



# NEWSBRIEF

A publication of the USG-UISG Commission for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation.

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*EDITORIAL. During the Year of Mercy Pope Francis reminds us of our call to hear the cry for justice and to respond. As Jesus commanded his disciples to give the hungry people something to eat so we are called to nourish others. This means “working to eliminate the structural causes of poverty and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as small daily acts of solidarity in meeting the real needs which we encounter ... the creation of a new mindset which thinks in terms of community and the priority of the life of all over the appropriation of goods by a few.” (Evangelii Gaudium 188).*

*In many ways the experience of COP 21 embodied these challenges. This issue of Newsbrief highlights these efforts with personal stories of JPIC Promoters who participated in the Paris event. Their sharings encourage*

*us to continue our journeys to make real the necessary changes to combat the ill effects of climate change. We are very grateful for their variety of efforts.*

**LINKS:** [Click underlined blue text to open a link or copy and paste the url on your browser window](#)

## JPIC PROMOTERS AT COP21



RSHM Sisters: (l-r) Mary Jo Mc Elroy; Veronica Brand UN NGO representative and Marie France Correau (France).

## MEMORIES OF COP 21

Every morning as we stepped off the hybrid buses that brought us to the conventions centre in le Bourget, we saw the ‘trees’ with big green leaves that generated electricity and we received a free apple (grown locally). We only saw the outside of the building where the negotiations were taking place, but when we got to the ‘green space’ there was so much to see and do (once we got through security.) There were ten rooms where there were on-going sessions on all aspects of climate change, as well as exhibition areas and food stalls and

cafes. There were often small groups who came along to demonstrate, some chanting slogans and others walking silently in prayer. I was very touched by the men from Bangladesh who came in with their pleas to save the mangrove forest written on small sheets of paper and they sang a hymn. In the sessions, there were experts on fossil fuels and representatives of the World Bank, politicians and representatives of NGO’s, but the speakers I remember best were the ‘waste pickers’ from Brazil and other South American countries, people who started recycling projects in Italy and the people who had personal experience of ‘fracking’. There were some who had been taken in by the offer of money and ended up having land that was no good for crops and seeing their children get ill. Others had resisted fracking in their State, facing imprisonment in order to save others and the earth.

There was always a warm welcome and good food when we got back to Neuilly at night. It was impressive to see how the school was so engaged with COP 21 and we were there the morning they planted a tree to commemorate their experience of the Climate Change Conference in Paris.

The day the declaration was agreed, there was a great movement on the streets of Paris. There were more than 10,000 people stretching down from the Arc de Triomphe, holding long red banners (to represent the ‘red lines’ of the negotiations). People danced with red

umbrellas and put red flowers on the ground. There were also solemn white angels and polar bears. I made friends with two French ladies who gave me a red plastic cloak to wear. We then walked to the Eiffel Tower, where more had gathered. The main theme was 'It's up to us now'. For some the declaration was 'the best chance we have'. For others it was that the agreement had been saved, but there was a long way to go before the earth would be saved. It is up to us now to put pressure on our governments, many of whom will not accept the document as legally binding. We have to be committed to save the people from small islands who are still in danger and to save the earth for future generations.—*Mary Jo McElroy, RSHM*



### MINICOP GINPARIS 2015 CONFERENCE FOR CHILDREN

Given the global importance of the United Nations Conference on Climate Change, it is essential that our children also be sensitized and educated about the factors that cause harm to our planet. Thus, the MiniCOP GINParis 2015 Conference: "Caring for our Common Home" was launched in partnership with Global Issues Network (GIN) and Marymount International School, Paris. This conference was aimed at students interested in learning about developing action plans on what and how they can best respond to the challenges facing the world as a result of climate change as a unique English medium event for children during the period of the COP21 UN Conference on Climate Change. There were about 200 kids from France and many other countries. The Conference was launched on Friday 4th December by Br. Benedict Ayodi JPIC OFM Capuchin. Benedict represented the Roman VI and the Global Catholic Climate Movement, GCCM. Benedict spoke about Pope Francis' encyclical Laudate Si and the call the Church makes to humanity to "Care for our Common Home." The participants, including parents, teachers and more than 200 students, committed themselves to climate action beginning with themselves by changing their lifestyle, living simply, reducing on unnecessary con-

sumption of things, and going green in their little ways. They said the time for empty words was over and now it's time to act to save our common home. The students sent a powerful and inspiring message to the COP21 summit that 'they care for our common home' and they demand action now.

