primary school age. An estimated 50 percent of out-of-school children of primary school age live in conflict-affected areas.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>59</sup> SDG 2, cf. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/hunger>

<sup>60</sup> SDG 8, cf. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/economic-growth/>

<sup>61</sup> The WHO Constitution (1946), available at the link [who\\_constitution\\_en.pdf](#)

<sup>62</sup> SDG 3, cf. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/health/>

<sup>63</sup> SDG 4, cf. <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/education/>

### 2.3. Interconnectedness: Social and Environmental Injustices

Nearly 50 years ago, the Holy Father Paul VI gave an urgent address on the global ecological crisis during the 25th anniversary of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome. Today we could say his words resounded prophetically:

“... The progressive deterioration of that which has generally come to be called the environment, risks provoking a veritable ecological catastrophe. Already we see the pollution of the air we breathe, the water we drink. We see the pollution of rivers, lakes, even oceans - to the point of inspiring fear of a true «biological death» in the near future, if energetic measures are not immediately and courageously taken and rigorously put into practice. It is a formidable prospect which you must diligently explore in order to save from destruction the fruit of millions of years of natural and human selection. In brief, everything is bound up together. You must be attentive to the great consequences which follow on every intervention by man in the balance of nature, whose harmonious richness has been placed at his disposal in accordance with the living design of the Creator. (Cf., for example, Ps. 64: 10-14).”<sup>64</sup>

On November 16, 1970, before a crowded assembly of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) members, Paul VI stated that the accelerated industrial civilization endangers the balance of the earth, causing irreversible deterioration leading to potential ecological catastrophe and annihilation of life on earth since everything is bound together in this common home. His statement sums up any treaty on the planetary imbalance that the most current environmental sciences can provide. The concept of interconnectedness stems from the theory of systems applied to the earth's sciences, in which every component of the earth system, such as the biosphere (life), the lithosphere (relief), the atmosphere (air), the hydrosphere (oceans, rivers and lakes), every part, takes its role in maintaining the balance, and they interplay one another at different space and time scales to keep the harmony and reestablish any imbalance that could arise. Pope Paul VI took the concept and elevated it to the ethical category of moral interdependence. Thus, he stated "the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitely turn against man". From that moment "*the urgent need for a radical change in the conduct of humanity*" emerges if we want to take care of the home.

This contribution of Paul VI is a Copernican shift in the Social Teaching of the Church on the conventional and modern concept of how the relationship of the human being must be with nature. A relationship that remained (or still has remained?) in the Catholic ecclesial environment at least until Vatican II. At that time, the separation between humans and nature was insurmountable/unbreakable. The historical evolution/deployment of human beings

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<sup>64</sup> Address to FAO on the 25th Anniversary of its Institution (16 November 1970), 4: AAS 62 (1970), 833. Available at [http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1970/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19701116\\_xxv-istituzione-fao.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/speeches/1970/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19701116_xxv-istituzione-fao.html)

took place in a static and natural framework. Nature was an immutable and eternal cosmic scene that provided human beings with goods, space for their conflicts, and guaranteed their rights<sup>65</sup>. The window opened by Paul VI became the starting point to accompany an ecological revival within the Church during the last half a century. It was part of the new air/revival brought by the Second Vatican Council. Since then, the progressive awareness of articulating social justice and caring for the environment has grown in the People of God, especially in those regions of the earth, such as Latin America, where the coexistence of a primary social poverty and an immeasurable abundance of nature distorts the message of the Gospel because of the practical contradiction it offers every day.

The Pope St John Paul II became concerned about the issue of responsible interdependence among humans and nature. He further offered the thought of *global ecological conversion*, meaning thus the need for a *change in our lifestyles* as well as our *patterns of production and consumption*, and *established structure of power* since human beings are unable “to see no other meaning in their natural environment than what serves for immediate use and consumption”.<sup>66</sup> Therefore, it is relevant a *human ecology* which “takes into account the nature of each being and of its *mutual connection in an ordered system*”<sup>67</sup>.

Economic and technical progress must be accompanied by increasing awareness of the impacts of our intervention in nature can cause to any kind of creature, living and not living, human and natural, in order to prevent the negative impacts, since everything is bound up together. As a practical rule, we must be aware that, for example, the polluted river the passes across a poor village, or slum, where the poor are struggling to live, is consequence of a common economic model of growth and human development, that do not regard its consequences on the environment and the poor it generates by exclusion. Therefore, if we want to conduct service to the poor, in order to re-establish justice, we must take care also of the polluted river, by restoring its original quality. By doing so we will be fixing the problem from root: the economic model that must be changed.

Pope Benedict XVI went further forward and provided insightful thoughts on the interconnectedness in the creation, concerning human behaviour. Before the youth gathered in Assis he called the young people *guardian of creation* by saying that

*“Respect for the human being and respect for nature are one, but both can grow and find their right measure if we respect in the human being and in nature the Creator and his creation. On this, dear young people, I believe to find allies in you, true “guardians of life and creation”.*<sup>68</sup>

For Pope Benedict XVI a major part of the origin of the imbalances in creation, the humans and the nature, is due to the forgetfulness of the creative intervention of God that relaxes the consciences of responsibility for the care of creation. In other words, the forgetfulness of God

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<sup>65</sup> Cf. The concept of Nature present in the social pastoral letter by Pope Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, 1891.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. John Paul II, CA 841.

<sup>67</sup> Cf. John Paul II, SRS 559.

<sup>68</sup> Address of Pope Benedict XVI to the students participating in the meeting promoted by the "Sorella Natura" Foundation. Paul VI Hall, 28 November 2011 available at [http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf\\_ben-xvi\\_spe\\_20111128\\_sorella-natura.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/speeches/2011/november/documents/hf_ben-xvi_spe_20111128_sorella-natura.html)

(as a source of creation), so typical of our westernized cultures, leads to the absolutization of nature (seen as divine, sacred and therefore untouchable), or to the absolutization of the human being, who becomes the tyrant of the creatures. Today, both extreme positions coexist in different world environmental movements, which clearly are not catholic stances.<sup>69</sup> In turn, for the first time, he introduces the fact that the care for social justice and the care for environmental justice is one unique justice, since nature and humans are united by the loving act of God's creation.

Furthermore, in *Caritas in Veritate*, Pope Benedict XVI provides what he understands as the basis of the unjust relationships built up against nature and the poor, namely, an economy whose goal, in itself, is profit and immediate benefit, forgetting the logic of *gift and gratuitousness*; thus, for him it is clear *that without gratuitousness, there can be no justice in the first place*.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, the pope found that, along this economy of the merely maximization of profit, a hedonistic and excessive consumption society is built, which has a negative impact on nature:

“The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa. This invites *contemporary society* to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many parts of the world, *is prone to hedonism and consumerism*, regardless of their harmful consequences.”<sup>71</sup>

It is a damage that occurs not only to nature but also to the most disadvantaged and vulnerable human beings. Hence, echoing John Paul II, he saw the urgent need to recover God's place in creation to guide human choices:

"What is needed is an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new life-styles “in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments”.”<sup>72</sup>

Popes through Pope Francis today, have provided three pillars or real facts from which we need to act and support the need of work for justice in our world: *1) the deterioration of nature, 2) an economy of infinite growth, and 3) a culture prone to hedonism and consumerism*.

Based on the three pillars, Pope Francis put the dispersed pieces of the ecological puzzle into one table, namely, his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, a pastoral letter entirely devoted to the JPIC issues. As it will be developed in later sections of this document, he will provide us a renewed vision of JPIC works and justice through the concept of integral ecology, which *calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology and take us to the heart of what it is to be human*.<sup>73</sup> Integral ecology could be regarded as an expanded version of interconnectedness, towards the sphere of the Spirit. From here, our work of JPIC

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<sup>69</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, CV 48.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. CV 38.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. CV 51.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. CV 51.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Francisco, LS 11.

will become an expression of our own spirituality, a *spirituality of ecology*<sup>74</sup>. Only possessing and exercising a spirituality of ecology we can realize that “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both *the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor*.”<sup>75</sup>

For Pope Francis, the deterioration of nature has become a cry of creation, the cry of the poor and a cry of the earth, the economy of infinite growth is an economy that must be fixed, because it kills the weak<sup>76</sup>, and a culture prone to hedonism and consumerism, has become a throw-away culture, for which an alternative lifestyle must be offered from the sharing our convictions of faith that bring hope and joy.

#### **2.4. Efforts on Migration and Refugees from The United Nations (UN)**

During September 2016, at the UN Summit, the world came together around one plan. Member States reached agreement by consensus on a powerful outcome document: the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. The New York Declaration expressed the political will of world leaders to save lives, protect rights and share responsibility on a global scale. This has been the basis for future development and consensus pursuing global compacts for refugees and migrants.

Two years of extensive consultations, in December 2018, the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) was approved by the United Nations General Assembly in New York<sup>77</sup>. The GCR “represents the political will and ambition of the international community as a whole for strengthened cooperation and solidarity with refugees and affected host countries” (from the Guiding principles of the GCR). It is a framework for more predictable and equitable responsibility-sharing, recognizing that a sustainable solution to refugee situations cannot be achieved without international cooperation. It provides a blueprint for governments, international organizations, and other stakeholders to ensure that host communities get the support they need and that refugees can lead productive lives. Its four key objectives are to:

- Ease the pressures on host countries.
- Enhance refugee self-reliance.
- Expand access to third-country solutions.
- Support conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

Also, in December 2018, the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) was held in Marrakech, Morocco. The GCM is the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. Though the global compact is non-legally binding, it is grounded on values of state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination, and human rights, and recognizes that a cooperative approach is needed to optimize the overall benefits of

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<sup>74</sup> Francisco, GE 28.

<sup>75</sup> LS 49.

<sup>76</sup> LS 109.

<sup>77</sup> The document can be retrieved from [https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR\\_English.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf)

migration, while addressing its risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination.

- The GCM is a non--legally-binding agreement. It is neither a convention nor a treaty.
- Instead, it expresses many universal values as Objectives -- for example, to save lives, prevent smuggling and trafficking, provide accurate information, facilitate fair recruitment, reduce vulnerabilities in migration, manage borders well and invest in skills development.
- Multiple proposals and best practices follow each Objective. Among these may be found initiatives like offering education, opening humanitarian corridors, accompanying migrants in countries of transit, and promoting intercultural encounter to foster integration in countries of arrival.
- The GCM is the product of two years of consultation and negotiation. It has been an important exercise in multilateralism, the approach believed by many to be the only way to confront the major problems afflicting humanity.

Although some countries did not endorse the GCM, 163 out of 194 countries signed. Among them the United States, Italy, Dominican Republic, Hungary, Austria, and Australia, the question is not whether the GCM will be adopted, what impact it will have on the world. The question arises given that its upcoming adoption has already been overshadowed by political statements that contradict the solidarity and multilateral approach to international migration it aims at promoting.

## 2.5 GLOBAL PASTORAL APPROACH ON MIGRANTS BY THE HOLY SEE

The advocacy that Pope Francis is calling us to on the care for migrants and refugees can be summarized in four mileposts for action to implement within Catholics communities:

- **Welcoming:** It means to provide and facilitate legal paths for entry, and no longer push migrants and displaced people towards countries where they face persecution and violence. We need to balance our concerns about national security with concern for fundamental human rights.
- **Protecting:** It means that we recognize and defend the inviolable dignity of those who flee real dangers in search of asylum and security, and to prevent them from being exploited. We must think of those women and children exposed to risks and abuses that can even result in enslavement.
- **Promoting:** It calls for us to support the integral human development of migrants and refugees by ensuring access to all levels of education for children and young people.
- **Integrating:** It means to allow refugees and migrants to participate fully in the life of the society that welcomes them, as part of a process of mutual enrichment and fruitful cooperation in service of the integral human development of the local community.

### **Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Pietro Parolin:**

“The Holy See has already launched the process to find the most effective ways with which institutions of the Catholic Church and Catholic-inspired organizations throughout the world can make use of the Global Compact’s compendium of best practices and recommendations that exemplify welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants”.

The Holy See has followed closely all these international efforts. As a State, it has joined many of the world’s governments in adopting both the GCR and GCM. Overall, the Church welcomes the GCM by the UN. Though it has a number of reservations and comments on a few references that contain terminology, principles and guidelines that are neither agreed language in the international community nor in line with Catholic principles, namely, references to documents suggesting the “Minimum Initial Service Package” (MISP), sexual and reproductive health services (which includes abortion) and the Lesbians Gays Bisexual Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) agenda.

The Church's agenda when it comes to promoting immigrants and their free mobility around the globe, is in open dialogue with the world. The agenda includes:

- Immigrants and refugees should have access to health care, minimum wage and education.
- They should have the freedom to choose where they wish to live.
- Child detention must be avoided and families, even extended relatives, should be reunited independent of financial requirements.
- The international budget for welcoming states should be amplified.
- Citizenship should be recognized at birth and countries must provide quick, safe and accessible paths to citizenship.
- The requisite of knowing the local language for immigrants, especially when over 50, should be dismissed for the purpose of gaining citizenship.

Note there is an effort by the Church to remove the distinction between refugees and immigrants in UN discussions, as a fundamental classification that determines or discriminates the behaviour of welcoming countries toward newcomers.

In early 2018, Migrants & Refugees (M&R) Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Human Integral Development was launched "The 20 Pastoral Actions Points"<sup>78</sup>, expanding the themes of welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating. They are meant to be used by in pastoral planning and evaluation in the Church's' dioceses, parishes and religious congregations, by Catholic and other organizations of the civil society, by schools and groups concerned with all those who are "forced to flee." The points are pastoral priorities for local programs and key points for families, education and media. We are all invited to reflect, pray and act upon them.

M&R has launched "The 20 Action Points for the Global Compacts"<sup>79</sup> to be in dialogue with governments and international organizations looking for that our concerns can be included in the Global Compacts by the UN. They became an essential part of the Holy See's overall official contribution to the consultations in 2017-2018 by the UN. It is grateful to see how principles and measures in the 20 Points are reflected in the final texts of the UN Compacts, specifically in about 15 out of the 23 Objectives of the GCM. Nevertheless, the final outcome of the UN GCM is still under process and debate.

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<sup>78</sup> Accessible at <https://migrants-refugees.va/resource-center/documents/>

<sup>79</sup> Retrieved from <https://migrants-refugees.va/resource-center/documents/>

# **CHAPTER 3**

## **BIBLICAL AND SPIRITUAL FUNDAMENTALS**

**“Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.”  
(1 John 4:8)**

**“Love is the only force capable of changing the heart of the human person and of all humanity, by making fruitful the relations between men and women, between rich and poor, between cultures and civilizations.”**

**(Pope Benedict XVI, message to the Youth on the occasion of the 22<sup>nd</sup> World Youth Day 2007)**

**“The dignity of each human person and the pursuit of the common good are concerns which ought to shape all economic policies”.**

**(Pope Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium* 203)**

### 3.1. Just Relationships in the Bible: God, Creation, Human Beings<sup>80</sup>

From an ecological point of view, the environment is the physical, concrete space of nature at a given moment; in which the exchange of energy in all its forms occurs. The flow of energy in the earth system is a complete gift of the sun. Everyday life is streaming from the sun and is received by the environment. You cannot add anything human to unfold spontaneously, that is, naturally, the magnificent donation of possibilities that it brings, like the miracle of life in its multiple forms, in mutual interrelation with the environment. Thus, the environment is, in relation to the manifestation of life, sustenance, possibility and limit. Without the environment there is no life, real and concrete, in any way. In this sense, it is unique and collective: each natural space brings its own possibilities, of life. This can be seen, for example, in a valley of the Andes, in a meadow in Illinois, the interior of the Mediterranean Sea, the dense forests of the Amazon, the Atacama desert or the Moon.

Scientific knowledge about the physics of creation is based on the exchange of energy flows, matter and forces to change the forms and move the states of things. It is the way to understand how things come to exist, but not why and for what purpose creation arose. For the believer, the environment is created. It is the creation of God. The Bible begins with the book of Genesis, which contains two accounts of creation. The first story is contained in chapter 1, the second in chapters 2 and 3. These texts have mainly religious purposes.<sup>81</sup> In other words: they are not concerned about giving information of a scientific or natural nature, but about the origin of the world. Their interest is to contribute to a vision of the world as something originated by a holy, faithful and loving God, and as something destined to an alliance that is the salvation of everything created.<sup>82</sup>

#### The Creation Story

These sacred texts in Genesis present the understanding that the powerful Word of God the Creator has realized the work of creation. By His Word, everything has been created out of nothing. Everything created is good in the eyes of God (Gen. 1, "And God saw that it was good", it is repeated throughout each day). Sun, moon, stars, oceans, air, soil, birds, trees, fish, animals, plants and human beings; all. The Genesis narrations emphasize that only God is really the divine being and that everything else in the world is a creature, and therefore, created by God. Being the work of God is the reason why creation is sacred.

Among all creatures created by God, human beings occupy a special place. Created man and woman, human beings are the image and likeness of God, therefore, they share a common dignity and become pro-creators responsible for the preservation of God's work in time. Dominion (not dominance) means that we have authority and responsibility over the welfare and well-being of God's creation. We resemble God mainly because of this dominion;

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<sup>80</sup> For this section, cf. Eduardo Agosta Scarel (2019). Ecological conversion. In hope of "new heavens and a new earth". Ed. The Carmelite NGO. Book available at <http://carmelitengo.org/en/proyectos-en/libro/>

<sup>81</sup> Cf. DV, Vatican Council II.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. Ruiz de la Peña, Juan Luis (1988). *Teología de la Creación*, Ed. Sal Terrae, Santander, p. 31.

therefore, our dominion must also resemble the dominion of God, which is the welfare and love for each creature.<sup>83</sup>

## The Rupture

In Genesis, the environment of the earth is presented with the metaphor of "the garden", in which "God places the human being" to "cultivate it and care for it" (Gen 2:15). Therefore, the relationship of human beings to nature and the environment is that of custodians or stewards. We are custodians, ministers, guardians who have been entrusted by the Creator to care for our environment. The custodianship implies the conscious and responsible management of something that is entrusted to the care of each. We received instructions to "care for and cultivate" God's creation (Gen 2:15). It is an ecological instruction.

However, for some reason, in some way linked to the distortion in the perception of reality and in the exercise of freedom made by human beings (Gen 3), evil is introduced in the course of time. Humanity suffered sin as broken bonds on three levels. A level related to God, since the man and the woman hid when God passed, having feelings of shame and fear because of the gaze of God. This explains the historical propensity for humans to avoid God's presence, either by forgetting his commandments, or by ignoring or forgetting the presence of God.

A second level of broken bond is found among humans, since before the scene of sin, Adam had said in reference to Eve, "this is, at last, bones of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen 2:23). However, after sin, Adam complains about his partner for the sin committed by saying: "The woman you gave me to be with me" (Gen 3:12). This is the scene of the first guilt against our neighbour, the partner, for our inability to recognize our own guilt. Then, a third level of broken bond is with nature, highlighted by the curse on the snake, childbirth with pain, the bread gained with effort and hard work etc., thus evidencing the hostility between the human flowering and the power of the nature.

Underlying the texts of Genesis is the interpretation of the faith that disturbances within the natural world have been introduced by the mankind. That is to say, the distancing of the human being from the will of God has a cosmic impact that alters the order of creation, generating an ecological crisis. Obviously, there is no pretence to give a historical explanation of natural disasters and human anguish<sup>84</sup>. What you can see is a certain deep relationship between human beings and the rest of the natural world, a relationship that includes an extension of the mystery of evil in nature, that originates in the human heart and that impacts on balance and harmony of nature<sup>85</sup>.

## Call to Conversion

From the beginning, the call of God clashes with the infidelity of human beings. Having doubted the goodness of God's work and His love, they flee from His presence instead of looking for it. To give right direction to them, God makes them realize that they are no longer in their place, extending to them this call: *Where are you?* (Gen 3:9). This call is implicitly an

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<sup>83</sup> Cf. Agosta Scarel, Eduardo and Lucio Florio (2013). La Tierra Creada. In: *Una Tierra habitable para Todos*, Ed. Claretiana, Buenos Aires, p. 20.

<sup>84</sup> *ibíd.*, p. 21.

<sup>85</sup> Cf. José Loza (2006). Génesis 1-11. *Comentario a la Nueva Biblia de Jerusalén*. Ed. Desclée de Brouwer, Bilbao.

invitation to return, an invitation to a change of interior attitude, an invitation to conversion. Conversion is a return on one's steps to retrace the path made, but this time, in the right direction, towards God. From the Old Testament, the history of the vocation of human beings, of their place in the world, is at the same time the history of their conversion. The conversion of human beings is essentially a restoration of the relationships between humanity: with others and with oneself, with the environment, and with God. Necessarily it is restoration of the cosmic order of the world and the ecological balance of nature, thought by God.

