



How is JPIC present in our everyday lives?

Justice, Peace and Care for Creation (JPIC): how is that possible in our everyday life? In fact, if it is not possible in the here and now, it will not be possible in the world that we are seeking to transform in the spirit of the Gospel. We can't give to others what we don't have within ourselves.

It is through our everyday prayers and actions that JPIC is present. Wherever we are, we bring the presence of Christ through who we are. By being more aware about God's presence within ourselves we allow that presence to become more conscious in others. Our smiles of welcome, greeting others by name, and being available, all invite an openness and alive spirit. As our Mother Clara wisely states, this love should shine out from our eyes, be visible in our speech and felt in our actions. She encourages us to experience this with each other, with those with whom we work and in our concerns for our wider world.

When we know ourselves to be deeply loved, every part of our being expresses this joy and contentment. It shows in all of our actions and in our prayers. We learn to respond to the requests of the beloved in our efforts to make our world a better place. Time for prayer is essential to deepen our relationship with God, and in that prayer to consciously hold the people with whom we live and with/to whom we serve. Our actions inform our prayers and our prayers transform our way of being into a unique presence of Christ. We integrate our lives of contemplation and action. We attend to what is immediate. In fact, St. Francis has been known to say that first we do what is before us, then we attend to what is necessary. And before we know it, we are doing the impossible. We are able to do this because we are embraced with the compassionate heart of Christ in justice, peace, and the care of creation (JPIC). This compassion also extends to ourselves since we will always be human in our efforts to become as Christ.

Justice

Justice is about right relationships. We seek to serve and be served. In Matthew 25, we find examples of opportunities to be involved in wholesome mutual relationships. In fact, Christ emphatically states where we are to find him. It is important to notice that this passage directly follows the parable of the talents. As we develop and share our God given gifts and talents, we are transformed in our efforts to seek change with others.

"Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take as your heritage
the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world.
For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
I was a stranger and you made me welcome,
lacking clothes and you clothed me,
sick and you visited me,
in prison and you came to see me." (Mt: 25, 34-36)

Even if we do not recognize Christ in these situations, he assures us of his presence. In our efforts to live as Christ, we are called to:

Feed the hungry. When people are hungry we provide food that is prepared with the love of our hearts and given with a generous spirit. We offer food that is nutritious and safe. In our speech and gentle manner we can express the value we have for each person. In return we are nourished because we helped to satisfy the hungers in others: whether of body, heart or mind. In our schools and in our communities we teach and practice good farming. We also advocate for policies that protect the rights of farmers around the world. We are concerned that farmers receive adequate wages and are protected from harmful pesticides.

Give drink to the thirsty. We give drink to those who need good, clean water. We also help persons who thirst for a sense of meaning in their lives and who long for God. We share our drink of what is meaningful in our lives. In a practical way, we advocate for safe drinking water and an adequate supply of water to meet all of our needs. We are concerned that the common good is respected when corporations erect hydro-electric plants for their personal gain without regard for the common good.

Welcome the stranger. We welcome persons on the margins and invite them to feel at home. We listen to their stories and encourage in them a sense of being important to us. We care personally for immigrants, refugees and the victims of trafficking. In this way we are reminded to befriend what is a stranger within ourselves and to recognize our own desires to belong and to be a vital part of a community. We also advocate for policies to enable these persons who are considered strangers, to have a better quality of life in our countries.

Clothe the naked. We offer clothing for protection in inclement weather conditions and for a sense of well being. We provide options for the poor so that they can choose the clothing they desire. We launder clothing, sew, and teach sewing skills. We realize that our clothing can speak of what is important in our hearts. We attend to our simplicity of life style. We advocate for healthy factory conditions for workers who make our clothes and for their just wages.

Visit the sick. We attend to the needs of the sick and help to bind up their wounded body and heart. We receive into our hearts, persons who are sick physically, mentally or psychologically. We are sensitive to the needs of healthcare through our personal relationships with patients and their relatives. Within our institutions we work with our associates to provide quality care. Our skills and listening hearts create a greater capacity to become ourselves through our interactions with others. Our advocacy encompasses a respect for life in all phases from conception to natural death. We also advocate for the sharing of medications that help to stop the spread of such diseases as AIDS, malaria and TB.