On Thursday December 3, Children gave a communique 'Act like kids!' to the climate summit COP21, in Paris. This document was presented by three Children who participated last week at the Children's Climate Conference 2015 in Sweden. This presentation took place at the inauguration of the Young and Future Generations Day.—*Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap.*

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6TSijBldp1A>

### A DAY AT COP21 WITH SISTER TINA

Many expectations. It is the World Summit on Climate Change, attended by more than a hundred State leaders, including that of my country Paraguay. We must pay attention to the cry of our sister and common mother Earth. She is suffering, especially because its torment has consequences on the most vulnerable; the poor, marginalized, the voiceless that account for the majority of this world, of our planet Earth.

I wanted to come and share this experience with my sisters and brothers. Dominican men and women from my country were not able to come but I meet some of my compatriots.

Armed with courage, here I am. I wanted to participate and join all those who were attending the organized marches for the fratricidal attack on Friday, November 13 in Paris. A terrible experience!!

The aim of these demonstrations, expected to attract multitudes, was to call on the national and international policymakers to fulfill sustainable development agreements. What are they? Respect for our Earth, in all its dimensions calling for: an end to carbon dioxide emissions, deforestation, pollution of our waters, seas, rivers and streams, use of clean and renewable energy. Investments by public and private bodies... and all necessary action to achieve more fairness, justice and peace here on earth today.

So, one day, together with **Sr. Celestina Veloso, OP**, International Promoter for Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation—Dominican Sister International—and a member of the JPIC Commission of the UISG/USG, we went to Le Bourget, the Summit's International community site.

I will comment on how Sr. Tina, using her imagination and creativity, with discardable material audaciously designed a sort of overcoat on some paper a young boy was about to throw away, and wrote on it her protest. Right then it became the voice of the voiceless. The poor of the Brazilian area of Minas Gerais, who have been stripped from their Rio Dulce, polluted





## REFLECTIONS ON MY EXPERIENCE OF COP21



On December 9<sup>th</sup>, the last full day that we were in Paris, those of us who were a part of the Franciscan delegation to COP 21 spent the day reflecting and sharing on our experience and beginning to develop a process for sharing our experience and possible next steps with the whole Franciscan Family. In this note I just want to share with

you what struck me most about the experience.

by joint ventured mining companies: Vale and BHP Billiton at the Samarco mining site. They dumped their waste products in the river, which reached the ocean. Leaving the inhabitants who depended on the river without drinking water. This situation is still producing sadness and suffering in that area. The settlers (1,200,000 inhabitants affected in 39 municipalities) are even poorer than before. Sr. Tina was there, crying for her poor brothers, denouncing the catastrophe to all those willing to listen.

She drew people's attention. People stopped, turned around, to look, taking pictures at the poster hanging on the front and back side of her body. Some television networks filmed and interviewed her. Her message of complaint spread. Tina's was truly an admirable gesture.

I did not say anything on the almost daily 1,000 hectares of deforestation in my beloved Paraguay, or about the extended soya crops, and grassland for livestock that are killing the poor farmers' crop diversity. And even less about the attack on the health of many women who are victims of the policies of sexual and reproductive health: a clear attack against human nature and its wise laws.

Having experienced this denunciation, it will animate me to act more strongly in favor of the voiceless.

On the other side I must say it has been a great joy to share together with the small group of members of the Dominican Family who had come from far away to attend COP 21. Coordinated by Friar Mike, Permanent Delegate of the Order at the UN, we shared moments of fraternity, on our actions in favor of Justice and Peace. Even if short, these meetings have been helpful to get to know one another, create bonds of friendship and common work projects consistent with the Dominican spirit. With gratitude and acknowledgement to all. Best regards.—Imelda Martinez, Dominican Laywoman from Paraguay

For the statement made by the Dominicans at COP 21, please visit [An Eye on COP21 Paris Climate Negotiations](http://www.tricri.org/news/116-an-eye-on-cop21-paris-climate-negotiations) (<http://www.tricri.org/news/116-an-eye-on-cop21-paris-climate-negotiations>).

First of all, I spent the week with a wonderful group of Franciscans. Our core group was made up of three women from three different congregations within the Third Order Regular, from the Philippines and the United States; three members of the Third Order Secular, one from the Netherlands, one from Italy and one from France. There were OFM friars from Brazil and Ecuador, as well as Capuchins from Ecuador, India and Kenya. In addition, there were two lay women who worked for the Justice and Peace offices of the Friars Minor in Australia and the Capuchins in Detroit, Michigan, and a man who is part of the staff for the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) from the United States. Periodically during the week we were joined by Franciscans from around the world who were participating either as actual negotiators (representatives of Franciscans International) or as presenters at various sites around the city.