### **Jesus: Model, Motor and Hope for a New Creation**

Jesus peacefully assumes faith in God, the creator of the Old Testament (cf Mt 11:25). God is the Father of all creatures and in his Providence, He cares for all (Mt 6:25-34; 10:29). The synoptic Gospels emphasize that creation is good, as highlighted in Genesis chapter 1, the psalms and wisdom literature. Jesus insists that evil comes from within human beings, not from things. Things are good (Mk 7:14-20). Although creation contains dimensions of finitude and contingency, the Word of God sheds light on the essentially good value of matter and the rest of creation. In turn, the Gospel of John begins by indicating that, in the being of Jesus Christ, the mystery of God is introduced into the history, not only of humanity, but of all creation (Jn 1:1-3.14). God is inserted into the created cosmos, suffering its same fate. This introduction of God in his work not only reaffirms the positive value that God gives to creation, but also it includes his commitment to its destiny.

In continuity with this idea that God is involved in the history of the universe, the New Testament expresses that creation has been made anew: there is a "new creation". The effects of the resurrection of Christ determine a renewed configuration of the cosmos and of all humanity (2 Cor 5:17). The whole of what is created now experiences that newness of being, although awaiting its final deployment (Rom 8:18-22), with the "new heavens and earth" (Ap 21:1). From faith, the new creation does not consist in a mere restoration of the ecological balance. The recreation of the material universe means again the mediation of the human being, vicar of God for the rest of his work, in the perfection of Jesus Christ. He, assuming the human and cosmic condition, redesigns and produces creation again through his Passover. This new cosmic reconfiguration is extended in history through the Holy Spirit. The experience of Easter in the Spirit engenders a childlike disposition in believers as "children of God". He makes us "new creatures" and allows us to resume his vicarious task not already determined by the tyrannical forces of sin, which had made us act as oppressors, but animated by the fruits of the Spirit that has made us "a new person" (cf. Eph 4:24, Col 3:10), a "new creature" (cf. Gal 6:15) to work towards a new creation.

The human redeemed by the resurrection of Christ, the spiritual human being (Eph 4:24, Col 3:10), is capable through the Holy Spirit of cooperating in the cosmic restoration carried out by Jesus Christ himself (2Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15). This ultimate restoration of creation in "new heaven and new earth" is evoked in the New Testament with the image of childbirth of creation, which implies a transitory state, an unfinished process (Rom 8:13). The new creation takes place in a tension between the definitive that is coming (the new man who is born) and the past that is being left behind (the old man who dies). In this process all creation participates longingly. In some way, as Christian living our faith today, the time of transformation is right for conversion to new realities by humanity and the entire cosmos. In

that time, we can see the ecological awakening (and all ecological activity that accompanies it) as a way of expressing concretely our faith entrusted to the Resurrection.

### **The Spirit of God Renews the Earth**

The Psalmist says: "You send forth your Spirit, everything is recreated, and you renew the face of the earth" (Ps 103:30). The story the birth of the Church in the Acts of the Apostles (Act 2:4) finds a significant correspondence in this psalm, which gives great praise to God the Creator. The Holy Spirit that Christ has sent from the Father, and the Creator Spirit who has given life to each creature, are one and the same. Our faith in creation tells us that the "garden" in which we live has been entrusted to us to cultivate and guard with respect. This is possible only if Adam - the old man, formed with earth - allows himself to be re-formed by the Holy Spirit, that is, if he allows himself to be reformed by the Father according to the model of Christ, the new Adam<sup>86</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Holy Mass on The Solemnity of Pentecost, Homily of his Holiness Pope Francis Vatican Basilica, Sunday, 24 May 2015.

### 3.2. The Development of JPIC Ministries

The Christian and Carmelite commitment to JPIC ministry is rooted in the Sacred Scriptures. Sacred Scripture is the 'Word of God written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit'.<sup>87</sup> Sacred Scripture is a source of life for the Church from which it derives guidance, enlightenment and strength for its ministry of evangelization. The Scriptures are so fundamental to the community of disciples of Christ that St Jerome said that ignorance of the scriptures was ignorance of Jesus Christ.<sup>88</sup>

The Christian disciple ought to read, study, meditate, pray and contemplate upon the Scriptures for proper enlightenment, guidance and increase passion in his or her relationship with the Triune God. Indeed, the Word of God is a light for one's steps and a source of light. The Scriptures popularly referred to as the Old Testament give an account of God's gratuitous involvement with the people of Israel so that they would, through their relationship with God and the goodness of their lives, draw all nations to the worship of the true and living God. Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation are biblical values. They are values of the Kingdom of God which need to be spread with commitment and joyfulness. Our source of encouragement for engaging in promoting these values is that God is involved in and committed to the task of making the world a place that is just, at peace and reconciled. The Scriptures establish that God is not finished with our world. He is its Creator, Liberator and Redeemer. All these images in the New Testament reveal a personal loving God.

As the Prophets had prophesied of old, Jesus the Son of God came into the world to reveal the face of the loving and compassionate God. He came as a prophet to announce the jubilee of the Lord God: The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord' (Lk 4:18-19).

Through his person, wisdom and presence Jesus attracted many classes of people – the poor and downtrodden, the rich and famous and the many who felt cut off from society. Those who encountered him and were converted to him felt a new lease of life. They embraced his life of beatitude and considered friendship with Him as a privilege rather than a burden. For the first followers, knowing Jesus was a gift and task. The Scriptures reveal Jesus to be the Son of God and Messiah, the Word made flesh, the Lord and Master of all who believe. Jesus came to reveal to us that he is the way, the truth and the life (Jn 14:6) to the God whom he revealed as our *Abba*, Father.

Noticing who Jesus is, we the contemporary Christians, are also attracted by his person and feel drawn to allow him as the Lord and Master of our lives. Jesus is not an idea to us. We encounter him as a person. Pope emeritus Benedict XVI expressed it more clearly when he wrote that "being Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but the encounter with an event, a person, which gives life a new horizon and a decisive direction"<sup>89</sup>.

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<sup>87</sup> DV 9.

<sup>88</sup> St Jerome, *Commentarium in Isaiam prophetam, Prologus*: PL 24,17.

<sup>89</sup> Benedict XVI, DCE 1.

Consequently, an encounter with the Christ of the Scriptures, the revealer of the Father's face of compassion and love, fills us with joy and challenges us to follow, adopt and live by his values. From our encounter and conversion to Christ we feel the urge to proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ whose heads are clearly spelt out in the following outline:

- The Good News of Human Dignity as daughters and sons in Christ who redeems us and establishes a permanent relationship with Him. From this relationship in Christ, we see the "source of our absolute, non-negotiable, and inviolable dignity"<sup>90</sup>.
- The Good News of Life revealed in Jesus Christ, "the human face of God and divine face of man"<sup>91</sup>. In the face of difficulties and uncertainties as well as a threatening sense of a meaningless life, hedonistic subjectivism and exclusion we hold that human beings "are always sacred, from their conception until their natural death, in all circumstances and conditions of life". In the service of life, God calls us "to care for the earth so that it may provide shelter and sustenance to all human beings"<sup>92</sup>.
- The Good News of the Family which is "the school of faith, the training ground for human and civil values, the hearth in which human life is born and is generously and responsibly welcome... The family is irreplaceable for the personal serenity it provides and for the upbringing of children"<sup>93</sup>.
- The Good News of Human Activity which includes activities such as work, science and technology which serve earthly progress, personal sanctification and the building up of the Kingdom of God in truth, goodness and beauty.
- The Good News of the Universal Destiny of Goods and Ecology which sees creation as the manifestation of God's provident love and which we are to care for and transform as a source of decent life for all.

The Scriptures provide a solid basis for our joy in the proclamation of the good news in our world.

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<sup>90</sup> V General Conference of the Bishops of Latin America and the Caribbean, *Disciples and Missionaries of Jesus Christ, so that our Peoples may have life in Him: "I am the Way and the Truth and the Life" (Jn 16:4) Concluding Document*, Aparecida, 13-31 May 2007, Bogota: Centro de Publicaciones del CELAM, 2008, no. 104.

<sup>91</sup> Benedict XVI, *Prayer for the V Conference*.

<sup>92</sup> V CELAM 112, 113.

<sup>93</sup> IA 5, in V CELAM 114.

### 3.3. The Role of Contemplation in JPIC<sup>94</sup>

Nowadays we have in the Church an increasing and sensitive conscience in face of the phenomenon of environmental degradation as part of our mission in Justice and Peace that could have been impossible to imagine, or it has been at least suspicious to realize, two decades ago. Justice and Peace can no longer be devoted only to the promotion and fight for fair human rights to territory, food, fresh-water, health, work and education, or to the defence of minority and fight against human trafficking, as examples of many other problems still affecting hundreds of million people with undesired high occurrence in the world. Justice and Peace opens up a new horizon, as never done before, to take care of creation, to integrate the created things as an inherent part of the human life dignity for all human beings. We have learnt that to take care of Nature, as the only space that receives human life – and the atmosphere, as the blanket that warms it -, is so important for evangelization as the care for every singular human life from the early stages of life until death. Thus, work of Justice and Peace expanded to integrate the Creation, becoming Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC). Likewise, the role of spirituality in JPIC has become naturally a spirituality of ecology.

The word "spirituality" can express various concepts. It is a very plastic word. Among its meanings, I opt the one for which spirituality is understood as that way and beliefs that guide the fundamental options and decisions of life, a new way, that gives rise to an alternative lifestyle, distinct from the dominant culture of consumerism and waste. In turn, the word "Ecology" (oikos-logieii, in Greek) can be understood as the deep understanding or knowledge of the right relationships present in the environment and life enclosed by it, which allows a balanced and healthy deployment of the potentialities of life in that geographic area. The link between ecology and spirituality requires recognizing that the ultimate goal of Christian spirituality - and human in general - is to achieve harmony, balance, peace, with all creation, with yourself and with God. We Carmelites call this horizon, contemplation.

As a Carmelite we learnt that contemplation is not a static dynamism, but the inner human space where spirituality expands upon creation. The whole reality, the spiritual and the physical, in turn, could be regarded through the Trinitarian dynamism: The Divine Power, the Humanness and the (other) Created Things (both visible and invisible), in mutual interpenetration, being the Divine Power, the Spirit of God, the enveloping and sustaining source of reality. The contemplation of such reality is a call to discover or be aware of the empowering love of God within the humanness, concretized in every human being, and the created things. And such a process requires a deep human being's transformation through prayer, community and service that are the paths to Contemplation.

Ecology also concerns a comprehensive management of Nature, i.e., the Created Things, and Humanness, in order to regulate the inner relationships ("logieii") among them within the Earth, our house ("oikos"). The comprehensive management means to consider the often-forgotten Divine dimension as well. Thus, the expression *ecological crisis*, or environmental crisis, means that the comprehensive management of such relationships is at risk. Probably the crisis arises due to the implicit silence of the Divine dimension of reality that is present in

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<sup>94</sup> The section is a reworking of previous works by Agosta Scarel Eduardo: (2012) *A Spiritual Pathway to a Sustainable Environment*. The Position of the Carmelite NGO on Climate Change; (2011) *The Role of Spirituality on Caring for Creation*, in *Mysticism and Prophecy in Everyday Life*, IUSG, Rome, 147, 30-38.

the way we have been behaving in western societies. The roots of the current ecological crisis appear to be linked to the way that human relationships are developed towards the Divine and Nature. If so, Contemplation can be regarded as the essential manner to recover the Divine dimension of reality. Hence prayer, community and service may approach each other to mend Nature. That is the link between spirituality and ecology.

### **The Spiritual Roots of Ecological Crisis**

Understanding the link between ecology and spirituality requires, first of all, to consider contemplation as a spiritual path that is intimately related to the process of consolidation of the human beings' self-conscience, integrating both the dark and luminous sides of personality, within an endless journey towards the maturity of human affectivity, intellect and sexuality. These three factors of human life can be considered as parts of the human desire for dynamism. Such integration needs and is performed by an ethical and existential proposal. For Carmelites, for instance, that ethical and existential proposal is *living a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ* (Carmelite Rule 1), and all its consequences contained in our rule of life. Thus, it turns to be a spiritual itinerary towards growth in humanness. God has created us for this: for an ongoing growth in humanness while keeping harmonic relationships with all the created things and God, according to the Trinitarian dynamism mentioned above. Secondly, we need to understand that the roots of the current ecological crisis are human and not merely technical or scientific ones, as if ecological problems were only a matter of deep changes in technology according to each environmental issue, i.e., it is not just to change towards new "clean" technologies. If it were so, we would not be speaking about crisis.

The current ecological crisis, evidenced by climate change, energy resource depletion, increasing breach between the richest and the poorest, among others, seems to have started with human being crisis. During the past last century very deep social changes have consolidated. Especially our conception of human beings has changed noticeably. We passed from thinking of ourselves as human beings equipped with reason, self-sufficiency and freedom, from which we could make options towards what we considered the best and proper for each of us, towards a conception of human being eternally unsatisfied; prior to which the technology, as a caring nanny, comes to meet every need and desire.

Since mankind has undergone dissatisfaction, which emerges as an endogenous violence in the social level, or as an inner violence of rivalry and fight for surviving. Likewise, oftentimes societies have to take care of such violence through diverse mechanisms that could channel the polarized power able to be self-destructive. For instance, the traditions and religions, with their rites and costumes, would work to contain or limit the expansion of such violent forces, born within, due to the frustration of human desire in sexual, affective and intellectual dimensions.

When we say that technology appears like a consenting mother who grants us everything that we wish without postponing it. I also mean that thanks to technology several human achievements have been reached, allowing us to make an extraordinary step towards new human capabilities to transform our nature and to enhance and embellish the quality of life. And this is good. We now can enjoy a vast technological development, which makes our lives more comfortable and healthier, thanks to the growing scientific knowledge (the luminous

side). However, the technological development has been appropriated by economic and cultural models to consolidate a social and pragmatic program of living, which we can name as technocratic western lifestyle. The laws or mottos that rule out the western societies under technocracy are well known by everyone: “grow or die”, otherwise you will be out of the system; “go out and buy to fight unemployment”, unemployment is now the new taboo word; “quantity and acceleration”, everything must be done at the speed of computers and scales of machines; and so on. Thus, the traditional human rhythms and cycles of Nature are estimated as illegal within the new codes. Apparently, we are unaware that the technocracy model of human development is a human construction. It is indispensable to understand that it is not an uncontrolled natural force to which we must subject, as we often tend to believe even within our communities.

Furthermore, the conventional economy belongs to the model of technocratic human development. It lies on the logic of dissatisfaction of desire, or in other words, the logic of inner violence. The western economy empowers the rivalry between human desire and greed, by producing abundance of goods to temporarily alleviate the tension of desire.

In addition, globalized societies, guided by the technocracy laws, have created their own myths, such as *the evil is unreal*. The unreality of evil is understood as the absence of material goods, which is improper to be acquainted with all the pain and anxiety observed in real life (such as illness, death, social injustice, etc.). This myth implies from the technocratic framework that the human desire and the greed are inoffensive because they emulate the relationship between producer and consumer.

Other beliefs of our globalized societies are *full is better than empty, much is better than little, big is better than small*. Therefore, we must fill everything, to have everything, to know everything. They are translated into pragmatic behaviours such as the social premise that everyone must succeed professionally as synonym of accomplishment. In our culture there are no more places for experiences of gratuity, as the one we can experience during the nude attitude of just simply to look around without expecting more than to look around, since contemplation is an odd word.

So far, we have seen that we have a social development model that is based on the dissatisfied-desire economy. At this point the first ecological dilemma appears: human desire is a psycho-spiritual dynamism that can be easily manipulated by external factors to the freedom and decision-making of every individual. This fact is observed within the phenomenon of globalization, where the changes in legacy<sup>95</sup> towards social fragmentation and the fashion of goods and services for consumption induced by advertising, all become external forces that irresistibly control us from within. We no longer consume those things we need, but everything we are offered without distinction (how many cell phones have you changed, or been forced to change, in the last three years?). We have nowadays new needs that did not exist before. The technological novelties appear to be little paradises of illusion that are updated every day and suited to our increasing fragmented world. Hence, consumerism has been imposed as the only way for the development of western life. It has

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<sup>95</sup> As perhaps they are the current and surprising social laws regarding "egalitarian" marriage, blended families, decriminalized abortion, trade alliances with a very small number of countries, etc., which contribute to a social fragmentation that benefits the economy of unsatisfied desire.

been imposed by the strong interests in the local economy of global enterprises. We are taught that the unique human goal in life is “profit” and every human action tends to maximize it. The maximization of profit is at the expense of whatever, i.e., against many people lives and the environment. The true cost of entropy (that regards the resilience, or the capacity for self-recovering, of every ecosystem, including that of the humans) is the existential mortgage of future generations. In the future, they will not have sufficient energy sources for living (as now we are consuming most of resources at the lowest cost and the maximum gain).

Another second human dilemma, anchored to the nucleus of human beings, is as follows: the *human desire is unlimited*. According to Saint John of the Cross, *the heart of human being is not satisfied with less than Infinite*.<sup>96</sup> The infinite he refers to is clearly God himself.<sup>97</sup> For this reason when the desire is released at global scales, natural resources are insufficient to satisfy it. The earth implodes. The physical limits of the planet, which result to be too small in comparison, are evidently the natural limits to the dissatisfied-desire economy.

There exists another human limitation between the unlimited human desire and the economy based on it, influencing negatively on the earth health: our daily concrete acts are performed locally, but their effects are global; and we are not aware of this fact. Therefore, the current ecological crisis can be summarized under the known issue of Climate Change as follows:

Moreover, as a consequence of current global patterns of development and consumption the social injustice is a common field in many parts of the world. Consumerism is a luxurious lifestyle, if compared with lifestyles associated to a half of global population, i.e., only few technologically developed societies enjoy standard wellbeing by depleting global resources. According to FAO, a quarter of the global population irreversibly consumes 80% of the earth resources in order to sustain their high standard lifestyles.

Thus, the spirituality may be both an ecological proposal and a personal itinerary towards a healing transformation. The teaching of our masters, such as John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, John of San Sanson, among others, is mainly based on the traditional and Carmelite *vacare Deo* spiritual dynamism. According to this contemplative tradition, the spiritual journey makes human desire mature. In other words, in order to make this human desire mature we need to channel our inner strengths towards healthy goals both individually and socially with clear healing effects on the creation.

In other words, for the Carmelite, contemplation is a path that leads you to move from a personal, multiple, full and fragmented world of passions, desires, goods and people, goals and projects, to a simpler, more empty and more unified one, whose founding centre is the experience of God, of the Love of God, which gives fullness affectively, although not physically, since we will always need people and goods (we are not angels). We are creatures of desire, and passions effectively mobilize us to love and work to care for others and transform our environment into a more beautiful and better place. In this healthy context, the experience of God in your heart will make you realize that only He is enough in most of the times.

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<sup>96</sup> Cf. John of the Cross, Flame 3:17.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. *ibíd.* 17-21.

## The Ecological Healing Path

The *vacare Deo* (literally, self-emptying for God) dynamism, or living in God's presence dynamism, implies to recognize the relevant priority of God in our lives. John of the Cross would say that the deepest human desire is a *desire of God*.<sup>98</sup> Although God is not the ultimate object of our desire, human desire presents such particular characteristics that have astonished psychologists of all times: it is both desire for everything and nothing. It is therefore ambiguous. That is to say, we want everything right now, wherever it comes from, without knowing exactly what it is. Human desire is the desire for the Impossible.<sup>99</sup>

Therefore, the existential and spiritual path for human beings throughout their lives is to pay attention and give efforts to what really matters, as Mary did according to Jesus' council (Luke 2:19). Only when a person is centred, i.e., when all the strengths of his/her desire are channelled in and towards God, then it is possible to achieve equilibrium and peace. John of the Cross' teaching is very clear in this extent: "The discreet reader has ever need to bear in mind the intent and end which I have in this book, which is the direction of the soul, through all its apprehensions, natural and supernatural, without deception or hindrance, in purity of faith, to Divine union with God".<sup>100</sup>

Thus, the Carmelite saint's main objective is to help people find their direction to God, by going within themselves, because *the centre of the soul is God*.<sup>101</sup> His poem "Spiritual Canticle" exquisitely defines the spiritual and existential itinerary of human beings in stanzas 1-5. John of the Cross' Canticle describes the origin of the unlimited human desire: the wound caused by God (stanza 1 and 2), leaving the soul as *in a dry and weary land where there is no water* (Psalm 63). The Beloved's wound allows human beings to go out of themselves, developing their potentials to face reality (stanza 3 and 4). Physiologists argue that one of the functions of the desire/dissatisfaction dynamism is the progressing development of human physique, the personality, in interaction with the exterior. In the spiritual registry, we go out seeking heal the wound, touring the overall creation and asking to every creature, persons and things: *has He, God, passed by you?* (Stanza 4). The major drama will be to be too demanding to creatures, asking them to occupy the place of God because we get confused by their beauty (stanza 5). That is always the temptation: to make the created things (either material or spiritual goods, such as success, pleasure, happiness, sex, power, science, etc.), as well as people, our idols or gods adequate to our desires.

