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SOLAR ENERGY IN THE OFM PROVINCE OF AUSTRIA

Awareness continues to grow in our province about the need to save energy. There exist, however, different paths to the same goal, especially in regard to replacement of fossil fuels with other energy sources. While existing energy systems are efficient and comfortable, their maintenance is expensive, specially since our friaries are generally rather large. All of these issues enter into the calculations as we search for an alternative that will help us to reduce costs.

The energy issue is taken into account whenever we reconstruct or renovate one of our friaries. We continuously benefit from our experience, and have learned to better insulate our buildings. This leads to increased savings without compromising comfort.

As far as I know, only one of our friaries is completely adapted for

renewable energy sources (wood and solar energy). Various friaries use solar energy for hot water, and this is a future option for the friaries which have not yet made the changeover.

In our efforts to save energy, we have some difficulties with the government organs that care for artistic patrimony, especially in urban settings. They generally refuse permission for us to put solar panels on the roofs of our oldest friaries, and these are often our biggest friaries.

In the city of Graz we are studying a plan which can solve this problem. The project includes specialists from the University of Graz, the municipal government, the Güssing Technology Center, specialists from the Department of care of artistic patrimony, and some friars from the house. The current city government is very interested in this project, which would like to showcase our friary

as an example of alternative energy use. It is also very interesting for the friary, since it combines care for Creation with the use of modern technology. This collaborative effort is a great challenge for all involved, and might offer a model that other cities can imitate.

In some of our friaries, installation of solar panels has meant an energy savings of about one third from previous levels. But the efficiency and the savings realized in all the friaries has not been calculated and so we cannot offer precise information about our energy savings.

The friary of Maria Enzersdorf, close to Vienna, is one of the other provincial houses that offers good conditions for an energy-saving project based on use of alternative energy sources.

Severin Mayerhofer ofm

SOME JPIC ACTIVITIES IN THE IRISH PROVINCE

For the first time ever in the Irish Province, a substantial slot in the Novitiate programme has been

given to JPIC formation with three blocks of four days each in January, May and July. One

block will cover the basis for our commitment to JPIC highlighting the contexts for justice,

peace and the integrity of creation in scripture, in Franciscan spirituality & tradition and in our General Constitutions. Emphasis will be placed on the transverse nature of JPIC values in our life and ministry as friars. A little bit of JPIC methodology will also be touched on. The next two blocks will hopefully present a mixture of Catholic Social Teaching, social analysis, the core elements of Franciscan non-violence and some activity amongst the poor or exploring an environmental issue.

Given that the Secular Franciscan Order has JPIC as its theme for 2008-2009, a letter was sent from the JPIC Committee to all the fraternities in Ireland offering them help and support in explo-

ring JPIC as secular Franciscans. The response has been very positive with about ten fraternities accepting the invitation. This has also helped to initiate communication between the JPIC committee and these fraternities, links that can be built upon in the future.

Late last year the Galway Franciscan family, comprising ourselves, the secular Franciscans, the Poor Clares and the Franciscan Missionaries of Mary (FMMs) formed a working group to organise a calendar of events to celebrate the 800 years of our common existence. We are dedicating each month of the year to a different Franciscan theme with January being devoted to Peace, February to Justice, and

so on. On 7th January, 2009, we began our celebrations with a talk on "Building Peace" given by one of our own friars, Fr. Brendan Forde ofm, who has worked in volatile situations in Central and South America, and is currently working in Columbia. Some 11 friars from three different fraternities attended as well as 35 local people, mostly secular Franciscans. The talk was well received and gave many of us food for thought. The hope is that it will generate some activity to do with peacemaking. This is one form of ongoing formation that is open both to friars and to all those who are interested in Franciscan values.

Br. Cathal Duddy ofm

NEWS FROM JAPAN

The JPIC Committee in Japan now has six members, having received new members in April 2008. To participate in the ecological movement in a more concrete way, this year we produced "eco-bags" to commemorate the VIII Centenary of the foundation of the Order. We reasoned that everyone can easily participate in this activity, and that the bags will be keepsakes.

The JPIC Committee met twice in 2008 and made two proposals to the Provincial Definitory. The first proposal was to participate as a Committee in the "Peace 9" movement based on Article 9 (renunciation of war) of the Japanese Constitution. This proposal of participation as a Committee was shelved on the advice of the Definitory, who said that participation in this movement should be on an individual basis.

The second proposal was to hold an exchange meeting with JPIC Committee of the Korean Province in 2009. This proposal was approved and we have made an offer of exchange to the Korean Province. We have received a reply; they welcome the exchange and would like to share opinions on Japan-Korea issues and peace issues.

ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION PROGRAM (PEA) FRANCISCAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL CENTERS (El Salvador)

During the year 2008, the office of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation has conducted a series of theoretical and practical, ecological workshops at eight Franciscan-Inspired School Centers. There was an average of 290 participants at the workshops organized across the eight Educational Centers, 250 participants at the Ecological Fair, and 117 at

the Impact Forum of Metallic Mining and the Christian Position regarding Megaprojects.

Themes Discussed during the Workshops:

1. Global Warming, Climate Change, Deforestation, the Level of Consumerism of the country, Population Growth, Tourism, the Problem of

- Environmental Laws, Hydrate Research, Civil Protection Law, and Disaster Prevention & Mitigation.
2. Waste Management
 3. Hydrographic Basins
 4. Sustainable Water Management among others.
 5. Ecological Practices.

The Result of the PEA Formative Process

1. Confirmation of ecological groups in each one of the participating Educational Centers.
2. The total execution of the Environmental Education Program by realizing the following activities: 4 Workshops of Environmental Education, 1 Ecological Fair, Periodical Meetings with Directors of participating Educational Centers, and a Forum on the Impact of Metallic Mining and the Christian Position concerning Megaprojects.
3. Work of investigation and summary by each ecological

group of local data regarding environmental problems in each Educational Center. The main theme of investigation was Hydrographic Basins.

4. As a result of the Congress, one of the Educational Centers took the initiative to accomplish a Forum on Impacts of the Metallic Mining and the Christian Position concerning Megaprojects.
5. Coordinating with other Institutions and creating Environmentalist Organizations as initiatives of Ecological Groups.
6. Working-out Ecological Projects for each one of the participating Educational

Centers with the following themes:

- Process of raising conscious awareness with the community of Reforestation and Care of the Green Belt bordering the Institution.
- Solid Waste Management
- S.O.S. raising awareness
- Raising conscious awareness over Garbage Disposal
- Garbage as an Environmental Problem
- “Sorting and Recycling Waste”
- “Reforestation of the Jalponga River Basin”

V INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY FRANCISCAN SEMINAR

Belem is a city in the state of Para in the Brazilian Amazon. Forty two Franciscans, coming from four continents and 15 countries, met there from January 17 to February 2, 2009. They participated in the V Franciscan Solidarity Seminar, and then in the IX World Social Forum.

The program for the seminar was divided into three moments: sharing the reality of the country of each of the participants; reality visits in the region, including visits to some Amazon indigenous peoples, to areas of occupation of the MST (Landless Workers Movement), and to various social programs promoted by the Church and the Franciscans; and finally a sharing and evaluation of the experience of the visits. The evaluation also offered an opportunity to search for ways for us to work together to face the challenges imposed on all due to the crisis of neoliberal capitalism. This is especially relevant for us Franciscans, followers of someone who

allowed himself to be evangelized by the excluded, the poor, and by the challenges of his society and times.

The first moment of the seminar, the sharing of country realities, allowed participants to see that the financial crisis is much more than an economic problem. It is a structural crisis of the current capitalist model, which has imposed on the world a paradigm of domination which has attacked social relations, the system of values, the daily life of people and our relationship to the transcendent.

The experience among the indigenous people of the Amazon helped us to reflect on the history of indigenous people in Brazil. When the colonizers arrived in Brazil, there was an indigenous population of 6 million, which is now reduced to 700 thousand after the processes of colonization, Christianization and slavery. These processes led to a negation of their historic and cultural roots, to loss of their lan-

guages and their way of life, which respected the water and the earth. Various indigenous peoples are involved in the process of rediscovering their roots. We also visited an urban occupation area, where we met Solange and Ediamerico; since 2002 they have struggled, in cooperation with the MST (Landless Workers Movement) for some land where they can live and which they can cultivate. We also visited CIMI (the Indigenous Missionary Council), an organization of the Church which supports missionaries who defend the rights of the indigenous people; some of them, like Sister Dorothy Stang, have paid for this work with their lives. Dorothy showed how change happens when people involved in this struggle come together for common action in defense of their rights. This grassroots movement is creating a new paradigm for an alternative civilization.

As Franciscans we felt challenged by all we saw to contribute to the construction of this

new world. Like Francis we need to start from the grassroots, from the people, from mother Earth. It is like the dream of Francis at Spoleto, where the

weapons and projects of death were abandoned in favor of another world which was not only possible, but necessary.

This world is beginning. It is being built by men and women of courage and hope!

Gianfrancesco Sisto ofm

THE WORLD SOCIAL FORUM AND OUR FRANCISCAN PRESENCE

The 9th World Social Forum began in Belém, Pará, in the Brazilian Amazon, on January 27th, and ended on February 1st. About 120,000 people were registered participants, coming from 150 countries. The Forum was opened with a colorful and enthusiastic march of about five kilometers (three miles) through the center of Belém, in which about 100,000 took part.