Second, I learned that COP 21 was not a single meeting. While most of the world was rightfully focused on the official meeting where the negotiations were taking place and the decisions were being made, there were many other parallel venues around the city, where people could go to meet with those who are deeply involved in issues of climate justice and/or who are most impacted by climate change, to hear their stories and to receive more education regarding the issues. During the week we had the opportunity to visit several of these sites.

Hearing the stories of what the warming of our planet has done to some of the most vulnerable places in the world from the mouths of those who live there touched my heart. I have heard the stories before but never from the people who are living through them. I had heard about the damage done by mining companies and how governments often turned a blind eye to the misdeeds of the companies. I had heard about land grabbing from indigenous people and the deforestation of the Amazon and Congo basins. I had heard how genetically modified seeds and agri-business were ruining the soil and the health of people in India and Africa. The difference was that this time I was hear-

ing the stories first hand, from the people who lived through them. Meeting these men and women from Peru and south central Africa and India helped me to understand, that climate justice is about much more than the ice caps melting and the oceans warming. It is, as Pope Francis says, about the marginalized and exploited people around the world. I am very happy that the leaders of nations were able to produce as strong an agreement as they did. However, I now understand that this agreement is only the beginning and that I/we must continue to work for greater care of our common home and for our most impacted brothers and sisters.

In addition to celebrating mass with one another each day before we left for the meetings, we participated in three larger prayer events. The first was at Notre Dame. It was an interfaith celebration of prayer and music with clergy and participants from many Christian denominations. The second was a Mass at which Michael Perry, the minister general of the Order of Friars minor presided in the provincial house of the French province of the Friars Minor. For this celebration we were joined by many members of the third Order secular of France and it was followed by a “pot luck” luncheon.

The third was also an interfaith experience held at the American Episcopal Cathedral in Paris. Representatives of many different religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, various branches of Christianity, Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and Universalist Unitarianism spoke of the statement of declaration that each of their respective religious bodies had published supporting the need for strong action on the part of national leaders regarding healing our common home. Many of them referenced Pope Francis and his global leadership on this issue. The service ended with a procession of some of the members of the People’s Pilgrimage who had participated in a 60-day walk from Rome to Paris in support of climate justice.

I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to participate in this experience and I strive to make the prayer of Pope

Francis, my own: “God of love, show us our place in this world as channels of your love for all the creatures of this earth, for not one of them is forgotten in your sight... The poor and the earth are crying out.” (A Christian Prayer in Union with All Creation)—*Pat McMahon, OSF*

### **FOLLOWUP FOR COP21**

Each of the signers of the agreement in Paris need to discuss the implications in their own countries in order to sign the agreement with their political authority. Fifty-five signatures are needed for the ratification. Secretary General Ban Ki Moon has set the date for the United Nations International Earth Day on April 22, 2016. Please find out what you need to do in your respective countries to support the official acceptance of this document.

For more information on the followup for COP21, please check out the following: [The Global Catholic Climate Movement \(https://catholicclimatemovement.global/\)](https://catholicclimatemovement.global/); [ourvoices.net/about.html](http://ourvoices.net/about.html)—an ecumenical faith resource; [Mongabay Environmental News \(www.mongabay.com\)](http://www.mongabay.com), which examines the impact of emerging trends in climate—[read an article that includes the Integrity of Creation Working Group \(http://news.mongabay.com/2016/01/the-paris-climate-talks-ended-in-elation-now-the-real-work-begins-say-faith-leaders/\)](http://news.mongabay.com/2016/01/the-paris-climate-talks-ended-in-elation-now-the-real-work-begins-say-faith-leaders/).

### **MINING—A PRIORITY ISSUE FOR NCR**

The Integrity of Creation Working Group (ICWG) has been contacted by the *National Catholic Reporter* (NCR), a prominent Catholic Newspaper in the USA, because they have decided that mining is a priority issue for them. At this time NCR is particularly interest in the countries of Ghana, Angola, Central America, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria and Vietnam. They are looking to make local and global connections. They are also interested in human rights and in a special way regarding the indigenous populations.

In the mining survey conducted by the ICWG, 87 participants listed they were located in specific mining areas. Although we are pursuing the contact information from the survey, we continue to seek additional contacts regarding the countries listed. Please e-mail our JPIC office at [jp-pic.cosec@lasalle.org](mailto:jp-pic.cosec@lasalle.org) if you can help address this important area.