However, there is neither nothing nor nobody on the earth that can overcome God's dwell in our hearts, the empty space reserved for Him. The divine wound is only cauterized by the Spirit of God. John of the Cross' doctrine explains that human desire always runs the risk of fragmentation in multiple desires attached immoderately to things and people. The Carmelite

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<sup>98</sup> Cf. *ibid.* 3:25.27

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Carlos Domínguez Morano (1992): *Creer después de Freud* (Ed. San Pablo), Madrid, p. 9-25.

<sup>100</sup> John of the Cross, Book 2, *Ascent to Mount Carmel*, 28:1.

<sup>101</sup> O.c. Flame 1:3.

friar warns us about this affection through the purification of desire, which consists in orienting the inner strengths of desire toward Him who really can help enjoy human life with harmony and peace. "The Dark Night of Soul" has to do with this process. During the night, the addictions and unconscious desires are not obstacles to eliminate or to make disappear, but to face or overcome throughout the emptying process of the night. The spiritual emptying does not mean the lack of things or material and spiritual goods (we need them because we are not angels), but it is about to contain the appetite for, or the exaggerated interest of, them:

For that reason we call this detachment night to the soul, for we are not treating here of the lack of things, since this implies no detachment on the part of the soul if it has a desire for them; but we are treating of the detachment from them of the taste and desire, for it is this that leaves the soul free and void of them, although it may have them; for it is not the things of this world that either occupy the soul or cause it harm, since they enter it not, but rather the will and desire for them, for it is these that dwell within it.<sup>102</sup>

Hence, the Carmelite spiritual itinerary of the soul regards the human being interior as a recipient that must be emptied of things, i.e., to be liberated from heavy loads, so as to be filled by and with God throughout the human life journey. The pass through the nights will be the process of emptying or detachment of goods and loads, making the person mature his/her desire. As long as the person goes forward in the journey of maturing desires and approaching to the union with God, a new process of refilling with the hidden divine reality will be activated. The soul's union with God is, according to John of the Cross, the plenitude and shawl. Only when we empty ourselves from human securities (to know, to possess, to be powerful), we can discover our true value: it is not in knowledge, possession or power, but in God himself who fills the human life.

But our unsacred societies have no other ways to treat the unlimited human desire rather than with the stimulation towards consumerism. Nowadays we are clearly facing the consequence of a humanity with no God. The natural disasters, climate change, air and water pollution, social injustice, impoverishment of our peoples, among other environmental and social issues, all of them respond to unsustainable development patterns of production and consumption that are supported by the economy based on the eternally dissatisfied human desire that has no God.

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<sup>102</sup> John of the Cross, Book 1, *Ascent to Mount Carmel* 3:4.

**Principles:**

- The roots of the ecological crisis are linked to the way human beings relate both to the Divine and to nature.
- The human heart is not satisfied with anything less than the Infinite.
- Created things can never take the place of God.
- God has created us to live in harmony with all created things and with God the Creator.
- Societies with no understanding of this will seek to deal with unlimited human desire by fostering consumerism by every means possible.
- The Carmelite call to contemplation presents a path to wisdom that can heal both the human person and the planet on which we live.
- The Carmelite path of contemplation re-orders our human desire and helps us attain happiness without constantly feeding every whim.
- The Carmelite path can help people appreciate the beauty of Creation and see a way to preserve it for the good of future generations.

### **Contemplation, a Way of Freedom**

The spiritual call to contemplation, as given by John of the Cross' itinerary of maturing human desire, is a proposal for healing both the persons and the planet. The essence of the life of the believer is this act of living in the profound lovely warning of God as *one who opens his eyes*<sup>103</sup>. It is a falling into awareness that He inhabits everything and is in everything. As long as human beings abandon the belief that their plenitude is found in materially filling everything up, they will be able to liberate the earth with the obligation to satisfy them infinitely as their released desire is. Such proposal is certainly not easy because it requires, as a first step, faith in God, a sense of life transcendence, and acceptance of human values of gratuity and gift beyond the logic of immediate satisfaction and consumption. However, human's will would need to experience *another and a greater enkindling by another and a better love, which is that of God himself; to the end that, having its pleasure set upon Him and deriving from Him its strength, it should have courage and constancy to deny itself all other things with ease*.<sup>104</sup> Hence the experience of the empowering love of God can help to reorient the inner forces of desire towards a more austere and simpler lifestyle, so as to deny or put off the immediate needs of pleasure and satisfaction. Definitely, it requires sacrifice, in its most positive way, as a hope that is patient and a happy and complacent disclaimer for *something greater and better* that is coming to our lives.

Contemplation as a way of freedom supposes the experience of travellers who have the goal to seek God through creatures, but without dwelling on them. They achieve it successfully as they enter into a discovery of their true self, deepest motivations, desires and frustrations, talents and weaknesses, to finally learn to be in relationship with others, that is, people, the created and God himself, from their personal truth. Clearly there will be new relationships of

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<sup>103</sup> O.c. Flame 3:33.

<sup>104</sup> O.c. Book 1, Ascent 14:2.

justice, peace and integration with all creation and with God himself, source and end of the created.

Contemplation is learned by doing (this is experience) the path of seeking God, of self-knowledge and of being in contact with others, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged, and with creation. In that intimate contact, where action and reaction come into play, we can discover our own smallness and vulnerability, the mud we are made of, and how needy we are of God, others and creation. At the same time, the urgency for care, the preservation of the creatures, of the poor, of oneself, and of God's place in this world will be activated in us, without which every horizon of work and struggle for justice and peace loses its horizon of deeper meaning.

In conclusion, the spiritual contemplative path of transformation through prayer, community and service would accomplish a personal, communitarian and planetary healing as long as these spirituality elements can help us be aware of the following:

- Self-knowledge or self-awareness: Our first touch is with us. We must name what we feel and develop the capacity to channelize our impulses and passions on the selected paths of healing us and the creations.
- Ability to make silence: this is a prerequisite for growing and personal maturing. "friend and peaceful environment", as the "quiet calm" described by JFC. Silence for best listening of the voice of the victims: the poor, the nature.
- Appraising everyday life: life makes us mature. Little gestures can make a great difference in quality of life.
- Capacity to enjoy with little: return to simplicity. Few things are really important in our lives. (Little is often much and sufficient. Sufficiency: God is enough! As Saint Teresa of Avila would say).
- Dissatisfaction is part of our life journey (quiet acceptance of this fact).
- Human aspirations and desires are infinite because they are made for God.
- Recover a certain sacredness of nature
- To become aware of interdependence
- To learn to appreciate the dimension of happiness that are not related to the fact of having and possessing.
- Contact with Reality: What are the big deals out there?
- Contact with the poor, with the least favored by society, with the hopeless ones and goners of society.
- Hope and optimism: Be faithful to the history and look into the future with hope. God passes by. It is a dive into the unexpected.

There is no doubt that humanity faces its self-destructive capacity, that was limited by the sacred in the past, but now appears to be unlimited. Without a growth in awareness of the Divine dimension of reality the ecological catastrophe seems to be inevitably.

Bear in mind: the contemplative dynamism is going from a multiple and full universe to one of simplicity and emptiness. Our mystics call such a purification process emptying, nudity or loneliness of the soul. As the soul is emptied of all things, God, who is pure simplicity, might fill the soul. To make this way forward it is only possible from the intimate call of love that

surpasses all other claims that the multiplicity of the world offers and which only a genuine experience of God can give. I believe that it is only at that moment that we can honestly start talking about justice and equity in our societies. John of the Cross, again, enlightens us the way ahead: “It is like the traveller, who, in order to go to new and unknown lands, takes new roads, unknown and untried...[the traveller] could not reach new countries... if he went not along new and unknown roads and abandoned those which were known to him”<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup> John of the Cross, Book 2, Dark Night 16:8.

### 3.4. The Spirit of Vatican Council II in JPIC

The word spirituality has had a checkered history. In ancient times it was used to signify living under the impulse of the Holy Spirit. By the late medieval period it had assumed a dichotomous meaning, the sharp division between spirit and matter. In 17<sup>th</sup> century French culture there were attempts to make it refer again to a person's relationship with God but often it acquired a pejorative nuance in being quietist. We are now in a position to know better since after Vatican II, particularly towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century there was a huge resurgence in the topic of spirituality.

In connection with our theme of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, we need to cultivate a particular perspective of spirituality as 'what we *do* because of what we say we believe rather than the pursuit of belief itself'.<sup>106</sup> Spirituality gives rise to a way of life and is itself a way of life that is motivated by a response to the Spirit of God as we encounter with existential realities in the light of the Gospel. We can also say that spirituality 'is the name given to the synthesis of Gospel values which takes place in each person or community. A particular spirituality re-orders the values of the Gospel in accordance with the time and circumstances in which it is born and develops'.<sup>107</sup>

The motivation and context for a spirituality of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation has been the rediscovery of the Gospel imperative deriving from the proclamation of the Kingdom values of justice, peace and goodness of creation in a world situation where there has been a travesty of justice, peace and wanton destruction of the environment with disastrous consequences for all. The methodology of the Spirituality of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation has largely followed what Pope St Paul VI pointed out as the mission of Justice and Peace, 'keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared for work of charity which it is called upon to realize in the world'.<sup>108</sup> This method consists in reading the word, reflecting upon it in relation to what is happening in each one's life, and accepting the implications and demands of that word in daily life. It is an approach to look closely at life, ask what the meaning is of what we see, and accept the implications and demands of what our reflection tells us. The purpose for engaging in such an activity is to look with faith at what is going on in the world in such a way that it unites us in a common understanding and purpose and leads to the kind of commitment which will result in joy for all, joy which is the experience of right relationship, which is the way we understand justice and peace.<sup>109</sup>

We now analyze the Spirituality of JPIC on the basis of Vatican II insights. First, spirituality springs from *opening our senses (eyes, seeing, hearing, touching, ...)* to what is happening. Our five senses are very important at this stage because they situate us in the present world, so much that we experience reality. If any spirituality is serious enough to respond correctly to people's cries and griefs and sufferings, it has to be attentive to what is happening around

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<sup>106</sup> Joan D. Chittister, *Heart of Flesh: A Feminist Spirituality for Women and Men*, Michigan/ Cambridge: William D. Eerdmans Publishing - Ottawa: St Paul University, 1998, 15.

<sup>107</sup> The JPIC Promoters Group, *Manual for Promoters of Justice, Peace, Integrity of Creation*, Rome 1997, 76.

<sup>108</sup> Office for JPIC-OFM, *Guidelines for the Animation of JPIC*, Rome, 2009, 14.

<sup>109</sup> The JPIC Promoters Group, *Manual for Promoters of JPIC*, 76; see also GS 5.

people. This “situatedness” in historical life makes it possible to see and hear the cries of the world and imagine how God sees it. Our seeing of this reality is not only a human seeing and hearing; rather, from a perspective of faith, we take note of the action of the Spirit of God. Through discernment and in openness to the Spirit we scrutinize the calls we hear from the world and collaborate with the Spirit along specific paths of action. This first approach is modelled on God’s own dealings with human beings as reported in the Scriptures (cf. Ex 3; Heb 1:1-4; Gal 4:4; Rom 1:3; Lk 2:6-7; 22:14; 20; Jn 6; 13). The role of the senses is to become acquainted with and getting to know the reality and the suffering of the poor.

When people have seen, heard and tasted the reality, the second stage is the cultivation of a *sensitive and compassionate heart*. What we *sense* of necessity touches the depths of our being, our heart, and this has the potential to move us to compassion. The second stage is closely bound to the first because of the contact that allows the *sensing* of people. Persons are moved to respond to the sufferings and problems that they see others going through. An immersion in a particular situation often yields a taste of reality from the victim’s perspective. Too often we have scales blocking our vision and other senses; these scales prevent us from being moved to compassion lest we act to make a difference. Only when the issue has reached our heart does it cause us discomfort, *disease*, motivating us to action. When we become ‘rooted in a particular situation’, only then can we understand, see, hear, taste the people’s reality enough to want to act. The heart prepares us for the next stage, action.

The third stage is *ACTION*. The insight of *Gaudium et Spes* 1 states that joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the people of our time especially those who are poor or afflicted are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Because of the inside experience, the sensing of the experiences of real people, Christians are moved to transformative action inspired by charity. As Christians, it is our gift and task to make charity present in the world. Christians are called to the ministry of renewal of the temporal order in Christ.<sup>110</sup> The experience of the God who is love inspires and prompts Christians to place the love of God and of people at the center of their lives (cf. 1 Jn 1). The experience of this love is an experience of a relationship of fraternity and solidarity among people so that all may come to be sharers in the abundance of life which is in the divine plan (cf. Jn 10:10). JPIC seeks to promote charity at both the *interpersonal relationships* that can be shared between family members, among friends, neighbors and community as well as that charity expressed in *social, structural and political relationships*. The goal of JPIC is the establishment of a more just, fraternal world where the needs of the poor and underprivileged are addressed. JPIC recognizes the interconnectedness and complexity of these issues but commits itself to spearhead action in favour of integral development of sectors of society that are weakest and most marginalized as well as the transformation of existing “structures of sin”, ‘an evil embedded in the structures of a society’, ‘evil crystallized in unjust social structures, which cannot be the basis of hope for a better future’.<sup>111</sup>

It is clear that to make a difference in our world riddled with injustice in human and international relations, and disrespect for the environmental and ecological balance. There is need for a new approach to spirituality. This spirituality can no longer proceed as before. This

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<sup>110</sup> Vatican II, AA 7.

<sup>111</sup> EG 59.

spirituality needs to issue from a down-to-earth contact with a transformative person, Jesus, the God-Man who gives us the courage and strength to forge a new dispensation. Such a spirituality is a matter of the education of the heart and leads to a transformed relationship with all facets of our world: persons, communities, nature and systems. The issues we have raised here can be graphically presented in this manner.

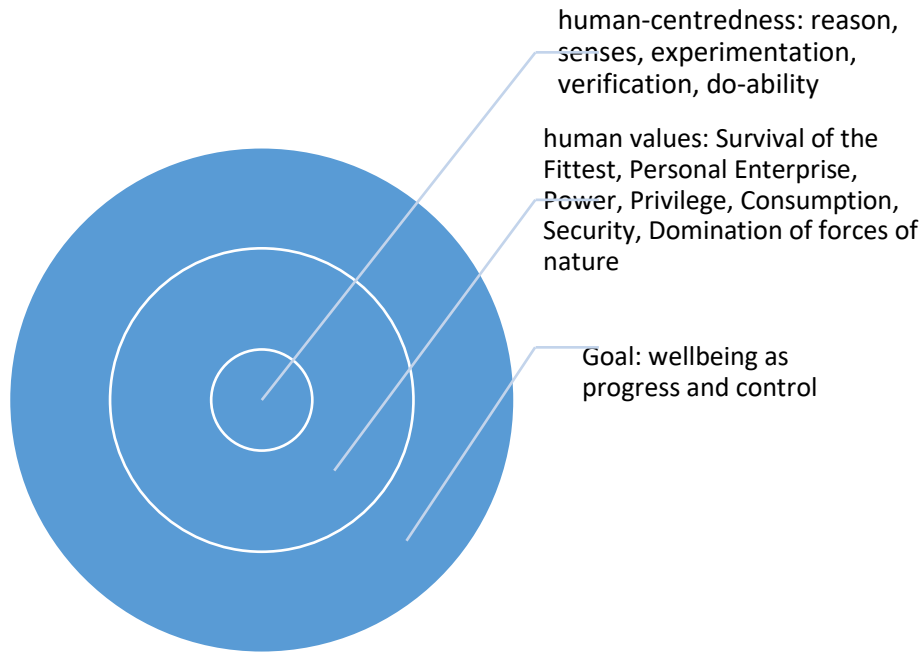


Figure 1: The world through a scientific paradigm or the Spirituality of Scientism

The figure above portrays the reality and experience of the world as we have had it. Human beings have, through the scientific paradigm, evolved to where they are because of their skills of adaptation and development of relevant skills to deal with challenges at every turn. The most adaptable of human beings have survived and built up a wealth of experience on which succeeding generations improved. Essentially, this progress has come about because of human reason and the ability to learn through trial and error.

The values that have steam-rolled human civilization have been experimentation, survivability, sheer personal enterprise, domination of forces of nature, cultivation of personal/ or group power and security leading to the domination of others to one's advantage.

While the goal of this human march in the evolutionary plan is wellbeing, it is essentially wellbeing as progress and control. This kind of control is very vulnerable to the ambitions of others who may also wish to rise to this level. The weakness of this outlook is that the evolutionary genius thrives on competition. Competition generates strife, exclusion, injustice, violence and ultimately leads to disintegration or death. According to this outlook, life is what you make it; you win some you lose some.

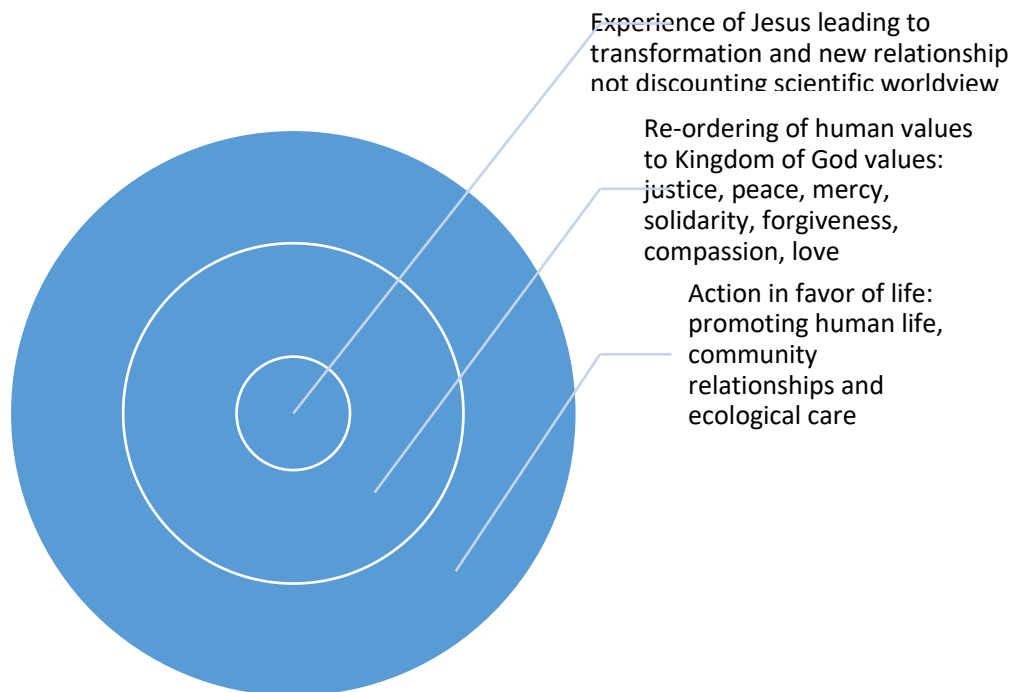


Figure 2. The world through a Christian Kingdom of God paradigm or JPIC Spirituality

Christian spirituality springs from a conscious awareness of relationship with God the Father through Jesus the Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and is in total acceptance of the reshaping of creation through Kingdom values. Christianity does not negate scientific inquiry but holds that science does not have the capacity to answer all questions, especially those of values and meaning. However, when science is limited to its proper realm, it is a necessary dialogue partner in helping to build a more just scenario between persons, communities and creation in general.

Hypocrisy is the weakness of Christian spirituality. Many Christians espouse lofty ideals that they themselves do not abide by. In the face of criticism and multiplicity of ideas on how best to embrace the values, Christianity has tended to splinter leading to various interpretations with the result that there has been intolerance, sometimes fundamentalist or fanatical crusade-ism that has generated strife, excommunications and even death.

However, notwithstanding the dark side of the human attempt to incarnate the Kingdom of God in the world, the Christian hope is that only relationship with God can be the true source and fruit of our relationship with people and the rest of creation.

### 3.5. The Spirituality of JPIC

Some would argue that for Hans Urs von Balthasar issues of social and political justice, reading the signs of the times, were of little interest, which is not the case. For him, theology hinges upon the biblical principle that “*God is love*” (1 John 4:8). It is the call to divine love that shapes the foundation and substance of the Christian life. The Swiss Catholic theologian offers the following definition of spirituality: “the way a person understands his or her own ethically and religiously committed existence, and the way he or she acts and reacts habitually to this understanding.”<sup>112</sup> From this perspective, we envision a spirituality of JPIC that makes the communities and world we inhabit the testing ground of our ethical and religious commitment to divine love.