See the imprisoned. We visit those who are imprisoned in any way through wrong decisions, lack of knowledge, or no opportunities for a better quality of life. Persons can be personally imprisoned by being labeled, stereotyped and because no one believes in their potential. In ourselves, we find ways to become personally freer as we reach out to help free others from their limitations and oppression. Our schools, various training programs and spirituality centers help to develop and enrich the lives of others. As we exercise our rights, we are also concerned that others may have similar rights. We advocate against the death penalty and for healthy prison conditions and rehabilitation opportunities.

Reflection:

Peace

Peace and nonviolence. We can see how our simple actions can have far reaching effects. Our institutions and ministries are noted for efforts to be places of peace and nonviolence. We create places of respect, practice honesty, promote justice and nurture wholesome relationships.

Create respect. We consider all the conditions necessary to accept the basic dignity of the human person and provide a non-threatening and safe place. . We are conscious of welcoming people and offering basic courtesies. We are mindful of the ways we can build-up or help destroy a person's self-worth by our actions. As Mother Clara has requested of us: love is the queen in our lives. We seek to find ways to resolve our conflicts early. We do not demonize anyone who disagrees with our opinion.

Practice honesty. We desire to know the truth. By our study, reflection and engaging in conversations we seek to become persons of wisdom. We honor the importance of honest and timely communications. We seek out ways for people to truly come to know themselves and to realize what they have to offer others. Our helpfulness is not imposed but intended to encourage the ability of the person to accept and to respond to their situations. We enrich our understandings as we prepare educational and spiritual programs.

Promote justice. Our actions for justice are imbued with peace. To create the common good, we negotiate in fairness. We look to honor both the challenges of responsible actions and freedom of options.

Nurture wholesome relationships. In our efforts to establish wholesome relationships, we seek to provide adequate resources so that a job can be done well. Resources can include equipment, time, skill training and mentoring. We call attention to the ways that trust and support is being demonstrated. In especially difficult and tense situations, trust and support has to be developed and monitored.

Reflection:

Integrity of Creation

Care for Creation. In this day, the concern for the care of creation has reached serious proportions. Creation is a beautiful gift from God and is meant to be enjoyed and used appropriately for our needs. We take time to be grateful for all of the wonders of our planet: the majestic mountains, beauty of plains, the teeming of life in the seas, the stateliness of trees and the glamour of flowers. We recognize that our planet is being diminished because of our lack of respect for the use of the resources and the unfair distribution of the wealth from these resources. How we use, reuse and recycle has implications for the sustainability of our resources. Through our various programs we address our concerns for the environment. We teach gardening and proper care of our Earth. Inspired by St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology, we develop and promote a spirituality and theology of ecology. We advocate for an awareness of the violations of human rights when land is being acquired without adequate consideration of the common good.

Reflection:

In conclusion

"In response to the struggles of the church and world we are called to live our lives rooted in the Word of God, Franciscan spirituality and the charism of Mother M. Clara." (General Chapter 2009)

Today we are faced with a contemporary form of penance that meets the needs of our times. We are called to study, reflect, share and pray in order to know what is ours to do in this time. The Scriptures, Franciscan spirituality and the charism of Mother M. Clara are our guides. We all have a piece of the truth and a vital contribution to make in our world. In our Congregational response we recognize how each of us are given parts of truths and actions that can become an integrated response. In the sharing we come to a greater understanding of what is truly ours to do.

We are able to enter into this journey of transformation through the credible experiences of the Congregation's involvement in personal direct services and in our ability to share our stories in the wider context of the world. We are attentive to know and describe how the Gospel message of Jesus day is being expressed in the Good News stories of our day. Our witness value to Christ's presence in our lives is strongest as a Congregational witness.

The intention of this paper is to provide a reflection opportunity of what it means to animate JPIC in our everyday life. In the future there will be additional foundational information that discusses the history of JPIC, our Franciscan Spirituality, and the charism of Mother Clara, as well as some practical ways to implement JPIC.