### **ADDRESSING NEEDS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE VICTIMS IN CONFLICT AREAS**

The dialogue continues with the Embassy of the United Kingdom (UK) and the JPIC office regarding the project on the International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict. In the document we are reminded that:

“Sexual violence not only affects hundreds of thousands of women and girls, but also affects and victimizes men

### **Ways to Promote Climate Justice**

- Pray for ongoing guidance
- Reflect on *Laudato Si* and consider using a study guide and/or engage in faith sharing on this document
- Consider Inter- and intra- community collaboration
- Dialogue on every level possible
- Determine areas of focus such as our economics, extracting from the earth, and lifestyle
- Keep informed



and boys. In addition to the extreme physical and psychological trauma suffered by survivors/witnesses, sexual violence may engender and aggravate ethnic, sectarian and other divisions in communities. This engrains conflict and instability and undermines peace-building and stabilization efforts.” (Executive Summary p. 1)

Sometime in the months of February and March the UK Team will come from London to Rome to further discuss their expectations of our involvement in this effort. During this meeting we will also explore the importance of compassionate listening skill development both in regards to the victims and their significant others. Sexual abuse in conflict zones is particular horrific because of the intention is also to humiliate and devastate the population in the areas where the violence is perpetrated. Please e-mail [jplic.cosec@lasalle.org](mailto:jplic.cosec@lasalle.org) to let us know if you would be interested in participating in such a discussion. For more information, please download [International Protocol on the Documentation and Investigation of Sexual Violence in Conflict \(https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/319054/PSVI\\_protocol\\_web.pdf\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/319054/PSVI_protocol_web.pdf). This International Protocol, the first of its kind, is the product of wisdom and experience.

## ROUNDUP OF EVENTS

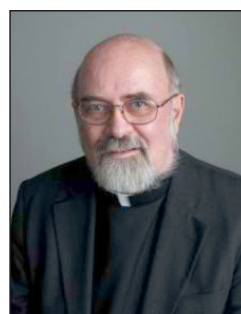


**Spanish-Portuguese Promoters feature the Care of Creation.** The focus of the Spanish-Portuguese JPIC Promoters meeting in January highlighted the close relationship between Care of Creation and the role of a Promoter. The meeting had two sessions: in the first session focused on the Care of Creation from biblical, ecological, ethical and economic point of view. The second session was a proposal of practical communitarian experiences of men and women religious working in the care of creation or working with those affected by climate change. They had a video-conference with Sr. Luz Maria of the Dominicans of the Presentation in Colombia. She works with the diocese of Tibu and ministers with the HEKS (Ecological Reintegration of Communities with Nature and Social Cohesion) Project in Catatumbo. There was also a question and answer session with Sr. Luz. The work of the Dominican Sisters with the poor in the Dominican Republic and Haiti was also discussed. The group shared with each other how

the presentation helped them to engage their congregation members in the Care of Creation. The video that was presented may be viewed at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8KyJS\\_Rt4M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8KyJS_Rt4M).



**COP21 at JPIC Promoters Meeting.** The January 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of JPIC Promoters featured Fr. Benedict Ayodi, OFM Cap. and Sr. Sheila Kinsey, FCJM who spoke about their experience at COP 21. They also provided updates on what has been happening since the Conference on Climate Change in Paris and suggested some future actions. Go to the JPIC website to download their [slide presentation \(http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a\\_92f5a8eb833e4172924daae86b-6153ff.pdf\)](http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a_92f5a8eb833e4172924daae86b-6153ff.pdf) and the “Recipe for Change” ([http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a\\_690cf0e7f1164c5ebb25a2d-52bea0b29.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a_690cf0e7f1164c5ebb25a2d-52bea0b29.pdf)), referred to in their presentation.



**Seminar on Justice and the Jubilee Year of Mercy.** The seminar sponsored by the JPIC Commission on January 23, featured Rev. Robert Schreiter, CPPS who spoke about “Pursuing Justice during the Jubilee Year of Mercy: How do Justice and Mercy Work Together?” The event was well attended by over 150 women and men religious from various congregations living in Rome. After a brief introduction on the meaning of Mercy in scripture and theology, he underscored the motivations that might have lead Pope Francis to invite the whole church to dedicate the extraordinary Jubilee Year with the Bull *Misericordiae Vultus* and its implications. The heart of his reflections was the way our commitment to justice is related to Mercy and the three dimensions of Justice through which the people of God, and in particular way those committed in ministries promoting justice, peace and integrity of creation can make visible God’s Mercy to those who live in existential peripheries of society. After his talk there was a very interesting session of comments, questions and answer which created a lot of energy and enthusiasm. [For a copy of Fr. Schreiter’s talk go to http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a\\_a2bd06552e6d4e08a-1c25e1e732ec43d.pdf](http://media.wix.com/ugd/e7a99a_a2bd06552e6d4e08a-1c25e1e732ec43d.pdf). He also suggests reading “Justice and Reconciliation” (<http://media.wix.com/ugd/>

[e7a99a\\_7702482018264178ac01f8e53a19a8ce.pdf](#)), which he presented at a JPIC Promoters conference in November 2009.