Echoing St. John of the Cross, the Friars’ Constitutions state that “*contemplation is the inner journey of Carmelites, arising out of the free initiative of God, who touches and transforms us, leading us towards unity in love with him.*”<sup>113</sup> This type of transformation leads to a self-emptying that enables one to see, judge, and act in ways that shape the individual response to the call to divine love. Contemplative spirituality opens within us an inner vision that reads the world through the lens of the One who loves us first, thereby enabling the contemplative to live in union with the Christ we claim to serve. “I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” (John 13:16-17).<sup>114</sup>

It is not uncommon to reduce Catholic social teaching, and the work of JPIC to a moral or ethical agenda untethered from spiritual awareness and practice. Papal social teaching about peace, human rights, environmental injustice, etc. represent the fruit of a long tradition of deep spiritual thought and practice. There is a natural rhythm to the spiritual life that allows one to pause, listen, reflect, pray, and plumb the depths of both creation and the mission of the Church. In seriously taking up the divine call to serve as the master served, we begin to see ourselves, our sisters and brothers, and all of creation through God’s vision of the reign of justice, reverence for all, most especially the weak and vulnerable.<sup>115</sup>

The Church as Mother and Teacher labours to nurture a spirituality of social justice within each member of her body. In his encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, John XXIII declares that just as Christ was intimately concerned for both the physical and spiritual needs of people, so now the Church is responsible for the care and guidance of God’s people. It is the “torch of charity not only by her teaching but also by her widespread example—that charity which, by combining in a fitting manner the precepts and the practice of mutual love, puts into effect in a wonderful way this twofold commandment of giving, wherein is contained the full social teaching and action of the Church.”<sup>116</sup> At the heart of Catholic social teaching, therefore, we encounter at once God’s transcendence, divine love, and the dignity of all that is God’s

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<sup>112</sup> Quoted in Reginald Cant, “What Does Spirituality Mean in the Modern World?” *The Expository Times* 89 (February 1978): 123.

<sup>113</sup> Const. 1995, 17.

<sup>114</sup> See also Matthew 20:28, Mark 20:15.

<sup>115</sup> See also Matthew 20:29; Mark 10:45.

<sup>116</sup> *Mater et Magistra*, n. 6

creation, a spirituality that journey's not only within one's self but ever more deeply into the depths of Christ's passion for humanity and sufferings of the earth.

As we grow to maturity in the spiritual life, there comes an invitation to examine our purity of motivation. As Hans Urs Balthasar suggests, the relationship between our own ethics and religiously committed existence, and the way he or she acts in their manner of living. It is important to recall that Jesus did not preach a message of divine love centered exclusively on himself. *"The word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me"* (Jn 14:24). The thrust of Jesus's teaching, preaching, healing, and redemptive ministry was about the kingdom and the saving work of God. In his book *Go and Do Likewise-Jesus and Ethics*, William Spohn offers this helpful perspective on the spirituality of JPIC: "Christians have often substituted a false norm for the story of Jesus by projecting their own values and biases onto it. These counterfeits are exposed by a deeper reading of the Gospels, which are the enduring standard against which all portraits of Jesus must be measured. The sentimental Jesus of middle-class piety hides the cross of poverty and oppression; the Jesus of Western imperialism is refuted by the non-violence of the passion accounts; the Jesus of patriarchal tradition wilts under the evidence that the Nazarene chose the powerless and marginal to share his table."<sup>117</sup> It is into a suffering world that Jesus ventured, a man of fervent prayer and religious practice, seeking to touch, heal, gather thereby revealing the values of the Kingdom. This represents the essence of a contemplative spirituality of JPIC. Let us go and do likewise.

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<sup>117</sup> Spohn, William C. *Go And Do Likewise - Jesus and Ethics*. (New York: Continuum International, 1989),11.

# **CHAPTER 4**

## **THE SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH IN JPIC**

**“Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless;  
plead the case of the widow.”  
(Isaiah 1:1)**

**“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to  
the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for  
the blind, to set the oppressed free” –  
(Luke 4:18. Isaiah 61:1)**

## 4.1. History of JPIC in the Church

### Vatican II and Revitalization of JPIC

Before the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), Catholic spirituality had generally become more inward looking, other worldly and a little influenced by biblical scholarship. With this kind of approach, the majority of Christian Catholics were not keen to get involved in socio-political issues tied to questions of justice, peace and care of creation as this was seen to be foreign to the intention of Scripture.

Prior to Vatican II, changes were set in motion in the area of spirituality. The publication of *Rerum Novarum* inspired many to find solutions to social and political problems. Other documents were to follow but the landmark document that strengthened disciples' commitment to social and political action as a mission received from Christ was *Gaudium et Spes*. Certain key texts of this document are worth quoting:

- ❖ The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of our time, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, are the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the followers of Christ<sup>118</sup>.
- ❖ Christ did not bequeath to the Church a mission in the political, economic or social order; the purpose he assigned to it was a religious one. But this religious mission can be the source of commitment, direction and vigour to establish and consolidate the human community according to the law of God<sup>119</sup>.
- ❖ Taking into account the immensity of the hardships which still afflict a large section of humanity, and with a view to fostering everywhere the justice and love of Christ for the poor, the Council suggests that it would be most opportune to create some organization of the universal Church whose task it would be to arouse the Catholic community to promote the progress of areas which are in want and foster social justice between nations<sup>120</sup>.

From a spirituality that had been inward looking, Catholic spirituality blossomed to make a connection between the incarnation, the Kingdom of God, and salvation. Salvation was not a futuristic reality only; it had implications for history now through working for its transformation.

Vatican II popularized a way of looking at the world that was hopeful rather than perceiving it as suspicious and to be condemned. A new pattern of spirituality was developing which has now solidified and created certain principles which are inspired from the Scriptures:

- Listening to the world: reading the signs of the times in the midst of the world, participating in its joys and concerns and the resultant movement towards the peripheries.

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<sup>118</sup> GS 1.

<sup>119</sup> GS 42.

<sup>120</sup> GS 90.

- Embracing the desires, values, cries and successes of the world: freedom, equality, participation, pluralism, democracy, and concern for justice and fairness.
- Offering a gospel practice based on living witness, service, collaboration and solidarity.
- Encouraging a concern to transform the world according to the values of the Kingdom.

After the Council huge strides in theological understanding of the connection between faith and justice have been made, for example:

- The 1971 Synod of Bishops promoted the understanding of justice as an integral part of the Gospel.
- Pope Paul VI stated in *Evangelii Nuntiandi* that there exists a strong gospel relationship between evangelization and human development: “It is impossible to accept that the work of evangelization could or should ignore the extremely grave questions so much under discussion today which refer to justice, liberation, development and peace in the world. If that were to happen it would mean ignoring the teaching of the Gospel concerning love of our neighbour who is suffering in need.”<sup>121</sup>
- Pope John Paul II left a huge body of teaching during his long pontificate deriving from synods and his calculated responses to world events. In his social encyclicals and episcopal pronouncements, he untiringly defended the primacy of God, the inviolable dignity of the human being, the dignity of human labour and the desirability of justice in social and economic relations.<sup>122</sup>
- Pope Benedict XVI, drawing on the legacy of his predecessors stressed the need to attend to the common good and the issue of the stewardship of God’s creation or the environment<sup>123</sup>.
- Pope Francis has popularized the debate on key issues of Catholic Social Teaching by speaking more urgently and witnessing by his personal style and symbolic acts the need for the community of disciples, the Church, to hear and respond to the cry of the poor, the excluded and those on the existential peripheries. His teaching in the encyclical *Laudato Si* has re-energized the whole Church in his invitation to an “integral ecology” based on an “ecological conversion” which is “a moral transformation linking the proper response to God for the gift of his creation to concern for justice, especially for the poor”. Pope Francis challenges people to understand ecology in terms of the right ordering of the fundamental relationships of the human person: with God, oneself, other people, and the rest of creation. He examines ecological concerns such as pollution, waste, climate change, biodiversity, consumerism and excessive individualism and implores people to a change of their hearts and lifestyle that “encourages a prophetic and contemplative lifestyle, one capable of deep enjoyment free of the obsession with consumption”.<sup>124</sup>

From the rich heritage of the Social Teaching of the Church we can point out that the key principles are the following:

- Life and dignity of the human person.
- Call to family, community and participation.
- Rights and responsibilities.

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<sup>121</sup> Paul VI, EN 31.

<sup>122</sup> Find out more in John Paul II, *Laborens Exercens* (1981); *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (1987); *Centesimus Annus* (1991).

<sup>123</sup> See from Benedict XVI, for instance, *Deus Caritas Est* (2005); *Caritas in Veritate* (2009)

<sup>124</sup> Cf. Francis, LS 222.

- Option for the poor and vulnerable.
- Working for the common good.
- Love, respect and forgiveness.
- The dignity of work and the rights of workers.
- Solidarity.
- Subsidiarity.
- Care for God's creation in its entirety.
- The universal destination of goods

### **The Pontifical Council for JPIC**

Pope Paul VI established the Pontifical Justice and Peace Commission in 1967 following the recommendation in *Gaudium et Spes*. On April 20, 1967, Pope Paul VI addressed the newly constituted Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace thus:

“You represent for us the realization of the last vote of the Council (GS 90). Today, as in the past, once the construction of a Church or bell tower is finished, a rooster is placed on top as a symbol of vigilance, for the faith and for the entire program of Christian life. In similar fashion, this Committee has been placed on top of the spiritual building of the Council, and its mission is none other than that of keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared for the work of charity which it is called upon to realize in the world...”<sup>125</sup>

The Pope gave the Commission its definitive status with the *Motu Proprio Iustitia et Pax* on December 10, 1976. On 28 June 1988, the Apostolic Constitution *Pastor Bonus* reorganized the Roman Curia and Pope John Paul II changed its title from Commission to Pontifical Council.

*Pastor Bonus* clearly stated that the Council would promote justice and peace in the world in the light of the Gospel and of the Social Teaching of the Church.<sup>126</sup> Other aspects of its mandate were to:

- ❖ Deepen the social doctrine of the Church and to make it widely known and applied by individuals and communities and ensure that relations between workers and employers were increasingly marked by the spirit of the Gospel.
- ❖ Assemble and evaluate research on issues related to justice and peace, the development of peoples and violations of human rights as well as foster relations with all organizations that are committed to the promotion of the values of justice and peace in the world.
- ❖ Heighten awareness of the need to promote peace, above all on the occasion of the World Day of Peace<sup>127</sup>.

The activities of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace revolve around everything that touches upon social justice, including the world of work, international justice issues and problems associated with development. The Council promotes ethical reflection on the

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<sup>125</sup> Papal Exhortation, available at [http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/fr/speeches/1967/april/documents/hf\\_p-vi\\_spe\\_19670420\\_iustitia-et-pax.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/fr/speeches/1967/april/documents/hf_p-vi_spe_19670420_iustitia-et-pax.html)

<sup>126</sup> John Paul II, PB 142.

<sup>127</sup> PB 143.

evolution of economic and financial systems and their impact on the environment and the responsible use of the earth's resources. With regard to peace, the Council reflects on many questions such as war, disarmament, the arms trade, international security and violence in its ever-changing forms. Catholic Social Teaching has also highlighted reflection on the dignity of peoples as the basis for promoting and defending of their inalienable rights through commutative, distributive, contributive or legal and social justices.

Concern for the ecology has been steadily rising on the international agenda of issues of concern. Ecological issues came to the surface in the reflections of Pope John Paul II, recognizing its emergence at the United Nations and other world bodies such as the World Council of Churches.

The Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace together with other Pontifical Councils were merged into the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development by Pope Francis in a *Motu Proprio* of 17 August 2016. This new Dicastery now combines the respective functions of the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, the Pontifical Council "Cor Unum", the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Care of Migrants and Itinerant People and the Pontifical Council for Pastoral Health Care Workers. Pope Francis spelt out the Statutes of the Dicastery:

- The Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development expresses the Holy See's concern for issues of justice and peace, including those related to migration, health, charitable works and the care of creation.
- The Dicastery promotes integral human development in the light of the Gospel and in the tradition of the Church's social teachings. To this end, it maintains relations with the Conferences of Bishops, offering them its cooperation so that values related to justice and peace as well as the care of creation may be promoted.<sup>128</sup>

With regards to its task, mission and activities, the Statutes state:

- The Dicastery studies the social teaching of the Church and works to make it widely known and implemented, and so that social, economic and political relations are increasingly imbued with the spirit of the Gospel.
- The Dicastery collects information and research in the areas of justice and peace, the development of peoples, the promotion and defence of human dignity and human rights, such as rights pertaining to work, including that of minors; the phenomenon of migration and the exploitation of migrants; human trafficking and enslavement; imprisonment, torture and capital punishment; disarmament and arms control as well as armed conflicts and their effects on the civilian population and the natural environment (humanitarian law). It evaluates these data and informs the episcopal agencies of the conclusions drawn, so that they may intervene directly where appropriate.<sup>129</sup>

The scope of the Dicastery has been broadened to capture "the Holy Father's care for suffering humanity, including the needy, the sick and the excluded, and pays special attention to the needs and issues of those who are forced to flee their homeland, the stateless, the marginalized, victims of armed conflicts and natural disasters, the imprisoned, the

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<sup>128</sup> Pope Francis, *Statutes of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development*, Rome: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2016, art.1 ~1-2.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 3~1-2.

unemployed, victims of contemporary forms of slavery and torture, and others whose dignity is endangered.”<sup>130</sup>

From its inception the Church has been motivated to reflect and act in accordance with the teaching of its Lord and Master Jesus Christ. For millennia the Church has proclaimed the gospel of life and defended the rights of the weak and vulnerable. But it was not until 1891 that a body of teaching began to accumulate in the magisterial expression of the Church. This body of teaching is called the Social Teaching of the Church. This body of teachings has grown to cover almost all aspect of our human life on planet earth as well as the need for moral conduct in the use of the goods of the earth. The formation of JPIC Commissions, especially after Vatican II has ensured that what the Church believes and teaches finds expression and makes a difference in the lives of people.

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<sup>130</sup> Pope Francis, Statutes of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development, art. 1~3.

## 4.2. Integral Ecology in *Laudato Si'*<sup>131</sup>

Since the middle of the twentieth century, we have witnessed the magnitude of the human being's impact on creation<sup>132</sup>. At the end of the second millennium, we fell into account of the rupture. During 1970, in line with the first voices raised from civil society Paul VI declared that the dizzying industrial civilization endangers the balance of the earth, causing an irreversible deterioration that leads to a possible ecological catastrophe and the annihilation of life on earth, since "everything is bound together" in this common home<sup>133</sup>. His statement is brilliant because it summarizes any updated treatise on the planetary imbalance that environmental sciences can offer. The concept of interconnection derives from the theory of systems applied to earth sciences, in which each component of the terrestrial system, such as the biosphere (life), the lithosphere (land), the atmosphere (air), the hydrosphere (oceans, rivers and lakes), each part, plays its role in maintaining balance, and interact with each other at different scales of space and time to maintain harmony and restore any imbalance that may arise.

As discussed in Section 2.3, for Paul VI interconnection is an instance that demands a greater ethical response, a human moral progress that accounts for the consequences of its actions on the ecological interweaving. For this reason, the Pope declares that "the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most surprising technical capacities, the most surprising economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic moral and social progress, will definitely turn against man". As a Church we have to "better underline the urgency and the need for a radical change in the behavior of humanity, if we want to ensure its survival,"<sup>134</sup> that is, if we want to take care of our common home, the garden.

### Ecological Conversion<sup>135</sup>

In section 2.3 it was also highlighted that there has been an ecological rebirth within the Church in the last decades. It was part of the renaissance brought about by the Second Vatican Council. The progressive awareness of articulating social justice and caring for the environment has been growing in the People of God, especially in those regions of the earth, such as Latin America, and in particular, the Amazon, where the coexistence of a primary social poverty and an immeasurable abundance of nature distorts the preaching of the Gospel message, due to the contradictions that geography offers every day.

Pope Saint John Paul II was concerned about the responsible interdependence between human beings and nature, so he sought to stimulate and sustain a global ecological conversion, to make "humanity more sensitive about the catastrophe" towards which it is

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<sup>131</sup> Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si' on care for the common home*, May 24, 2015.

<sup>132</sup> Witnesses of the paradox: The light of intelligence endowed humanity with unique and unimagined progress throughout the history of civilization (for example, electricity, quantum technology, exploration of the universe ...). The growing distance from reason to the heart led humanity to some of its darkest chapters, that do not make us proud of (for example, the Second World War, the irreversible destruction of nature, famines ...).

<sup>133</sup> Cf. Address of Pope Paul VI to FAO on the 25th anniversary of its institution (November 16, 1970), 4: AAS 62 (1970), 833.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*

<sup>135</sup> From here to the end of this section, cf. o.c. Eduardo Agosta Scarel (2019).

heading<sup>136</sup>. Thus, the concept of ecological conversion appeared for the first time in the teaching of the Church. Ecological conversion means a change in our lifestyles, as well as in our patterns of production and consumption and in the established power structure. Human beings seem unable to perceive "other meanings of their natural environment, but only those that serve the purpose of immediate use and consumption"<sup>137</sup>. Ecological conversion requires a human ecology that "takes into account the nature of each being and their mutual connection in an orderly (bigger) system"<sup>138</sup> that sustains it.

### **A Shift in Mentality and Logic**

In the same line, Pope Benedict XVI affirms that "the deterioration of nature is in fact closely connected to the culture that shapes human coexistence: when "human ecology" is respected within society, environmental ecology also benefits"<sup>139</sup>. In other words: "The duties we have with the environment are related to those we have for the person considered in himself and in his relationship with others," because "The way humanity treats the environment influences the way it treats itself, and vice versa". All this as a natural consequence of the fact that everything is bound together, connected (Paul VI). This well-understood ecology of mankind "invites contemporary society to a serious review of its life-style, which, in many parts of the world, is prone to hedonism and consumerism, regardless of their harmful consequences"<sup>140</sup>. Therefore, it can be said that ecological conversion begins with "an effective shift in mentality which can lead to the adoption of new life-styles in which the quest for truth, beauty, goodness and communion with others for the sake of common growth are the factors which determine consumer choices, savings and investments".<sup>141</sup>

### **Shift in the Commercial Logic**

Likewise, Pope Benedict XVI identifies the material cause of the current crisis: an economy that has assumed the cultural eclipse of God, with the consequent loss of the "centrality of the human person", and the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of the gift, values inherent to the creation of God, which make human beings brothers and sisters, one family sharing a common home, this inherited land<sup>142</sup>. The economy requires a change of logic to function correctly, assuming a people-centered ethics<sup>143</sup>. For Benedict: "Economic activity cannot solve all social problems through the simple application of commercial logic. This needs to be directed towards the pursuit of the common good". Since we understand "earth, water and air as gifts of creation that belong to everyone,"<sup>144</sup>we have the challenge of showing that "in commercial relationships the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of gift as an expression of fraternity can and must find their place within normal economic activity".

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<sup>136</sup> Cf. John Paul II, Cf. Catechesis (17 January 2001), 4: *L'Osservatore Romano*, weekly issues in Spanish (19 January 2001), p. 12.

<sup>137</sup> Cf. John Paul II, CA 58.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. John Paul II, SRS 34.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Benedict XVI, CV 52, also 18, 34, 36, 47.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. CV 51.

<sup>141</sup> Cf. CV 51.

<sup>142</sup> Cf. CV 34.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. CV 36, 45.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. CV 51.

It is a change from the prevailing commercial logic of pure profit, as the sole purpose of economic activity, a need to "shape and structure be given to those types of economic initiative which, without rejecting profit, aim at a higher goal than the mere logic of the exchange of equivalents, of profit as an end in itself."<sup>145</sup>

As the current economy in the world is exercised, it is far from eradicating the social injustices that it generates and the deterioration of nature it causes, since it is still based on the irrational logic of infinite growth. The idea of a non-growth economy can be a threat to an economist. But the idea of an economy in constant growth is a blackmail for those who look for alternative routes to take care of creation<sup>146</sup>.

Ecological conversion finds a clear expression in *Laudato Si'*, based as it is on elements of biblical and spiritual traditions, and the contributions of contemporaneous human sciences. Conversion is about a "desire to change"<sup>147</sup>, which impels us to become aware of the real state of things and our relationship with creation, so "we must examine our lives and acknowledge the ways in which we have harmed God's creation through our actions and our failure to act. We need to experience a conversion or change of heart"<sup>148</sup>. Because whatever does not touch the fibers of our hearts, does not generate real changes in behavior. We often see how mere information does not change us; what changes us is that which springs from within, touching our hearts ("if I do not have love, I am nothing", 1Cor 13,1). It is about "to daring to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering and thus to discover what each of us can do about it"<sup>149</sup>.

Ecological conversion means opening ourselves to a new spirituality of ecology<sup>150</sup>. We understand that the spirituality to which the Encyclical directs is that way of living according to the values and beliefs that govern the fundamental choices and decisions of life. Therefore, it is a new experience that forms a lifestyle alternative to the dominant culture, of pure consumption and discarding. Such spirituality can only be sustained by the essential values that faith offers; such as, for example, the principle of gratuitousness and the logic of the gift, which expresses human fraternity and is an essential condition for opening ourselves to universal fraternity with all creatures. For this reason, Francis affirms that "although this Encyclical welcomes dialogue with everyone so that together we can seek paths of liberation, I would like from the outset to show how faith convictions can offer Christians, and some other believers as well, ample motivation to care for nature and for the most vulnerable of their brothers and sisters."<sup>151</sup>

## Great Motivations

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<sup>145</sup> Cf. CV 18.