There were 2,400 programmed activities offered during the Forum, including workshops presented by individual organizations or by networks of organizations, and large conferences given by well-known speakers. Issues covered economic solidarity, public policy debates, gender, equality, indigenous questions, race, land, water, human rights, children, human trafficking, and many more.

Five Latin American presidents were present at the Forum, and participated in various activities: Evo Morales of Bolivia, Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, Rafael Correa of Ecuador, Fernando Lugo of Paraguay, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva of Brazil. Among other issues, they came to discuss Latin American mechanisms to contain the impact of the world-wide economic crisis.

A significant number of Franciscans came together for the World Social Forum. Forty two members of the international family arrived ten days before the Forum to participate in the fifth Franciscan Solidarity Seminar; they came from fifteen countries and shared reflections on the reality of their countries, and sought ways to network to help strengthen our work for the poor and for the environment. The OFM JPIC Office in Rome is a co-sponsor of the seminar, together with Missionszentrale in Germany. Joe Rozansky participated from the office. Many members of the Franciscan Family of Brazil were also present, they came from throughout Brazil, but especially from the local Franciscan family around Belém.

Coordinated by the Rome Office and Missionszentrale, Franciscans offered a presentation at the Forum on the morning of January 29. It was entitled *Environmental Justice: Suffering of the Earth, Suffering of the People*. The principal speakers were Leonardo Boff and Bishop Luiz Cappio, the Franciscan who went on a hunger strike to protest the transposition of the São Francisco river in the semi-arid region of Brazil. Boff spoke about the unprecedented environmental crisis we are facing as a species and as a planet; Cappio

spoke about the responsibility of pastors to lead the Church well, and their need to know profoundly the cries of the earth and the people, and to respond to these cries. Each of the main speakers was followed by a Franciscan “witness” to the environmental injustice that is rampant in the world today. Yleana Egoávil Arnáez of Peru, an organic and traditional producer of coffee, spoke about the devastating changes that have occurred in the Peruvian Amazon in recent years; Juliana Garcia Gutierrez, a Mayan indigenous woman from Guatemala, spoke of the massacre of her tribe at the hands of the military, their resistance, and their struggle for land and for the environment. The large crowd that attended the event was also treated to a song/dance presented by one of the Brazilian indigenous peoples present at the Forum.

Participants of the World Social Forum, including the Franciscans present, recommitted themselves to working together for a better world, in the spirit of all the World Social Forums which have declared that “another world is possible”!

Joe Rozansky ofm

THE KEYS OF SAINT PETER

(A Faith-filled Reading of the Signs of the Times)

Even if it is not the greatest, I have a profession that I can practice. No, certainly not that of guard at the gates of Paradise, someone already has that job! Rather, much more modestly, I am slowly becoming a skilled locksmith. From July to the present, I have changed at least seven locks, and in one instance, three times on the same door! It is a rather pleasant pastime, and I now feel right at home in the hardware store and have gotten to know all the salespeople. The real reason for this new pastime of mine has to do with the increasing visits of a “brother thief”; it seems he has taken a liking to our house, and to my room in particular. Thus the number of discarded locks on my desk keeps getting bigger, and I am at the point of opening a small business to sell used material that is in good condition!

It seems that this friend of ours is someone from the area who knows our schedule well, knows when we will be out; this person has been able to make copies of our keys (not once, but twice!), has not once broken a lock, and has gone so far as to double lock the door for us after he has done his dirty deed! Our anguished question: who is doing this? To catch our thief, some of the friars have called for installation of a hidden video camera; great, they can put us on one of those funny TV shows where people are always running into each other! And while we wait for this small technological miracle, which will place us among the few high security Franciscan fraternities, we live in a climate of generalized suspicion. We are at the point of suspecting everyone: the cook, the teachers from the cultural center, our neighbors,

the milkman, the trash collectors and, why not, it could be one of the friars of the community who is unconsciously a kleptomaniac! At table, the issue occupies a good part of our conversation and we have all sorts of hypotheses, in the search for that one detail we have overlooked which is the key to the mystery. In this stressful climate of suspicion and strategies to defend ourselves, I remembered that which Francis said to the bishop of Assisi, who was offering Francis a piece of property for support of the friars: *“if we had property, we would also need doors and locks, and then arms to defend it...no, thank you!”*