**New JPIC working group on the Family.** Fr. David Reid, SSCC the member of the congregation of Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary invites religious women and men to join a new working group. “Where did your first protest that something was not fair? If your answer is “in my family,” then you may want to discern belonging to this group! Social justice is first learned in the family and so family is a natural setting for JPIC. The recent Synod on the Family offers a great occasion on which to develop this mission of the family structure. The group will sort out the issues at stake in this discussion and then find the resources to help and interpret and apply the awaited results of the Synod. A spin off will be an appreciation of the social justice character of the marriage of a Christian”. For those interested to join the group, please contact Fr. David P. Reid: tel. +39 066617931; e-mail [daihireid@yahoo.com](mailto:daihireid@yahoo.com).

**JPIC Seminar in Ecuador.** The conference of Religious in Ecuador is inviting congregations with members in that country to participate to a seminar

**Lenten Message of Pope Francis:** “I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.” (Mt. 9:13) *The works of mercy on the road of the Jubilee.* ([https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco\\_20151004\\_messaggio-quaresima2016.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20151004_messaggio-quaresima2016.html))

#### **Intentions of the Holy Father for the month of February:**

That prisoners, especially the young, may be able to rebuild lives of dignity.

That married people who are separated may find welcome and support in the Christian community.

#### **United Nations International Observance Days in February**

**February 6:** International Day of Zero Tolerance to Female Genital Mutilation (A/RES/67/146)

**February 20:** World Day of Social Justice (A/RES/62/10)

**Errata Corrige.** In the last issue of Newsbrief, we requested prayers for the eternal rest of Sr. Susan Chia of the Religious of Good Shepherd. The place and date of her death were incorrect; she died in Singapore on October 3, 2015. We also apologize that the picture which accompanied the news is not her.

organized in Quito from February 15-19, 2016. The theme is “Experience and promotion of good relations (JPIC), with oneself, with others, with creation and with God”. The seminar will be animated by Francisco O’Conaire, OFM. It is designed specifically for consecrated women and men in Ecuador, lay people engaged in different social activities and animators of apostolate in the church. [The information in Spanish is on http://www.vidadelacer.org/index.php/noticer-2/aviso/2077-taller-de-justicia-paz-e-integridad-de-la-creacion-jpic](http://www.vidadelacer.org/index.php/noticer-2/aviso/2077-taller-de-justicia-paz-e-integridad-de-la-creacion-jpic).

### **JPIC EVENTS IN FEBRUARY 2016**

- **JPIC English Promoters Core Group Meeting:** moved to February 8, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- **JPIC Spanish-Portuguese Promoters:** Human Trafficking and Care of Creation, February 3, 9:00 am-12:00 pm at UISG.
- **Anti-Trafficking WG Meeting:** February 11, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- **JPIC English Promoters Meeting:** Facilitated by the ICR at FAO WG, February 17, 9:00 am-12:00 pm at UISG
- **Symposium on “Jesus’ Family from a Gender Perspective.”** Presentation by Mercedes Navarro, member of the Women European Association for Theological Research. Sponsored by the Collaboration of Men and Women WG: February 20, 9:30 am-12:30 pm, Aula Magna at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane. Presentation in Spanish with English and Italian translations. Donation of 5 Euro. For more information contact Patrizia Morgante at 328 0722 672 or the JPIC office at 06 6622929.
- **ICR at FAO WG Meeting:** February 23, 3:00 pm-5:00 pm at ICR office, Passionists
- **Integrity of Creation WG Meeting:** February 25, 3:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane
- **Prayer Service** at Chiesa di San Marcelo: February 26, 7:00 pm, Via del Corso
- **Forum on Laudato Si: Economics or Religion or What?”** Presentation by Louis De Thomasis, FSC, Ph.D, Chairman, Christian Brothers Investment Service-Global: Sponsored by the JPIC Commission. February 27, 9:00 am-12:00 pm, Aula John Paul II at Fratelli delle Scuole Cristiane, Via Aurelia 476, Roma. Presentation in English with Spanish and Italian translations. Donation of 5 Euro. For more information e-mail [jpigusguisg@lasalle.org](mailto:jpigusguisg@lasalle.org).
- **Stations of the Cross** at Borghese Park in the spirit of *Laudato Si*: March 20

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