<sup>146</sup> Cf. Tim Jackson (2010). UK Sustainable Development Commission: Prosperity without Growth report, at <http://www.sd-commission.org.uk/publications.php?id=914.html>

<sup>147</sup> LS 218.

<sup>148</sup> LS 63.

<sup>149</sup> LS 19.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. Francis, GE 28.

<sup>151</sup> LS 64.

The convictions of faith that Francis develops in numbers 84 and 85 concern this ecological spirituality: "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God"<sup>152</sup>. We must convince ourselves that "to sense each creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope"<sup>153</sup>. From this core of convictions, the Pope assumes the call to peace, to justice and to the preservation of all creation. The central message is the possibility of achieving a personal experience of love for God, which is realized through each creature and the poor.

The revolutionary element of Pope Francis's message in the encyclical is that the essential motivation for the care of nature and the care of living beings is nothing other than love. Other more materialistic ecological motivations without doubt are doomed to failure, because "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Mt 6:21).

Conversion, above all, means a change in mentality, a change in the logic of thinking, given that " we need to realize that certain mindsets really do influence our behaviour"<sup>154</sup>. "A strategy for real change calls for rethinking processes in their entirety, for it is not enough to include a few superficial ecological considerations while failing to question the logic which underlies present-day culture"<sup>155</sup>. Therefore, we must question our underlying "logics" that prevent us from taking the ecological issues seriously.

Mere information is not enough, we must "fall into account", "be aware of" the seriousness of the planetary problems of environmental deterioration, because that "awareness of the gravity of today's cultural and ecological crisis must be translated into new habits"<sup>156</sup>. This means that we cannot continue living as we are doing, we cannot continue to consume as we consume, or feed as we feed, or move as we move. We cannot continue degrading the environment or polluting as we are doing. In order to react in time, we have to dedicate time to look around us because "an outsider looking at our world would be amazed at such behaviour, which at times appears self-destructive"<sup>157</sup>.

### **Spirituality of Interconnectedness**

The primary motivation throughout LS is the full conviction that love makes possible "an alternative understanding of the quality of life", for which "less is more"<sup>158</sup>. For Pope Francis "the teachings of the Gospel have direct consequences for our way of thinking, feeling and living"<sup>159</sup>. Authentic ecological spirituality can motivate us to a more passionate concern for the care of the world because it provides an "interior impulse which encourages, motivates, nourishes and gives meaning to our individual and communal activity "<sup>160</sup>. It will not be

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<sup>152</sup> LS 84.

<sup>153</sup> LS85

<sup>154</sup> LS 215.

<sup>155</sup> LS 197.

<sup>156</sup> LS 209.

<sup>157</sup> LS 55.

<sup>158</sup> LS 222.

<sup>159</sup> LS 216.

<sup>160</sup> LS 216.

possible to commit ourselves to the great causes only with doctrines alone, without a "mysticism" that encourages us.

The force of love that the believer discovers living contact with creation - in the admirable beauty of nature and in the response to the most disadvantaged brothers - can be a source of joy and celebration because we are able to discover the gratuitousness that precedes, sustains, feeds and returns (our feet) to the ground.

We need to sow a spirituality of connection with everything created: "Christians have not always appropriated and developed the spiritual treasures bestowed by God upon the Church, where the life of the spirit is not dissociated from the body or from nature or from worldly realities, but lived in and with them, in communion with all that surrounds us" (LS 216). Ecological conversion also involves a change in our ways of celebrating and praying.

As examples, Pope Francis cites the experience of simplicity of Saint Therese of Lisieux, to emphasize the need to change our way of life to one which is simpler, more communal and in solidarity with others, especially the poor<sup>161</sup>. The Canticle of Creation of Saint John of the Cross, serves the Pope to illustrate the value of grateful and joyful contemplation of those who are able to intuit (gratefully contemplate) the nexus between the creature and the Creator<sup>162</sup>.

Nor is it about an isolated, voluntarist and individual entrepreneurship of a few. That is not enough. The ecological conversion is a call to all to the cooperative participation, creating networks, to promote new habits and virtues that help us to get out of the simplistic thinking that: "every problem has a technical solution". Educate to find technical solutions within the need for community action, motivated by beauty, good and truth, through new capacities to intervene in political processes at different levels to which each one has or can have access.

### **Integral Ecology.**

Ecological Conversion tends to the integral ecology proposed by Pope Francis in LS. The concept of integral ecology, in turn, would seem to connect two levels, one immanent and the other transcendent. On the immanent level it means that the ecological integrity in a particular geographic area and social justice in that environment are two faces of the one coin. They are united because human beings and nature are part of interdependent and nourishing systems of life. On the transcendent plane, integral ecology connects the exercise of care for the natural world with the exercise of justice towards the poorest and most disadvantaged people of the earth, who represent God's preferential option, revealed in history; those with whom he identified. For that reason, the exercise of care for creation could become a way of expressing or indeed of cultivating our connection with God. Thus, integral ecology, what ecological conversion is meant for, indicates that my faith and my eschatological hope in new heaven and new earth (Ap 21:1) may be seen as the same as the

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<sup>161</sup> Cf. LS 230.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. Fernando Millán Romeral (2017). Dalla casa del Carmelo alla casa comune. In: *Tutte le creature sono connesse tra loro*, Pontificio Istituto di Spiritualità del Tersianum, Edizioni OCD, Rome. Fiamma Viva 57, pp. 26, 32.

present moment in terms of the Gospel: “as often as you did this to my little ones you did it to me” (Mt 25:40), including creatures.

### **Ecological Conversion Urges Us**

In the face of the planetary scale of the ecological crisis facing humanity today, ecological conversion is crucial for the present generation. Among the principal challenges before us, "climate change", with its “grave implications: environmental, social, economic, political and for the distribution of goods” is one of the principal challenges facing humanity<sup>163</sup>. Pope Francis expresses “an urgent need to develop policies so that, in the next years,” we can drastically reduce the emission of carbon dioxide and other gases related to climate change, such as “substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy”. Therefore, ecological conversion today means to be energy efficient, divest in fossil fuels and put all our efforts (money and talent) to increase the current "minimal access to clean and renewable energy" that exists in the world, such as solar, geothermal, generated by winds and others, as well as the development of suitable storage technologies (batteries) that allow us to store new forms of energy<sup>164</sup>.

As the Pope concluded during a conference related to the theme: “we must be even more acutely aware of the importance of accelerating and adapting our actions in responding adequately to both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (cf. LS 49) - they are connected”<sup>165</sup>. A sense of urgency, accompanied by right and concrete action, will be the touchstone of our ecological conversion whereby humanity is restored, and all creation transformed into God’s kingdom of justice and peace (cf. Rom 8:13).

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<sup>163</sup> Cf. LS 25.

<sup>164</sup> Cf. LS 26.

<sup>165</sup> Cf. Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants at the Conference on "Religions and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Listening to the Cry of the Earth and of the Poor", Clementine Hall, Friday, 8 March 2019.

### 4.3. Education for a Common Home for All Creatures

Our world today suffers due to human related environmental problems. Our non-sustainable lifestyle has degraded the quality of our world. As Christians we believe that the world, including us, is God's good creation. From the Bible we learn that God gives us an important task to care for this beautiful planet on which we live. The Church teaches us that the entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God.<sup>166</sup> As Carmelites we learn from John of the Cross that in creation, we can see the traces of the divine beauty, power, and loving wisdom.<sup>167</sup>

*Laudato Si*, the encyclical letter of Pope Francis, helps us contemplate that over the years the description of creation has emerged from humans having dominion over creation to responsible stewardship of creation to today's description of the footprint of God on all of creation.<sup>168</sup> We, of course, do not want to leave a corrupted world to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?<sup>169</sup> We have to work hand in hand to recreate this world as God created it. We believe, with God's help, we are capable of rising above great challenges, choosing again what is good and entering a new and sustainable path. To achieve this we need a conversation which includes everyone since the environmental challenge we are undergoing and its human roots, concern and affects us all.<sup>170</sup> It is the responsibility of all of us since the climate is a common good, belonging to all and meant for all.<sup>171</sup>

There are two complementary paths we have to follow. The first path is to educate ourselves. Through education we will be able to get rid of our corrupted ways of understanding and exploiting nature, our irresponsible habits of consumption, and our poor behaviour towards other living creatures. We are all the citizen of the common home, we all need to educate ourselves to listen to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor who suffer the most from environmental destruction, to think deeply, live wisely and love generously, and to build a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet that includes everyone.<sup>172</sup>

Likewise, religious communities, churches, parishes and schools are called to educate in a responsible sobriety, as part of their ministry in ecological education. In seminaries and houses of formation, priority should be given to "an education in responsible simplicity of life, in grateful contemplation of God's world, and in concern for the needs of the poor and the protection of the environment".<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> LS 84.

<sup>167</sup> Kieran Kavanaugh, General Introduction in Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Eds. & Transl). 2017, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, Washington, DC: ICS Publication, p. 25.

<sup>168</sup> LS 210.

<sup>169</sup> LS 160.

<sup>170</sup>. LS 3 and 14.

<sup>171</sup>. LS 23.

<sup>172</sup> LS 14.

<sup>173</sup> LS 214.

### Pope Francis visit in Ecuador, 5-8 July 2015

- “How do we help our Young people not to see a university degree as synonymous with higher status, money and social prestige?”
- "How can we help make their education a sign of greater responsibility in the face of today's problems" ... especially responding to the needs of the poor, concern for the environment?"]

Pope Francis encourages us to educate the youth in new values that save the creation and the human person. There is need of development of new convictions, attitudes and lifestyles as an authentic cultural revolution in order to reorient the world of human values, creating an increasing awareness of a common origin, and of a shared future. We are all part of a unique Family, humans and the created things. As Pope Francis says “Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffective unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature. Otherwise, the paradigm of consumerism will continue to advance, with the help of the media and the highly effective workings of the market”.<sup>174</sup>

The theological method in *Laudato Si'*

To see: through the tools of Science

To judge: light of reason, faith,

To act: Educating the Youth

The teaching strategies for the necessary change can take advantage of the ecological sensitivity present in young people and their generous spirit. We need to facilitate new experiences to the youth that help them make vital release options in the face of excessive consumption that the market sets before them. It is worthy to acknowledge everytime they make admirable efforts to protect the environment.<sup>175</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> LS 215.

<sup>175</sup> Cf. LS 209.

In education, it is important to overcome the myths of modernity, grounded in a utilitarian mindset (individualisms, unlimited progress, competition, consumerism, and the unregulated market), somehow present in the teaching strategies. Ecological education “seeks also to restore the various levels of ecological equilibrium, establishing harmony within ourselves, with others, with nature and other living creatures, and with God”<sup>176</sup>. Thus, the purely instrumental, mono-rational ecological thinking must open up itself to the Mystery. Teachers are required to share an ethics of ecology that opens to solidarity, responsibility and caring for the other through compassion.<sup>177</sup>

In his exhortation at the Plenary Assembly of the Congregation for Catholic Education, Pope Francis provided us of three keys to educate in ecology<sup>178</sup>:

- **Humanizing:** "Against an intrusive individualism, which makes us humanly poor and culturally sterile", it is necessary to "humanize education". The school and the university make sense in relation to the human being. "To this process of human growth, all educators are called to collaborate with their professionalism and with the richness of humanity of which they are carriers, in order to help young people to be builders of a more solidary and peaceful world. Furthermore, Catholic educational institutions have the mission of offering horizons open to transcendence."
- **Culture of dialogue:** In face of a throw-away culture. "Catholic educational institutes are called in the first line to put into practice the grammar of dialogue, which forms in the encounter and appreciation of cultural and religious diversities." In effect, the dialogue educates when the person is related with respect, esteem, sincerity of listening and expresses himself with authenticity, without obfuscating or mitigating his own identity nourished by the evangelical inspiration. We are encouraged by the conviction that the new generations, educated in dialogue, will leave the school and university classrooms motivated to build bridges and, therefore, to find new answers to the many challenges of our time.

A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal” (Laudato Si’)

- **Cultivating hope:** “I am convinced that young people today have above all the need for this life that builds the future. Therefore, the true educator is like a father and a

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<sup>176</sup> LS 210.

<sup>177</sup> Cf. LS 211.

<sup>178</sup> Cf. Address of Pope Francis at the “DISCORSO DEL SANTO PADRE FRANCESCO AI PARTECIPANTI ALLA PLENARIA DELLA CONGREGAZIONE PER L'EDUCAZIONE CATTOLICA (DEGLI ISTITUTI DI STUDI)”, Sala Clementina Giovedì, 9 febbraio 2017; retrieved in Italian at [http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco\\_20170209\\_plenaria-educazione-cattolica.html](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/speeches/2017/february/documents/papa-francesco_20170209_plenaria-educazione-cattolica.html)

mother who transmits a life capable of the future. In order to have this mettle, it is necessary to listen to young people – make your ears work!”

### **EDUCATING IN ESSENTIAL VALUES TO CARE FOR CREATION**

- To strengthen the INSTINCT, for ethical and moral issues, for beauty and creativity
- To pay attention to beauty and LOVE it (to get out of the paradigm of pragmatism, utilitarianism and consumerism)
- To motivate and empower cooperation and democratic participation (which is opposed to technocratic isolation), in order to transform themselves and the society in which they live.
- To abandon the simplistic thinking: "every problem has a technical solution"
- To seek technical solutions, but within the need for cooperative action that has moral, ethical and aesthetic motivation.
- To obtain freedoms to decide about life, and to develop the value and capacity to intervene in political processes, at the different levels that each one has access to or could access.

#### 4.4. CELEBRATION OF OUR COMMON HOME AND FAMILY

As we need a change of heart, the second path is to celebrate the nature and our family. Nature and Human Family are given to us by God and God see that all of them are good.<sup>179</sup> How do we celebrate this? First, we have to speak realistically and respectfully about the environment which demands understanding the relationship between one's way of living habits and its effect to the environment, educating oneself and eliminating one's bad habits related to the environment. Second, we have to live our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork. Finally, we crown our works with liturgy, prayer and in-depth spirituality. Through this celebration, we are all totally changed and renewed by the love of God.

Francis uses the method, to SEE through the lens of science, to JUDGE with the power of love, to ACT through educating in person and nature-friendly values, and to CELEBRATE life in hope. Even though we must be critical of the present times since injustice is still dominant, we must be hopeful about the future<sup>180</sup>. The care for creation today expresses our faith in the restoration of all creatures, as we expect "new heavens and new earth" (Ap 21:1). This will be our distinctive hallmark from the tone of other environmental movements. The threatening messages have little potential to achieve behavioral changes in people.

Note that celebration has spiritual roots. It stems from the discovery of graciousness present in life, since everything is given to us as a gift, that everything precedes us and will continue beyond us. In celebrating we acquire the ability to enjoy with little or sufficient, without obsession, in the faith conviction (the idea embedded with affection) that "less is more" (LS 222). It is the positive gaze that God has on creation: "and God saw that everything was good" (Genesis 1). As John of the Cross expresses, it is as if "the soul walks like as in feast", as "one who opens his eyes, and uncovers the veil: "God is always there".

So we may honestly ask ourselves: Does the pluralistic society or the lay ecological movement have an equivalent to the kind of "celebration" that provides the experience of faith?

**"Let us sing as we go.  
May our struggles and our concern  
for this planet never take  
away the joy of our hope".  
(Pope Francis, LS 244)**

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<sup>179</sup> See Gen 1.

<sup>180</sup> Cf. LS 244.

# **CHAPTER 5**

## **CARMELITE APPROACH TO JPIC**

**“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”**

**(John 1:1-4)**

**Finally, this way of being “in the midst of the people is a sign and a prophetic witness of new relationships of fraternity and friendship among men and women everywhere. It is a prophetic message of justice and peace in society and among peoples. As an integral part of the Good News, this prophecy must be fulfilled through active commitment to the transformation of sinful systems and structures into grace-filled systems and structures. It is also an expression of “the choice to share in the lives of “the little ones” (“minores”) of history, so that we may speak a word of hope and of salvation from their midst - more by our life than by our words.”**

**(1995 Carmelite Constitutions no. 24)**

## 5.1. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Carmelite Spiritual Tradition

### Before Second Vatican Council

Carmelite spirituality emerged on the ecclesial landscape during the 13<sup>th</sup> century with the formal approach of Albert of Avogadro, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, by Latin *hermit dwellers* on Mount Carmel for a *vitae formula*, formula of life. This *vitae formula* was issued sometime between 1206-1214 by the Patriarch. Albert wrote the formula of life for the hermits 'in accordance with your commitment'.<sup>181</sup> This suggests that the hermits may have dwelt on the mountain for some time enough for them to form some kind of organization meriting the Patriarch to write addressing them as a brotherhood, 'Albert, by the grace of God called to be patriarch of the church of Jerusalem, to the beloved sons in Christ, *B. and the other hermits who are living under obedience to him by the spring on Mount Carmel*'.<sup>182</sup>

While nothing much is known about their inception, we do know that the context into which they came into existence was suffused with medieval lay spiritual movements in reaction to the prevalent decadence of the Church.<sup>183</sup> Whereas in an earlier period, those who had sought a deeper spiritual combat had joined the monastic orders, the majority of medieval folks had ceased to be impressed by the now powerful monastic establishments. Many medieval persons took flight into the desert seeking solitude, prayer and penitence attracted by the figure of the poor Christ. Such a life was seen as truly embracing the evangelical or apostolic life.<sup>184</sup> Although assuming an eremitical existence, hermits maintained contact with local faithful through occasional opportunities for selling and bartering products of their labour. When such occasions happened, they also assumed the role of itinerant preachers if they felt that the need of salvation of their neighbour required it.<sup>185</sup> They were much appreciated by the people for their simplicity of life, poverty of dress and availability that flowed from the richness of their encounter with God in solitude. It was to such zealous spiritual seekers that Albert wrote the formula of life. This *vitae formula* was revised, corrected and modified in a process of ecclesial acceptance by Pope Innocent IV and Pope Honorius III.

Threatened by Islamic expansion, they emigrated to Europe but with two significant scriptural and prophetic figures having left an indelible mark on their spiritual identity and consciousness, the prophet who stood in God's presence, Elijah and the woman of total surrender to the Father's will, Mary. Elijah was a most beloved prophet from ancient times in the three Abrahamic faiths. That the initiators of the Carmelite tradition gathered on Mount Carmel was not accidental. Reporters arriving in Palestine around this time pointed out how these hermit dwellers were recognizable by their dwelling near the Spring of Elijah on Mount Carmel, a place of significant symbolic meaning with its memory of the prophet's call to Israelites to shun idolatry and embrace strict monotheist service and worship of Yahweh.

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<sup>181</sup> Rule 3.

<sup>182</sup> Rule1.

<sup>183</sup> Carlo Cicconetti, "The History of the Rule", in Michael Mulhall, ed. *Albert's Way*, Rome – Barrington, 1989, 23-49 at 42.

<sup>184</sup> C. Cicconetti, "The History of the Rule", 45.

<sup>185</sup> Joachim Smet, *The Carmelites: A History of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel*, Vol.1, Rome: 1975, 2.

The other figure connected with the foundation and development of this nascent group of hermits is Mary. Pilgrims' accounts pointed out that the hermits' chapel, built 'in the midst of the cells'<sup>186</sup> was dedicated to Mary of Mount Carmel which had been motivated by more than just a choice of a patroness. The Rule which had been premised on living '*in obsequio Ihesu Christi*', who was the hermits' *Dominus* also motivated them to choose Mary as the *Domina loci*, the Lady of the Place, particularly because of Mary's spiritual and physical affinity to Jesus Christ. Service to Mary was therefore connected to service of Christ and vice versa.<sup>187</sup> This dedication to Mary involved a reciprocal movement, first, that by means of their choice and dedication to her, they would honour and thus serve (*servitium*) her; and second, on Mary's part, having been thus served, she would protect them by obtaining for them graces from God. Later on in the tradition, some of the Carmelite theologians in their apologetical works argued that the Order was founded for the honour of the Blessed Virgin Mary.<sup>188</sup>

This digression was necessary to bring out the eremitical and mendicant roots of Carmel. These two qualities have everything to do with the seeds of the rediscovered ministry of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the post Vatican II era. The gift of Carmel to the world is *contemplation*. This charism has been articulated consistently over the centuries. In one of the early documents of the Order, *De institutione primorum monachorum*, contemplation is certainly presented as the supreme Carmelite ideal:

The end of our life is twofold: one, which can be reached by our own efforts in the practice of virtue and with the aid of divine grace, consists in offering to God a holy life untainted by any stain of sin... The other, which is a pure gift of God, consists in tasting in some manner in the heart and experiencing in mind, not only after death but also in this life, the power of the divine presence and sweetness of supernal glory.<sup>189</sup>

This contemplation is characterized by a primal prioritization of God at the center of one's life so much that the human person responds to the call to relationship with God in total openness to other human beings and indeed all creation. Even before Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation were spoken of in terms of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries, Carmelites saw these values as contained in this contemplative posture. This is so because, as Dionysius Kosasih observes:

Contemplative life, if it is authentic, should awaken a strong desire to render oneself to be able to understand and share the joy and hope, the sorrow and anguish of people. Thus, for Carmelites the concern for the problems of people does not come only from a sense of compassion, nor is it merely an expression of their commitment to one another extending outside the community, but something that springs from their contemplative attitude to serve God's people and to see God, living and speaking in them. This contemplative attitude

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<sup>186</sup> Rule 14.