We face an additional problem. The local youth, those who hang around on our street, are acting more and more like bullies. They more frequently make their way into our center and insult the teachers because the teachers will not allow them to bother the young ladies “in peace.” I myself have seen this attitude grow; when I arrived four years ago, these youngsters were only 14, and now they think they are the bosses of the neighborhood. Their arrogant attitude is reinforced by use of hashish in the game room located right across the street from our door! Of course, we are facing the same situation as all urban centers throughout the world. Perhaps some small villages of peasants escape these issues, but almost everyone is dealing with this uneasiness on the part of young which is found in Rio de Janeiro, Moscow, or in Cinisello Balsamo. What do we do? I think of the advice from a wise confrere: “...let’s throw them out, and if they don’t accept, we go talk to their parents. It’s the only lan-

guage they understand!” Ah yes, the language. But in this case, we are not talking about Arabic or French or Italian. Rather, we are talking about entering the world of these young people and understanding why they feel like they have been cast out of society, even before they have truly entered it! And we friars minor are also ready to toss them out, because, “if you can’t understand the good ones...” I do not have an easy answer, but I have something of a soft spot for them. Have I spoiled them by inviting them in for a drink of water, or a sandwich, or to play the guitar? Do we have nothing more to propose to them than to stay far away?

I must say that, even with the thieves and the bullies in the neighborhood, there are still many joys. So many people who wish me well. The little kids that accompany me as I come and go on Driba Street and call out for “Pedro,” and who happily give me a kiss, and do not complain when I have no candy in my pocket. And further, why should we lament our situation, why defend ourselves from that which is different, when we are already part of this communion of saints and thieves here on earth? As our former Minister General Fra Giacomo used to say: within every thief there is a potential friar, and within every friar....a potential thief! I am convinced of the message left by Christian de Chergé, a monk and martyr from Algeria:

“We will all meet again together, penitent thieves, in the big House, without bolts and locks, without possessions and without more or less legitimate interests that we need to protect.

And then the feast can begin!”

Fra Pietro (Peter) Pagliarini OFM

THE CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE OUGHT TO LISTEN TO THE POOR

Petition from Bishops and 170 Catholic Groups

Rome, December 15, 2008 (ZENIT.org). More than 80 bishops and representatives of more than 170 Catholic groups have requested that the UN Convention on Climate Change reflect the needs of the poor in developing countries.

The UN held a conference on its Climate Change Convention in Poznan, Poland, in December 2008. Participants came together to launch a world-wide campaign demanding urgent action in regard to the issue of climate change.

The Catholic campaign is being led by Caritas Internationalis (www.caritas.org), and by CIDSE (<http://www.cidse.org>), a Catholic alliance of development organizations. "The populations of the developing countries are those most affected by climate change, in spite of the fact that they are the least responsible for causing it," said René Grotenhuis, president of CIDSE. "We have a moral obligation to assure that countries receive needed financial and technical assistance to adapt to climate change and to generate better conditions of life for the people."

As part of the beginning of the campaign, more than 80 bishops from North and South sent a letter to the governments are involved in the negotiations. The letter calls for solidarity with the poor of the world, and for rapid and sustained action in regard to climate change in industrialized countries. "People in countries like Bangladesh depend completely on climate. Our agriculture and thus our entire culture are based on water, rains and rivers. With changes in the patterns of precipitation, storms are stronger and dry seasons are longer, costing lives and changing forms of subsistence," said Bishop Theotonius Gomes C.S.C., president of Caritas Bangladesh. He continued: "In recent years we have seen a rapid increase in the need for help and for emergency provision of food. It is estimated that in the next 10 years there will be 200 million climate refugees, of whom 25%, 50 million, will be from Bangladesh."

Industrialized countries are responsible for 70% of the carbon dioxide emissions since the beginning of the industrial era. Developing countries have less ability to react and are more vul-

nerable to changes in climate patterns, including catastrophic storms and other effects of climate change. "Billions of dollars are being earmarked to relieve pressure on financial markets. It is an important issue, but we cannot forget that if we do not deal with climate change now, the human and financial price we pay in future years will be on an incomprehensible scale," said René Grotenhuis.

This campaign will bring together hundreds of thousands of Catholics to pressure their governments to negotiate a socially just climate agreement after 2012. It ought to include guaranteed and sufficient support from industrialized countries for developing countries, to help them adapt to the impact of climate change. It should also include a commitment on the part of the industrialized countries to reduce by at least 30-40% emission of the gases which create the greenhouse effect, based on 1990 levels. This should be put into effect by 2020.

http://www.caritas.org/activities/climate_change/action.html

2009 Fairtrade (FT) Lenten Campaign

The JPIC Commission and JPIC Economic Justice Working Group call on their fellow religious, members of the USG/UISG in Rome, to consider the purchase of some Fairtrade products during Lent 2009 as a concrete expression of solidarity. Through this short booklet the Commission and the Economic Justice Working Group wishes to inform generalates in Rome about the Fairtrade movement, give some examples of what religious are doing and provide contact information on some Fairtrade outlets in Rome. Attached is a pdf file to read. This version **in booklet format** can be downloaded at:

<http://jpicformation.wikispaces.com/english>

Statement of the Madrid High-Level Meeting on Food Security for All

For copies in Spanish, English and French go to: <http://www.ransa2009.org/>