<sup>187</sup> Emmanuele Boaga, "La presenza di Maria nella storia del Carmelo", in di Pozzo di Gotto (ed), *Maria Icona della Tenerezza del Padre – La spiritualità mariana nell'esperienza del Carmelo*, Palermo: Fraternita carmelitana, 1992, 49-61.

<sup>188</sup> John Baconthorpe, *Speculum De Institutione*

<sup>189</sup> G. Wessels, ed. *De institutione primorum monachorum*, chapter 2., in *Analecta Ordinis Carmelitarum*, 3 (1914-1916), 348.

is the fundamental element, which unites the Carmelites in community urging them to be concerned in the problems of the world and of the Church.<sup>190</sup>

In the centuries before Vatican II, Justice, Peace and Integrity of creation were not conceived in the ways contemporary people do. Justice and peace were more clearly spelt out as virtues of religion. The unique Carmelite flavour to these virtues was that it sprung from his contemplative relationship with God. The search for justice and peace was more a personal journey of transformation and response to particular people in particular situations rather than seeking transformational change in structures. In keeping with the eremitical and mendicant traditions, the Carmelites pursuit of justice and peace was an outgrowth of his mystical favour, an overflow of one's relationship with God. As *eremiticism and mendicancy* are part and parcel of the Carmelite historical and spiritual DNA, their *diakonia* was preferentially directed to and in solidarity with the *minores*, the poor because of their commitment to the demands of the Kingdom of God. Blessed Titus Brandsma summarized the Carmelite mendicant concern and ideal for the wellbeing of people around them through the following synthesis: "*Deum propter Deum relinquere*" which means "Only charity toward one's neighbour or obedience can be reason for leaving God for the sake of God".<sup>191</sup> This Carmelite summary was formed alongside the Dominican synthesis, another mendicant Order, of *contemplate alii tradere*, to hand on the fruits of their contemplation. In fact, all the mendicant Orders (Franciscans with their stress on prayer, fraternity, minority and evangelization, the Dominicans, Augustinians and Carmelites) have, from the time of their foundations, stressed the values of service and solidarity with the poor as well as a more intense life of simplicity as embracing the evangelical ideal.

### **Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation in the Carmelite Tradition in the Post-Vatican II Era**

The issues of justice and peace (and much later integrity of creation) became part of the concern of the mission of the Church during and after Vatican II. As we have already observed, Vatican II, the 21<sup>st</sup> ecumenical Council of the Church concerned itself with addressing relations between the Church and the modern world. Its attitude was markedly different from previous Councils and many assessors have pointed out that it opened the Church to respond to society and realities of the modern world and to making a preferential option for the poor.<sup>192</sup>

When the Council was over, Religious Orders, Congregations and Institutes, were given the task to update their Constitutions and statutes as directed by the Decree *Perfectae Caritatis*. In the years following the Council there was another theological approach that was irrupting in Latin America spearheaded by Gustavo Gutierrez. This approach to theology was called Liberation Theology. Initially suspected of links and contamination by Marxist political and economic overtones, it slowly was accepted as legitimately expressing the desire for the establishment of Kingdom values in situations of utter dehumanization and exploitation.

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<sup>190</sup> Dionysius Kosasih, O.Carm., "Carmelite Community and the Work of Justice and Peace", in *The Carmelite NGO: Meeting the People in the Marketplace*, Darien, Illinois: Carmelite Media, 2013, 129-137 at 131-132.

<sup>191</sup> Titus Brandsma, 'The Spirituality of the Carmelites of the Ancient Observance', trans. art. "Carmes", in *Dictionnaire de Spiritualite*, 3:156-171.

<sup>192</sup> Ana Maria Pineda, 'Liberation Theology: Practice of a People Hungering for Human Dignity', in *The Way* 38 (1998) 231-239, 232.

We now turn our attention to Carmelite consciousness on the theme of justice, peace and integrity of creation as expressed in our post Conciliar documents. There are different kinds of documents from which we draw the deep Carmelite concern about the values of the Kingdom including justice, peace and integrity of creation:

- Rule.
- Constitutions,.
- *Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitanae* publications.
- General Chapter Pronouncements.
- General Congregation Documents.
- Council of Province Documents.
- NGO reflections and activities.

## The Rule

The Carmelite Rule does not address the theme of justice, peace and integrity of creation directly in the sense of our late 20<sup>th</sup> century and early 21<sup>st</sup> century levels of consciousness. We need to remember that our Rule is a 13<sup>th</sup> century document issued to give a coherent structure, order, direction and spiritual animation to persons seeking a life of holiness or communion with God. But because the thrust of the first Carmelites was to 'live in allegiance to Jesus Christ and serve him faithfully from a pure heart and a good conscience'<sup>193</sup>, it is possible to graft the insights and passion for justice, peace and integrity of creation onto this Carmelite stock. The Rule seeks to rally followers to a serious sense of discipleship of Christ. From some of the provisions of the Rule, it is possible to recognize a certain affinity to the beauty of and preservation of nature. For example, the Rule says: 'You may have places in solitary areas or where they are given to you which are suitable and convenient for the observance of your religious life, as may seem fit to the prior and the brothers'.<sup>194</sup> Solitary places served the role to nurture an atmosphere of silence, solitude and contemplation. Carmelites were to fit into their environment without destroying it; rather they were to be nurtured by it and brought to heights of contemplation because of it.

The Rule also points out that the Carmelite has to put on the armour of God<sup>195</sup>. One of the elements of the armour is: '...The breastplate of justice is to be put on, that you may love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength and your neighbour as yourselves'.<sup>196</sup> This cardinal gospel injunction touches us all through all centuries down to ours. We now know that part of the love due to God is not only giving honour, glory and praise to God as such but to respect human beings as well as respect the environment because of our knowledge and love of God. Our appreciation of creation is much more improved than that of the medievals and we need to rediscover our close affinity to nature for it to nurture us in life-giving ways. The insight of Pope Francis comes in handy in appreciating this gospel teaching of the vocation to love. The Pope argues that human beings were offered creation to be custodians of it and not to be masters. He says:

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<sup>193</sup> Rule 2.

<sup>194</sup> Rule 5.

<sup>195</sup> Rule 18.

<sup>196</sup> Rule 9.

We are Custodians of Creation. But when we exploit Creation, we destroy the sign of God's love for us, in destroying Creation we are saying to God: "I don't like it! This is not good!" "So, what do you like?" "I like myself!" – Here, this is sin! Do you see? Custody of Creation is custody of God's gift to us and it is also a way of saying thank you to God. I am the master of Creation but to carry it forward I will never destroy your gift. And this should be our attitude towards Creation. Safeguard Creation. Because *if we destroy Creation, Creation will destroy us! Never forget this!*<sup>197</sup>

Breathing Scripture as our Rule does, it can only send us back into the Scriptures to drink from the mouth of the Lord of living in harmony with all creation.

## Constitutions

There have been two Constitutions documents issued since Vatican II. These are first, the Constitutions issued in 1971 and the second, the Constitutions approved by the 1995 General Chapter.

The themes of justice, peace and integrity of creation emerged more strongly after Vatican II. The first of those themes – justice – was already a source of major debate in the 1960s. Theologies of liberation helped in popularizing this theme. Gustavo Gutierrez, the Peruvian theologian, popularized this approach to theological reflection through his publication in English of *A Theology of Liberation*.<sup>198</sup> The Church in Latin America was forced into reflecting on matters of politics and its implications for the gospel in the face of many repressive military regimes that did not care about trampling down the legitimate grievances of the masses. In other parts of the world issues of injustice were being denounced through such theological trends as Black Theology in North America as well as a similar movement in South Africa. Issues of injustice were at the root of many of the upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s as colonies revolted against the economic, socio-political injustices and exploitative colonial master countries.

As pointed out above, this new approach to theology found foundations in the Scriptures, the patristics as well as the Vatican II Conciliar analyses of the world particularly in *Gaudium et Spes*, *Lumen gentium* and other documents. A new look at the Scriptures through the *liberationist* perspective magnified the biblical themes of life, hope, justice and peace. There were new insights about Jesus' ministry being geared towards the establishment of justice, i.e., right relationships between God and human beings; between human beings and between humanity and the rest of creation.

Some of these issues were taken up in the 1971 *Constitutions*. The 1971 *Constitutions* were the Carmelites' attempt to respond to the Conciliar documents which called for renewal and adaptation through *ressourcement*, a return to the sources as a first step to promote the appropriate renewal of religious life<sup>199</sup>. The intentions of revising the *Constitutions* were spelt

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<sup>197</sup> Pope Francis, Vatican, May 21, 2014, quoted in One Page – Extra.

<sup>198</sup> Gustavo Gutierrez, *A Theology of Liberation: History, Politics and Salvation*, Maryknoll, NY.: Orbis Books, 1973.

<sup>199</sup> Const. 1971, 1; cf also, *Motu proprio: Ecclesiae sanctae*, II, 3.

out as seeking to renew and adapt the Order guided by 'the Gospel and the tradition of the Order in relation to the social and cultural conditions of our day, to the needs of the Church and the modern world. Only in this way may the charism which forms at once our role and function adapt to the signs of the times and become incarnate in a real sense'.<sup>200</sup> One interpretive key to its adaptation is the reference to the theme of *signs of the times*. This expression is significant since it points to how Carmelites were responding to the contemporary realities and challenges emerging on the world scene. The expression seeks to capture the underlying Carmelite intuition of seeking to find the presence of God in human lives and experiences of history. The thrust of these Constitutions was to penetrate and impregnate the culture of secularized society with gospel values. One of the significant gospel values that evolved strongly after the Council was this sensitivity towards justice and ecological care. This expression *sign of the times* actually made Carmelites sensitive and responsive to the great movements and desires, in both the Church and secular society, taking place in history.

The successor Constitutions to those of 1971 were the Constitutions approved by the General Chapter of 1995.<sup>201</sup> The 1995 Constitutions demonstrate a greater sensitivity to signs of the times: As the human race enters into a new period of its history, we seek, as Carmelites inspired by the Spirit at work in the Church, to adapt our way of life to new conditions. We seek to understand the signs of the times and to examine them in the light of the Gospel, of our charism, and of our spiritual heritage, so that we may incarnate this way of life in different cultures.<sup>202</sup>

The Constitutions display a deep sense of awareness of the new historical period and the changing realities. Even though they do not spell out what these realities are, these necessarily include some of the grave challenges of our era calling for practical action such as the following: overcoming privileges and distinctions, in a spirit of participation and co-responsibility, in sharing material possessions...through walking in the way of dialogue and reconciliation<sup>203</sup>, showing solidarity and collaboration with all who suffer, who hope, and who commit themselves to the search for the Kingdom of God<sup>204</sup>, being in the midst of the people as a prophetic witness to fraternity and friendship among men and women everywhere as a prophetic message of justice and peace in society and among peoples with a preferential option for the poor<sup>205</sup>.

In the light of the vow of poverty which it interprets as the vow of sharing and solidarity, the Constitutions betray a very clear bias towards the poor:

Poverty is a complex and ambiguous reality. When it is the absence of the necessary means for survival, resulting from injustice or personal and social sin, it is an evil. But it can also be a Gospel form of life adopted by

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<sup>200</sup> Const. 1971 art. 89.

<sup>201</sup> *Constitutions of the Order of the Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel*, Rome, Italy 1996 / Middle Park, Victoria: Carmelite Communications, 1996.

<sup>202</sup> Const. 1995, 13.

<sup>203</sup> Const. 1995, 19.

<sup>204</sup> Const. 1995, 21.

<sup>205</sup> Const. 1995, 24, 26.

those who trust in God alone, sharing all their possessions, identifying with the poor in a spirit of solidarity, renouncing all desire for dominion or self-sufficiency... Thus, we who freely chose poverty as our evangelical lifestyle feel called by the Gospel and by the Church to awaken people's consciences to the problems of destitution, hunger and social injustice...

206

The thrust of the vow of poverty is for Carmelites to live 'a simple life, individually and within our communities, avoiding whatever might offend the sensibilities of the poor'<sup>207</sup> and faithfully fulfilling the common law of work.<sup>208</sup>

The Constitutions (1995) directed that in considering apostolic mission Carmelites were to be guided by the teaching of the pastors of the Church, our tradition and values, the signs of the times and the attentive listening to the Word and having regard for its interpretation from the perspective of the poor.<sup>209</sup> The Constitutions had reached a very deep insight into the signs of the times when they came up with criteria for discernment of Carmelite apostolic mission.

Inspired by the fundamental directions of our charism and by present-day ecclesial and social contexts, the following guidelines are offered for the discernment of our apostolic mission:

- A life of brotherhood and prayer in the midst of the people.
- A response to the needs of the local and universal Church.
- A preferential service of the poor and the marginalized.
- A special attention to issues concerning women.
- A commitment to justice and peace.
- A care for those who show an interest in the spirit, the spiritual heritage, and the life of Carmel.<sup>210</sup>

Some of the other notable apostolates that are mentioned for the first time in Constitutions include taking part in the ecumenical movement and in inter-religious dialogue, and the promotion of dialogue at various levels with Jews and Muslims.<sup>211</sup>

Chapter IX of Part II of the Constitutions (1995) treats of "Our Apostolic Mission and the Promotion of Justice and Peace throughout the world". This is a section that was introduced in direct response to the burning contemporary issues, a kind of response to the signs of the times in the documents of the Order. There was not a similar section in the Constitutions of 1971. While the Constitutions point out that our world is full of injustice and disquiet, it stresses that it is our duty to contribute to the search for an understanding of the causes of evils, to be in solidarity with the marginalized, to share in their struggle for justice and peace and to fight for their total liberation, helping them to fulfil their desire for a decent life.<sup>212</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> Const. 1995, 53, 54.

<sup>207</sup> Const. 1995, 57.

<sup>208</sup> Const. 1995, 58.

<sup>209</sup> Const. 1995, 91.

<sup>210</sup> Const. 1995, 93.

<sup>211</sup> Const. 1995, 96.

<sup>212</sup> Const. 1995, 111.

The language is decidedly influenced by the positive appreciation of some of the insights of liberation theology as espoused in Latin America. Even though it guards against using the politically charged terminology, its reference to “the little ones’ (*minores*) goes further back in history than liberation theology to the medieval mendicant movement. It can be argued that the process of *resourcement* actually helped Carmelites to retrieve from the treasure of their past some of the topics that resonated strongly with late 20<sup>th</sup> century sensibilities. As pointed out already, the Church welcomed the public debate on these issues of justice and peace beginning in 1965 with the issuing of *Gaudium et Spes* and strengthened continuing discussion with publication of *Justice in the World* following the Synod of Bishops in the 1971. The Constitutions speak of hearing the cry of the oppressed, of interpreting reality from the perspective of the poor:

... We cannot turn a deaf ear to the cry of the oppressed who plead for justice. We must hear and interpret reality from the perspective of the poor – of those oppressed by the economic and political systems which today govern humanity. ... Social reality challenges us. Attentive to the cry of the poor, and faithful to the Gospel, we must take our stand with them, making an option for the “little ones”. “There is a growing desire within the Order to choose solidarity with the “little ones” of history, to bring to our brothers and sisters a word of hope and salvation from their midst, more by our lives than by our words...We recommend this option for the poor, because it is in keeping with the charism of the Order, which can be summarized as ‘a life in allegiance to Jesus Christ’; allegiance to Jesus also means allegiance to the poor and to those in whom the face of Christ is mirrored preferentially”.<sup>213</sup>

The Constitutions tap into the very strong Elian tradition for its inspiration on this theme of working for justice. They take up the metaphor of *walking* in its various shades in the Carmelite imagination and lived experience:

Our Elijan inspiration, which our prophetic charism is founded on, calls us to walk with the “little ones” along the paths the prophet travelled in his time – along the path of justice, opposing false ideologies and moving towards a concrete experience of the true living God; along the path of solidarity, defending the victims of injustice and taking their part; along the path of mysticism, struggling to restore to the poor faith in themselves by renewing their awareness that God is on their side.<sup>214</sup>

It appears that even by 1995, the Carmelites’ social concern was limited to issues of justice and peace. The issues surrounding the environment and its integral preservation took center stage at the turn of the century. Carmelites seem to have been a bit slow in tapping into this debate but became very much involved in the very constructive debates on climate change and the preservation of the environment through the establishment and advocacy activities of the Carmelite Non-Governmental Organisation as we will see later.

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<sup>213</sup> Const. 1995, 112-114.

<sup>214</sup> Const. 1995, 115.

### ***Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitanae (RIVC)***

There have been three RIVCs issued to date since Vatican II. The first one was issued in 1988. Ratio documents are broad guidelines to direct the development of vocational programmes in the initiation of candidates into the Order. In the introduction of the *Ratio* 1988, reference is made to fundamental guiding values of Carmelites:

- living constantly in the presence of God (contemplation);
- building the fraternity proposed to us by Jesus Christ;
- living in the midst of the people and at their service.

We walk this path following the example of Mary and Elijah.<sup>215</sup>

Furthermore, the document speaks about the need for Carmelites to take part in the liberation of men and women in the transformation of dehumanizing relationships into just and fraternal ones<sup>216</sup>; it also proposes a journey of personal, communitarian and structural conversion which is faithful to the Spirit, to the problems of today's world and to the founding experience of the Carmelite Order. It stresses on living in the presence of God, on fraternal relationships and on service and prophetic action.<sup>217</sup> It is very clear that there is a very strong consciousness of justice in the document as well as a more intentional openness to engage with the problems of today's world but dealt with from the tried and tested wisdom of the Carmelite heritage. Some of the fundamental elements of the Carmelite Charism that are stressed in the document are: a contemplative style of life, fraternity, justice, love and peace, sensitivity to the seeds of the presence of the Word in history, feeling in solidarity with the dramas and hopes of men and women in the taking of decisions to transform life in accordance with the will of the Father.<sup>218</sup> The RIVC also interprets the value of living in the midst of the people as 'a prophetic sign of new relationships characterized by friendship and fraternity among people. It is a prophetic call to justice and peace in society and among peoples. It is choosing "solidarity with the 'little ones' of history, to bring a word of hope and salvation by our lives rather than by our lips"<sup>219</sup>

The significant insight of the RIVC 1988 was the harmonization of the basic Carmelite aspirations with the demands of the Gospel for the actualization of justice and peace in specific contexts oppression and dehumanization. The image of the Carmelite that emerges from this synthesis is one who has sought the face of God at the heart of the world and emerged as a companion of all people who suffer, hope and commit themselves to the building of the Kingdom of God.<sup>220</sup> The RIVC 2013 urges Carmelite formation that is situated in the midst of the people by developing sensitivity to the poor, the sick, the marginalized, the least and protection of the environment<sup>221</sup> in the spirit of Elijah and Mary.

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<sup>215</sup> General Curia of the Carmelite Order, *Ratio Institutionis Vitae Carmelitane, Forming Prophetic Brotherhood: The Carmelite Guide to Formation*, Rome 1988, art. 1. Hereafter reference will be RIVC 1988.

<sup>216</sup> RIVC 1988, 3.

<sup>217</sup> RIVC 1988, 5.

<sup>218</sup> RIVC 1988, 9-11.

<sup>219</sup> RIVC 1988, 16.

<sup>220</sup> RIVC 1988, 14.

<sup>221</sup> RIVC 2013, 54.



## **5.2. Carmelite JPIC Identity**

The Carmelite charism has its source in the charismatic experience of the first penitent-pilgrims-hermits on Mount Carmel under the model and inspiration of Mary, the mother of Jesus and Elijah, the prophet of fire on Mount Carmel. A witness of this is the insinuated "presence" of Elijah, "near the fount of Mount Carmel", as collected in number 1 of our Rule, and the "dedication" to Mary of the first church and oratory that the first hermits built on this mountain. Both have helped and inspired the Carmelite communities in their attempt to become contemplative-active, prayerful-prophetic, and reflective-apostolic communities throughout 800 years of history. Mary and Elijah, as human models, felt fear when they questioned themselves what would be the best way to go in their lives, like us, they also had to face difficult questions and were affected by the decisions they made.

### **The Carmelites at Service, as Sisters and Brothers of Mary**

Mary always plays an important role in the Carmelite history. The first Carmelites built a little oratory in the middle of the cells which was named in honour of her, the Lady of the Place. It was said that on the mountain there was a "very beautiful and small church of Our Lady" that the hermit friars, called "Brothers of Carmel", had near the Karit stream, where the Prophet Elijah had drunk. This meant that they were taking Mary as their Patroness. This tradition continues today as Mary took care of her Son, Jesus, Carmelites under her patronage take care of all people.

The title of the Order that appears in some older papal documents is "Brothers of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel". The same Pope Innocent IV, who finally approved our Rule of Life (1247) writes to the friars "On behalf of the beloved sons, the hermit brothers of the Order of Our Lady of Mount Carmel". This name, "Brothers" that each member of the Carmelite family carries, is the sign of our familiarity and intimacy with the Virgin. She is the Mother and Sister who embellishes the Family of Carmel. Therefore, for the Carmelites, Mary is our Mother and Sister. Since the beginning of our Family, we have dedicated all the honour and love she deserves, for being the Mother of the Lord of our lives.

Since the angel's visit, Mary treasures the Word of God in her heart. Her willingness to let the Spirit of God work in her life is revealed in the song of the "Magnificat", where she praised "the greatness of God" for having "looked at the humility of his servant" for the welfare of all generations. Mary as a faithful follower of her Son is a witness to his miracles and sufferings, accompanying him until the end of his mission on this earth. She then became full witness of the light of His Resurrection.

The Scapular, a brown piece of cloth, a garment, that the Carmelites usually wear on their shoulders, is a visible reminder that the Carmelites try to imitate Mary in her total surrender to God's plan and in the service to people. It is through Mary that the Spirit of God inspires the Carmelites to continue to adapt and be open to what God is calling them to be and do.

The Carmelites learn from Mary:

- to live open to God and to his will, manifested in the events of life;
- to listen to the voice (Word) of God in the Bible and in life, then put into practice the demands of this voice
- to pray faithfully feeling God present in all events;
- to live close to our brothers and to be in solidarity with them in their needs.

### **Elijah, Our Spiritual Father**

The prophet Elijah has always been a part of the Carmelite spirituality in the biblical sense. At present time we stress the prophetic element of Elijah's life and ministry which leads us to contemplation. Today an authentic contemplative experience leads us to see with God's eyes and to love with God's heart. This leads inexorably to a preferential option for the poor because God sent Jesus to the poor with the Good News.

Contemplation is a journey which takes us through places of light and places of darkness. Like us, it took Elijah a long time to hear God's voice, but the angel of the Lord encouraged him along his journey. Our journey, like Elijah's journey, leads us to Mount Horeb, the Mount of God. Like Elijah, there we hear God's voice in the silence of our ideologies and desires (see section 3.3 for further details on contemplation in JPIC).

In the Old Testament, the Prophet Elijah appears as a character of solitude. It was on Mount Carmel - the first place of residence of the first Carmelites - that Elijah challenged his people to choose between the God of Israel (Yahweh) and Baal as their god. According to the First Book of Kings, Chapter 18, Elijah's sacrifice was consumed by fire while the sacrifice of the followers of Baal was not; demonstrating to his people with it that Yahweh was the true God.

In his commitment to the work of God, Elijah begins a journey to Mount Horeb. During his journey through the desert, he loses focus as the commitment acquired to the point of wishing death. However, God encouraged him to continue on his way. It is at this moment that Elijah becomes aware of the presence of God - not in the striking signs of fire or earthquake, but rather, in the sign of a gentle breeze, of mute and subtle sound. At the end of his journey, Elijah was sent back to his village with a renewed spirit.

The Carmelites learn from Elijah:

- To be aware of the presence of God in the unexpected.
- to hear the whisper of God in silence.

Elijah said: "Live God in whose presence I am", and the Carmelites try to follow in his footsteps, recognizing God in all the people they know and serve.

In the light of his biblical cycle (in which three blocks can be distinguished: 1 Re 17-19, 1 Re 21, and 2 Re 1), Elijah is characterized by the following fundamental attitudes and traits:

- Man entirely 'in front of God', all dedicated without commitment to the cause of God and ardent of passion for God: this is the meaning of the expression: "Live the Lord in whose presence I am standing (to which I serve)" that he often uses as his motto.
- Driven by the Spirit (1 Kings 18:12).

- The victor of Mount Carmel and the restorer of Yahweh's religion against the idolatrous invader cult to Baal in a context of pan-economic polytheism (1 Kings 21-24, 36-39).
- The adversary of the royal power of Ahab and his son Ahaziah regarding religious themes and practices (1 Kings 17, 18, 21, 1-29, 36-39, 2 Kings 1:16).
- His universalism, or ecumenism (1 Re 17, 13).
- The mystery man who appears and disappears, and the lover of loneliness (1 Re 17, 1; 2 Re, 1 1-18; 1 Re 17, 2-6).
- The man who speaks face to face with God (1 Kings 19).
- The architect of peace, according to a later interpretation (MI 3, 23-24)

### **Carmelite's JPIC DNA**

The Carmelites, on Mount Carmel, for the "*solatium terrae sanctae*" (for the service of the Holy Land) engaged in spiritual struggle with "pure heart and right conscience". In addition to spiritual struggle, with the victory over sin and as support to keep the Holy Land free and in possession of Christians, the hermits of Carmel understood this "solatium" extending it to other forms of service: in effect, they dedicated themselves to sometimes help pilgrims and migrants by welcoming, guiding and accompanying, and to announce the Gospel to the people.

When they moved to Europe, the Carmelites brought with them these ideas of remaining in the "*solatium*" of the Holy Land, which started to become clearer and broader: understood not only as the geographical place of the Holy Land, but as the whole Church, mystical body of the Lord, his true Earth and Kingdom.

Thus, the Carmelites were inserted in different contexts, assuming apostolic ministries that were necessary so that the Church becomes more and more in accordance with the desires of God's heart.

We Carmelites thus participate in different apostolic activities and our way of life remains open to the different forms at each time. We recognize that the cultivation of the contemplative attitude, as a path of personal conversion that discovers God presence in each creature, especially the most disadvantaged of creation, although it is not an easy task, is essential for an authentic personal health of life and the ecological sanitation of our common home, the earth.

The work for justice, peace and care for creation is a process of change of mentality of the dominant culture in our world, characterized by waste and discarding. This process requires that experiences of God be favoured as the only Good, Beautiful and True, irresistible and supreme, as opposed to other superfluous offers that are offered to us.

In tune with the Social Doctrine of the Church, we Carmelites are called to create or facilitate social and ecclesial spaces of work of promotion, care and awareness of the intrinsic value of the created. Thus, we personally seek, together with other brothers and sisters, the possibility of rediscovering the passage of God in creation, through direct contact with nature and human suffering, which is the touchstone of our smallness and vulnerability.

### 5.3. A Carmelite Methodology of JPIC Work

Since its formation in 1983, the Carmelite Justice and Peace Commission (later Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation) works to promote within the Order an preferential option for the poor and to engage in social analysis for transformative action.

All Carmelites – Friars, Sisters and Laity – are called to live a life of allegiance to Jesus Christ through a commitment to seek the face of the living God, through fraternity and through service in the midst of the people.<sup>222</sup> The ministry of promoting justice, peace and integrity of creation is not peripheral to Carmel; the search for the Kingdom of God necessarily draws us to notice that Jesus had a special solicitude towards all those who suffered and worked to transform their situations for the better. Carmelite inspirations too, the Prophet Elijah and the Blessed Virgin Mary, were persons of faith, hope and love who were moved to put into practice the inspiration drawn from their lives of contemplation. The God of our contemplation is also the God who sends us out to be channels of his tender love for the poor and afflicted.

JPIC work is very practical because it is both personal and communal. It is not enough to pray and wish for justice, peace and care for creation in the world; individuals have to be moved to walk the talk or the prayer. Justice, peace and integrity of creation are values of the Kingdom of God that are essential to Christian and Carmelite living. As part of the universal Church Carmel has adopted for its JPIC ministries the methodology that has been accepted in Catholic Social Teaching from Pope St. John XXIII's 1961 encyclical, *Mater et Magistra*. The methodology utilizes an approach to reality is summarized in the verbs: to see, to judge and to act. This methodology is also referred to as the Pastoral Cycle of See, Judge and Act.

The See-Judge-Act model is a pastoral approach which involves three stages of first, review of the concrete situation in which people are living; second, a process of discernment and formation of judgement; third, appreciating what, under the circumstances, can or should be done. The dynamic of the methodology is roughly presented in the following scheme:

#### Pastoral Cycle: See

- Look at what is happening
- What is going on?
- What do you see or observe?
- What are the facts about the issues?

#### Pastoral Cycle: Judge

- Analyze the information
- Inquire into why the situation exists.
- Inquire into the underlying historical, political, social, religious, cultural and economic factors of the situation.
- Inquire into who and how decisions are made.

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<sup>222</sup> Const. 1995, 14.

### Pastoral Cycle: Act

- What needs to be done to change or address the situation?
- How would one develop responses or action to help the people at the center of the injustice?
- How might the disadvantaged be empowered?
- How will the action be evaluated?

There are many variations of the See-Judge-Act approach. To these three activities others add Evaluate and Celebrate. Others utilize the Four-Step- Social Analysis Process which consists in:

- Experience: This consists in awareness of what is happening.
- Analysis: Inquiring into why it is happening in the way that it is.
- Theological Reflection: Inquiring into what it means, often, in the light of the Scriptures.
- Response: Moving towards a definite response.

What would make engaging these approaches Carmelite is permeating the whole approach with a Carmelite flavour in light of its spiritual patrimony and charism. For example, Bishop Donal Lamont (1911-2003)<sup>223</sup>, the first bishop of Mutare Diocese in Zimbabwe, utilized the See-Judge-Act methodology in identifying the fundamental issues at the root of the instability, violence and bad race relations in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and proposing a new dispensation of justice, peace and charity.

### **Carmelite NGO Curriculum on *Laudato Si'* for Secondary Schools.**

We know that education is part of the act step of the pastoral method. In accordance with this, the Carmelite NGO tries to help the members of our Carmelite family by offering two types of *Laudato Si* studies which can be used to educate ourselves and others. The first is for students of secondary education. The curriculum for secondary education is an across-the-board curriculum with lesson plans for theology, science, world history, humanities, literature, and art with appropriate inserts from *Laudato Si*. Moreover, the Carmelite NGO has also developed a study guide for parishes on *Laudato Si* for adults. The reason for developing the curriculum is to demonstrate the connection between religion and secular subjects. It provides a means for educators to show their students the connection between one's faith and the secular world of which they are a part of. This will help build a foundation for life choices in a secular world.<sup>224</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Bishop Donal Lamont, *Purchased People*, Pastoral Instruction To the Catholics of Umtali, 1959, in Miceal O'Neill, O.Carm., *A Bishop Could Not Do Otherwise: The Life and Witness of Bishop Donal Lamont (1911-2003)*, Blackrock: The Columba Press, 2013.

<sup>224</sup> A Lesson Plan for Secondary Education is available at [www.carmelitengo.org/en/proyectos-en/proyecto-4/](http://www.carmelitengo.org/en/proyectos-en/proyecto-4/)

# **CHAPTER 6**

## **THE CARMELITE JPIC MISSION IN THE WORLD**

**“The smallest thing when done for the love of God is priceless.”  
(St. Teresa of Avila, Foundations 12:7)**

**“Remember that nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love.”  
(St. Therese of Lisieux)**

## 6.1. JPIC Structures in the Order

As noted above, it was after Pope Paul VI constituted the Pontifical Commission for Justice and Peace that there was a ripple effect throughout the Catholic world in setting up Commissions for Justice and Peace at Episcopal Conference and Religious Congregations levels. Later these were renamed commissions for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The missions of these Congregational Commissions are modelled on the Pontifical Council with the difference that the mandate of Congregational commissions are confined to particular Congregations:

- to enlighten the People of God, as well as the members of the Congregation, about issues of national and international justice, human rights, peace and integrity of creation;
- to raise awareness among members of the Congregation to the need to rethink their style of life and mission in the world characterized by great injustice, violence and poverty, in order to make their actions consistent with their beliefs;
- to foster a commitment on the part of religious, Christians, and all citizens in the area of socio-political and civic activities;
- to promote actions in favour of justice, peace and human rights, that could concretize the contribution of the Congregation in these areas<sup>225</sup>;
- to promote awareness of the need to care for our common home and advocate for environmentally sustainable technologies, lifestyles and conservation.

Implementation of these objectives requires structures formed with the requisite means, personnel, knowledge, skills and enthusiasm to implement them. The implementation of these objectives call for the formation of appropriate organizational structures. The current situation is that there is a General Commission for JPIC at the Curia level without there being regional, provincial and local commissions. It is therefore important that appropriate structures be set up, which would include the following:

### General Commission for JPIC

The Carmelite General Commission for JPIC is appointed by the Carmelite General Council. The General Commission for JPIC has clearly spelt out tasks in the General Council for its *sexennium* plan. The Commission is tasked with particular responsibilities, viz:

- To promote continual Carmelite personal encounter and relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.
- To organize and coordinate existing programmes in the area of JPIC throughout the Order and its affiliates.
- To promote the formation, development and animation of Carmelite JPIC structures and promoters as well as incorporate JPIC values and initiatives.
- To promote dialogue, discussions, days of study of the Church's JPIC imperatives taught by the magisterium of the Church.
- To organize for Carmelite Family JPIC events for study and dialogue.

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<sup>225</sup> Order of Friars Minor, *Guidelines for the Animation of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC)*, Office for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation, Rome 2009, pp. 13-14.

## **Geographical Area JPIC Commission**

The Order comprises of four geographical areas: Africa, Asia-Australia-Oceania, Europe and the Americas. There is great diversity in the representation of the constituent member Congregations and Guilds that constitute the Carmelite Family. However, if there is to be smooth movement in the operations of JPIC Committees in the regions, it is vital that there is some administrative structures at the geographical area whose purpose would be to coordinate, animate and foster networking of JPIC organs at this level.

Such a body would be comprised of the Presidents (or their representatives) of the Provincial JPIC committees to constitute a coordinating committee for the geographical areas. Depending on the feedback from the Province JPIC Commissions, the roles of the Geographical Area JPIC Commissions are:

- To share experiences and networking.
- To collate, analyse, synthesize and present information from constituent Provinces.
- To organize geographical area workshops on formation and promotion of the assimilation of JPIC values by all members of the Carmelite Family.

## **Province JPIC Commission**

The Province JPIC Committee ought to be constituted by members of JPIC promoters drawn from each community of the Province or/ and the members of the Carmelite Family. The President of the Provincial JPIC Committee acts both as the promoter within the Province and the link-pin with the Geographical area Commission, if such exists.

To function well, the Provincial JPIC Commission should prepare a strategic plan with clear objectives for the proliferation of JPIC values in the Province. One of the greatest objectives is to ensure that the values of JPIC become part-and-parcel of the daily life and mission of the friars and sisters.

When the Province JPIC Commission is set, its first task is to analyse the current situation in the Province and engage in a clear methodology that would include asking such questions as:

- What steps have already been taken to integrate JPIC into the life and mission of the Province (this needs to be comprehensive including a review of life of communities, formation programme, schools and parishes)? It is important to note any signs of resistance and the reasons for such an attitude.
- In light of the reality of the Province, what do we propose for action and when?
- How are we going to share the programme with the friars and members of the Carmelite family of the Province? It is important to create opportunities for disseminating information and promoting formation.

It is important to set up an evaluation mechanism of the Provincial JPIC work incorporating reviews of the overall processes, the objectives that were attained and those that failed, deliberations on strong and weak points of the programme, the methodology and the tools employed.

## **Local Community JPIC Committees**

The local Community JPIC Committees comprise of the local JPIC chapter at a community or parish level. The Prior and Community nominate a member of the community to be either a contact person or a promoter of the chapter activities. Any member of the Carmelite Family can be appointed to animate and coordinate local activities of the committee. It is the role of the promoter at local chapter to arrange for all members of the chapter to be imbued with the spirit of the Gospel, the Carmelite charism, the history of the congregation especially in the particular Province. The role of the promoter is to liaise with the Province JPIC Commission.

It ought to be clear to all members of the local community JPIC committee that JPIC coordination is a life ministry by which is meant that one who takes it up is steeped in and witnesses to the Congregation's spirit, charism and mission.

Subject to the principles of subsidiarity, the JPIC promoters at various levels must promote the following activities: Formation, Networking, and Communication. It is the role of all JPIC promoters individually and in groups to spearhead the renewal, animation and support of JPIC awareness in the Province.

## 6.2. JPIC organs in the Carmelite tradition

The Carmelite Family is blessed with two types of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organization). One type is the Carmelite NGO that is accredited and affiliated with the U.N. and focuses on structural change..

The goal of the Carmelite NGO is to help bring about a more peaceful, just and loving world by actively participating in caring for the human needs of the human family and the environment.

To achieve its goal the Carmelite NGO participates at the U.N. in the areas of:

- 1) Education - the Carmelite NGO developed a curriculum for secondary education and a Study Guide for Parishes based on the teachings of *Laudato Si* and the Sustainable Development Goals of the U.N.
- 2) Freedom of Belief - the Carmelite NGO sponsors Study Houses in Malang, Indonesia for Christian and Muslim children of elementary school age to learn English, Math and cultural music and dance. The Carmelite NGO also sponsors a class on Freedom of Belief at Loyola University in New Orleans Louisiana, USA that focuses on the common bonds of Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
- 3) Human Rights - the Carmelite NGO supports the Right to Food of the World Food Program of the U.N. and the Right to Personal Safety by sponsoring a program to assist victims of human trafficking with education, capacity building and skills-job training in Zimbabwe.
- 4) Sustainable Development - the Carmelite NGO participates at the highest level for NGOs at the U.N.'s U.N. Framework Convention on Climate Change and the International Panel on Climate Change.

Why is the Carmelite NGO affiliated with the U.N.? Because the U.N. is the only international organization that addresses the needs of the human family globally for solutions. The Carmelite NGO brings the needs of the human family to the U.N. for structural change for the benefit of the human family.

JPIC members are welcome to participate in the Carmelite NGO through prayer especially the Day of Prayer on June 5th, World Environment Day and December 10th, World Human Rights Day. Also by sharing their work experiences with the Carmelite NGO to help bring the cry of the poor and marginalized to the attention of decision makers at the U.N.

The second type of NGO is, for instance, “Karit, solidarios por la paz” (Karit, solidarity for Peace). This Carmelite NGO was founded as an initiative of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Carmelite Iberian Region in 1996, which objective is to coordinate and promote the solidarity movement that has been arising in Carmelite family.

Karit, as an organization, lives Christian values and the Carmelite charism, and follows the spirit of the prophet Elijah, in promoting solidarity actions for peace, justice, and social commitment, for the sake of the most disadvantaged. Those involved in this solidarity work are Carmelite lay people, friars and sisters. It is registered under the Spanish Agency for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain (AECID).

The existence of this association has the following aims:

1. To promote the development and promotion of all people and the peoples, based on respect for Human Rights and the values of justice and peace.
2. Promote the integration and development of people and groups at risk of social exclusion, in order to improve their living conditions and defend their rights.
3. Encourage the prophetic commitment and the promotion of volunteerism of the members, of the Carmelite Family and of society in general, raising awareness of the values of justice, peace and the integrity of creation (Statutes, revised, 2016).

Through:

1. Programs of international cooperation, in support of progress and human development in all countries, mainly in the most impoverished, in coordination with local organizations that guarantee us closeness to beneficiaries, their permanence in the area and the sustainability of the Projects.
2. Communication and denunciation, through the implementation of public opinion campaigns and through the means at their disposal, of the existence of injustice, its causes and proposed solutions.
3. The culture of solidarity and volunteering, in order to awaken this evangelical demand through awareness and education for development.
4. The organization and support of initiatives and exchanges according to our aims in collaboration with the different social sectors, without pretending personal or group roles.

There are also other Carmelite entities which do JPIC works though not formally recognized as NGOs by the local government are doing great social ministries. They may have similar missions and structures to these two NGOs.

### 6.3. The Role of the JPIC promoter at the Grassroots Level

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are values at the core of the experience of what it is to be a Catholic Christian. Upon this base is grafted a Carmelite nuance and interpretation of reality. JPIC values are life-affirming of the interconnectedness of life that pervades the encyclical of Pope Francis, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. It is the role of the JPIC promoter to dedicate himself or herself to the spread of these values through the witness of his/her life and legitimate advocacy activities.

It is vital that the JPIC promoters are knowledgeable about their roles and that they be willing to get others to appreciate and live by the JPIC values. Once appointed to the JPIC animation role in a Province or whatever grouping, it is important that the particular Carmelites familiarize themselves with the tradition of JPIC in the universal Church as well as the practices within the Order or Congregation.

The first target of Carmelite JPIC promoters is to create a sense of consciousness of JPIC values in communities of Carmelites so that friars, sisters and lay Carmelites live justice in the particularity of their communities and contexts. To this end, they are advised to promote fraternal gatherings, celebrations and share information about the ministries of the brothers and sisters. The clearest promotion of JPIC values will be noticeable when Carmelite communities incarnate JPIC values at a local level of family, community and parish.

To equip themselves for the ministry of JPIC, promoters need to immerse and familiarise themselves with Sacred Scripture, the Social Teaching of the Church, the Institute's Constitutions relating to JPIC, Institute's social documents and the JPIC Statues and Formation Manual if the latter two documents are available. promoters need to study these documents in creative fidelity to the charism of the Order or Institute.

The other significant role for promoters is to engage in networking with other groups, ecclesial faith-based organizations and secular, which promote the values of JPIC. Promoters need to be always in support of whatever promotes the common good. It is the role of promoters to check in the neighbourhood what organizations do what and to register membership with those groups that are well organized and meet regularly in small working groups.

The grassroots promoters are the reason why JPIC groups function at all. It is the promoters who are the face of the Institute's effort to reach out to the little ones in society and those on the margins of society. promoters need to ensure that local chapter members are adequately formed into the spirituality of the Institute and that of the universal Church to be involved in action and interventions that make a difference in people's lives. Carmelite JPIC ministry is not only contemplative; it is also active. It is targeted at transforming people's ways of thinking and doing things. Some of the ways of animating/promoting JPIC values are very practical and make a lot of difference in people's lives such as reducing personal and community carbon footprints by implementing the 3 Rs of waste management, namely, Reducing, Reusing and Recycling for a more sustainable life. The principles of Reducing, Reusing and Recycling work together to resist the throwaway culture and mentality. Human beings are some of the chief agents of the destruction of our earth, our common home

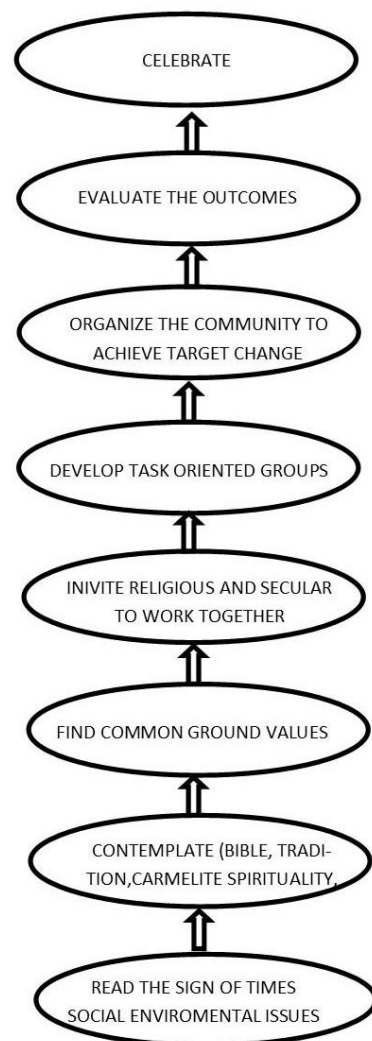
through unsustainable patterns of living. To return to sustainability it is good to reduce the use of plastic, encourage the use of public transportation and promoting the use of products that contain little or no contaminants.

Other opportunities arise around promoting particular days of awareness in the communities and neighbourhood such as highlighting dates like World Day of Prayer for Peace (1 January) Earth Day (22 April), International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women (25 November), International Migrants Day (18 December), World Aids Day (1 December), International Day for the Abolition of Slavery (2 December), World Soil Day (2 December), Human Rights Day (10 December). These days draw attention and focus on specific themes that need reflection, prayer and practical action. These themes can be seen from a Carmelite perspective, thus deepening their appreciation in the tradition.

JPIC ministry is evangelization work through the witness of life at both the personal and communal levels. It is the role of promoters to motivate members of communities and members of Provinces and regions to commit themselves to social ministries which may include working with the excluded, solidarity with the poor, promoting human rights and work for the care of creation. When the awareness of JPIC values is widespread, it may even be opportune for promoters to promote the formation of JPIC committees in parishes and schools.

## 6.4. How to start a JPIC Ministry

Since local JPIC works at the grassroots level, the suitable approach is bottom-up. Problems are best identified by the people living at the grassroots. With the help of indigenous leaders, religious leaders, experts, etc., JPIC promoters need to see and analyse the issues deeply so that they may find the core of the issues. The JPIC promoters need to have a deep understanding of religious teachings, local wisdoms, common concerns, humanity, and others so that they can understand the issue holistically. These, then, may become the source of power and the instrument of the movement. A JPIC promoters need to have a good managerial skill to organize the committees. Inclusiveness is very important for JPIC promoters. They have to be able to create a feeling that the project belongs to all of them who involve in, not something imposed by outsiders or by someone in power. This does not only guarantee their continued support and participation in the project but also the wider impact of the project. Every project needs to be evaluated to review the project and also to see the achievement. The last step is celebrating the program through reflection, prayer, and liturgy. This step is important even becomes the crown of the project. It will bring awareness among the people involved that their success is communal.



Carmelites must agree on the signs of the time at the local and/or national and international levels, for example climate change. How is climate change affecting the local community (farmers). If locally grown foods are not available, how is climate change affecting local communities when internationally grown food commands a higher price.

Once the signs of the time are agreed upon, the issues must be studied for their scientific and public validity with the help of contemplation and prayer.

The next step is identifying the values and common ground for the issue and educating the groups on the issue involved. The groups in turn must educate the public on the pros and cons of the issue.

Since it is not possible to solve a problem alone, invite others who have the same interest in the issue to join the group. This could be accomplished by a face-to-face meeting with another group or by hosting an informational gathering open to the public. As part of the gathering, create a network so that all interested groups can work together and share resources and responsibilities. It is important that the team establish a public relations team to keep the public informed of what they are doing and why they should support the groups involved.

Formalize a working group on the issue so that all know the issue and are kept informed on the progress of the issue. In order to give recognition to the group, form a leadership team composed of members of participating groups in order that tasks can be shared.

Support the decisions of the leadership team by accepting assigned tasks and working for consensus among the groups.

Evaluate the outcome of the issue, the groups must see that the issue is resolved for the common good or the common good is enhanced by the outcome.

Celebrate the outcome by all the groups involved. It is important to thank all those involved, especially those who worked to achieve the outcome and all financial supporters.

### **Suggestions for running a JPIC meeting**

There are five essential elements for a productive meeting: good planning, friendly atmosphere, clarity of purpose, good guidance/facilitation, and evaluation.

- Planning for a meeting should take place well in advance of the meeting. Participants should be asked to provide dates and times when they are available. The JPIC promoter must send the agenda to participants for agenda items or to comment on the agenda. The place and time of the meeting must be clear. Food and lodging must be prepared for participants staying overnight. If there is a fee, participants must be informed beforehand.

- Begin and end the meeting with a prayer. A time for participants to introduce themselves should be provided.
- The goal of the meeting should be clear so participants can come better prepared to participate. Review the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and leave time for participants to add other topics they believe are important. Add enough meeting time to deal with all topics thoroughly.
- In addition to good preparation, a meeting also needs good facilitation. Care should be taken that all topics are covered and not become bogged down in any one topic. If a topic is important enough, it may be scheduled for another time. Participants attending the meeting should feel their concerns have been addressed.
- A date and time for a follow-up meeting should be scheduled.

## **6.5. Building bridges: coordination, formation, communication, networking**

The responsibility of the council member for JPIC is responsible for communication, formation, coordination and networking with all JPIC institutions. The council person must work closely with the members of the international commission of JPIC in these tasks.

### **Communication**

From our past experience using the present system of communication we have learned that not all members of the family have received communications from the JPIC commission. We recommend that for building bridges for JPIC activities should be done through the general secretary which will send out the communication to all members of the family. This can be done by email or for those who do not access to the internet, regular postage might be required. To set the email system of the institutions of the family, the email address of the main representatives of each institution of the family are to be listed in the email directory.

### **Formation**

A JPIC website is essential for all JPIC groups to know what other groups are engaged in as well as educate the public on the work of JPIC. The website should be user friendly. The council member shall have a website set-up and maintained.

### **Coordination**

The council member would assist in the coordination of like institutions, for example a lay community in Indonesia can coordinate with a lay community in Australia.

### **Networking**

The council member will encourage and assist networking with all members of the JPIC family. This can be done by assisting them in like projects, for example if an institution in the family works on human trafficking, the council member should be able to inform it to network with other JPIC institution inside and outside the family.

# CHAPTER 7

## Concluding Remarks

**“Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these,  
you did not do for me.”**

**(Mathew 25:45)**

**Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”**

**And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”**

**(Isaiah 6:8)**

The journey writing this Carmelite Handbook for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation has been long. Previous Carmelite General Commissions for JPIC intended to write a Carmelite handbook. Extensive work was done in this regard, however never got to the point where the volume was published. When the present General Commission was constituted after the General Chapter of the Order in 2013, the members agreed to pursue the ambitious agenda of working towards the publication of a Carmelite handbook for JPIC promoters or practitioners.

During July 2017 the Carmelite Family Congress on JPIC met. Before the Congress, a survey was conducted to assess the involvement Carmelite family in the work of JPIC. An analysis of the information provided by respondents demonstrated that Carmelites – Friars, consecrated women and lay men and women – individually and communally participate in social and environmental ministries with the clear desire to raise awareness of and respond to the social and environmental issues of our time. In the light of the publication of *Laudato Si*, many Carmelite communities and individuals reported on the urgent need to have a multi-faceted approach to participation in addressing some of the human, socio-political, economic and environmental injustices. Carmelites participate in the addressing of these injustices on practical levels by engaging in the ministries of prayer and liturgy, education, direct services to the needy, communication and advocacy. JPIC ministry is not so much doctrinal but rather a commitment to living the values of the Kingdom of God. These values are built on a conception of life based on the primacy of God, the universe and the fundamental respect for human beings. Organs of the Carmelite Family such as the Carmelite NGO have adopted the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals focusing on education, freedom of belief, human rights and sustainable development. Since there are too many problems in the world, we could not deal with all of them. The prudent thing is to focus our energies on those areas in which we can make a difference in cooperation with others.

Even though there may be some Carmelites who are persuaded to think that JPIC is not the main focus of Carmelite spirituality, our tradition makes evident that contemplation and prophetic action go hand in hand. It is true that the Carmelite Rule and particularly its inspirations – the fiery Prophet Elijah and the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel – all stress the points that we must learn to stand before God, and with one another, attentive of all who suffer. Since the process of returning to the sources initiated after the Second Vatican Council, the traditional emphasis on the goal of Carmelite life as contemplation has been retrieved together with its logical outflow which consists in the movement towards a preferential option for the poor. In his reflection on the figure of the Prophet Elijah, Fr. Carlos Mesters convinces many when he argues that Elijah challenges Carmelites to a three-fold walk: a. the walk of justice against the false ideologies and towards the concrete experience of Yahweh; b. the walk of solidarity with the victims of injustice; c. the walk of the mystic in which the prophet tried to restore the self-confidence of the poor by challenging the consciousness of all by stating that God is with the poor and the oppressed. This means that to do the work of JPIC involves the pursuit of contemplation as well as justice which is its consequence. It must be stressed that true contemplation of the living God leads to compassion. An awareness of the presence of God in myself predisposes me to discover God in my brothers and sisters and in creation. The contemplation-compassion union is celebrated most clearly by the Prophet Micah: ‘You have been told, O mortal, what is good, and what the Lord requires of you: Only to do justice and to love goodness, and to walk humbly with your God’ (Mic 6:8). In other

words, contemplative life is reflected in lives of justice that lead to peace with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.<sup>226</sup> As Carmelites we are all called to being a contemplative prophetic fraternity in the midst of the people. Our contemplation is not about savouring the beauty of our ecstasies but sends us into mission which is both “a passion for Jesus and a passion for his people”.<sup>227</sup>

The Handbook emphasizes the point that any meaningful contribution to the welfare of peoples and the earth should be rooted in reality. Hence, Section 1 deals with an appreciation of the methodological pastoral cycle of *See, Judge, Act*. A good prognosis will lead to a good diagnosis of issues in order to give a good prescription. The See-Judge-Act approach involves three stages of:

- a. Review of concrete situation.
- b. Engagement in the formation of judgement.
- c. Appreciating what, under the circumstances, can or should be done.

Other versions of this methodology suggest the following stances: Stop; Stand back; Reflection; Taking action and engaging in Evaluation.

Section 2 of the Handbook addresses the biblical foundations of JPIC ministry as well the spirituality of JPIC. The Christian Scriptures consist of the substructure in the reflection and ministry of JPIC. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation are biblical values which are essential to our Christian discipleship. These values need to be lived, realized and not simply spoken about. If these values are not incarnated in real life by all class of Christians – consecrated and lay – then we run the risk of being hypocrites who preach to others to do the right thing while we do the opposite. Jesus is our model; he lived by and preached about life-transforming values of proclamation of the good news, the proclamation of liberty to captives and sight to the blind and the freedom of the oppressed (cf. Lk 4:18ff). Jesus’ earthly ministry was an affirmation and celebration of life. Because the values of JPIC are so crucial in our world they need to be integrated into all aspects of our life and ministry.

In section 3 we looked at the theme of the Social Teaching of the Church. The Catholic Social Teaching is the tradition of papal reflection about how Christians, as co-creators with God in the building of Kingdom values, live their vocation of fostering the common good in the world. Rooted in the Biblical tradition particularly in the prophetic tradition of pronouncements concerning covenant faithfulness and advocacy for justice for the underprivileged and the teaching and example of Jesus Christ, Catholic Social Teaching refers to the Catholic doctrines on key topics concerning the following: human life and dignity; family community and participation; rights and responsibilities; the option for the poor; dignity of work and the rights of workers; solidarity; and the care for God’s creation. Inspired by the Church’s teaching, Carmelites believe as all disciples of Christ that God has a plan for creation to build a kingdom of peace, love and justice. Our part in this plan is not merely to be spiritual or to

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<sup>226</sup> Pope Francis, Encyclical Letter Praise Be to You, *Laudato Si*, On Care for Our Common Home, Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2015, no. 66

<sup>227</sup> Pope Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World, Citta del Vaticano: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2013, no. 268.

limit our activities to Sunday but rather to get involved in every aspect of life according to our station in life. As Section 4 illustrates, Carmelites have been involved in the work of leavening the society with the transforming leaven of the Gospel. Carmelites have, over the centuries, engaged in activities and programmes that have positively impacted on society. As responsible global citizens we are ceased with seeking ways of redressing the challenges of our times by responding to them through local initiatives.

To respond effectively to the challenges that threaten human life and the common good in the world, Section 5 has explored the manner in which Carmelites may engage through setting up structures of operation and cooperation. From the time of Carmel's insertion in the European context as mendicants, we have cultivated a strong tradition of closeness to the poor, the *minores*. Sensitivity towards JPIC values grew and were vigorously disseminated within the Carmelite Family most significantly after the Second Vatican Council and upon encountering a new approach to theology called Liberation theology. Engagement in the ministry of JPIC necessarily calls for networking, communication and coordination with other Christian groups, people of good will and faith-based groups and organizations that work for the alleviation of suffering among people.

Finally, this Handbook is offered to the Carmelite Family to encourage, inform, sensitize and stir Carmelites of every station in life to action. At one point or another, we have all felt like the prophet Habakkuk when he complained to God about the prevalence of violence and injustice in the world:

How long, O Lord, must I cry for help and you do not listen? Or cry out to you, "Violence!" and you do not intervene? Why do you let me see iniquity? Why do you simply gaze at evil? Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife and discord. This is why the law is numb and justice never comes, For the wicked surround the just; this is why justice comes forth perverted (Habakkuk 1:2-4).

It is our conviction that the God of our contemplation is the same one who awakens in us the desire and courage to reach out in compassion. Contemplation and compassion are different sides of the same coin. Consecrated Carmelites are called to witness to the fact that God is to be loved above all things while lay Carmelites are called to bear witness to the fact that God is to be loved in all things. Through contemplation we meet the God of love who illuminates our minds and hearts to see our neighbour and go out to serve him. In the service of neighbour, the Carmelite has Christ himself for a model as the Rule suggests:

We have written these things briefly for you, establishing a formula for your way of life according to which you are bound to live. But if anyone will have expended more, the Lord himself, when he returns, will repay him. Use discernment, however, which is the guide of the virtues.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>228</sup> *Regula Ordinis Fratrum Beatissimae Virginis Mariae De Monte Carmelo, 800<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Carmelite Rule*, Roma: Edizioni Carmelitane, 2007, no. 24.

A specific element of the Carmelite spirituality that is highlighted in this quote is that it is eschatological. While we keep our focus on the return of the Lord, we are not to lose sight of the service due to our brothers and sisters. Kees Waaijman understands this chapter of the Rule as an invitation into complete transformation in God by which Carmelites, in the absence of the Messiah must have compassion by showing responsibility for a poor and suffering world solely because we are living in allegiance to the Messiah.<sup>229</sup>

Carmelites need to respond enthusiastically to the Church's threefold call to be attentive to what is happening in the world and to its cries; cultivating the courage to get to know the reality of those who suffer which affects us; and the movement to action at various levels – personal, social and political. If we are transformed by the love of God, we will not be satisfied with personal sanctity alone; rather we will seek to express this love in social, structural and political relationships. Political charity of this nature is an outflow of contemplation. It will seek integral and sustainable development of persons and societies by transforming “structures of sin” and creating structures of grace. All of us are involved in this project. May the God of our contemplation enlighten the eyes of our minds and hearts and move us to involvement in the lives of real persons and empower us with prophetic courage to live by the Kingdom values of justice, peace and integrity of creation.

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<sup>229</sup> Kees Waaijman, *The Mystical Space of Carmel: A Commentary on the Carmelite Rule*, Trans. John Vriend, Leuven: Peeters, 1999, p. 255.

## APPENDIX

### Message of the Carmelite Family International Congress on Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC), Fatima, Portugal, 28 July 2017

1. Representative members of the Carmelite Family gathered in Fatima, Portugal to reflect on issues of JPIC during the International Congress on the topic of Carmel Engages with *Laudato Si'*: Hearing both the Cry of the Poor and of the Earth (cf. *Laudato Si'* 49). The Prior General reminded us of the journey that the Carmelite Family has followed from the Second Vatican Council to the present in which its commitment to justice and peace has matured greatly. It is important to remember previous Carmelite documents from Councils of Provinces which are milestones on this journey. It was also good to hear how much involvement there is within the Carmelite Family concerning issues of JPIC.
2. We were inspired to reflect on our tradition, particularly the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kings 21). The complicity of silence which led to Naboth's death was striking, and this began a reflection on our own silence and complicity in the face of the current social and environmental challenges present in our world today. Such a reading of the signs of our time is an essential element of our Carmelite charism.
3. Following a succession of papal pronouncements, from Pope Paul VI to Pope Francis, the Church has moved from the idea that we have dominion over the earth (Gn 1:28, 2:15) to an understanding that we are "citizens in the garden of God" (*Carm-el-ites*). Pope Francis takes that teaching in *Laudato Si'* and offers us a comprehensive and integral approach to the relationships of human beings towards God, the earth and others, in which he makes explicit the link between the degradation of nature and the suffering of people under the power of an economy of infinite growth and overconsumption.
4. The encyclical *Laudato Si'* was welcomed greatly by many people outside and inside the Church. The former Secretary General of the U.N. thanked Pope Francis for speaking up for global action in the face of the urgent need to preserve our common home. The encyclical is part of a chorus of voices of many worldwide religious traditions. There is a growing gap in inequality among peoples regarding basic needs. One-quarter of the world's population consumes 80% of its goods.
5. Pope Francis provides an 'integral ecology', which brings together elements related to spiritual, ethical, social, environmental and economic issues, as a way forward that helps us appreciate our own Carmelite charism in new ways. "Care for our common home requires simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness." Encouraged by the biblical narrative of Naboth, we will not remain silently complicit in the destruction of our common home. We urge our Carmelite Family to join us in a commitment to study, prayer and the performance of very simple gestures that will contribute to substantive change in our lifestyles. The culture of indifference is one of the key challenges within our communities and societies. Blessed Titus Brandsma, along with many other Carmelite saints, reminds us "We are not called to do great things. We are called to do the ordinary things in grand style." We find the encyclical *Laudato Si'* to

be stimulating both for prayer and study and we would heartily recommend it to the whole Carmelite Family. In the light of the above, we invite the whole Carmelite Family to be an advocate for change and justice and to announce the living God following the model of life of the Prophet Elijah.

6. We, therefore, recommend to Carmelite Family leaders - Superior Generals, Provincials and local superiors - to support the creation of viable JPIC structures from local community levels to work hand in hand with the international JPIC commission. These organs will help spearhead local responses to the many social justice issues calling for involvement and commitment.