

JPIC Reflections

Franciscan Moments . . .

This brochure is one of a series on various themes in justice, peace and the integrity of Creation. You may read them on our JPIC section of our website: www.sbfranciscans.org.

You are invited to download them as well from this website and to use them as a way to quickly bring a Franciscan perspective to your discussion group, prayer group or social justice dialogue. We only ask that you would credit the authors of these brochures as you use this material.

**“Where is my son?”
she yells out.
The pain is
indescribable
to all of us!**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

When have you been a quiet witness to violence in your neighborhood?

ACTION:

**How might you be an instrument of peace: To yourself? To your neighbors?
To someone you fear or dislike?
To some part of the created world?**

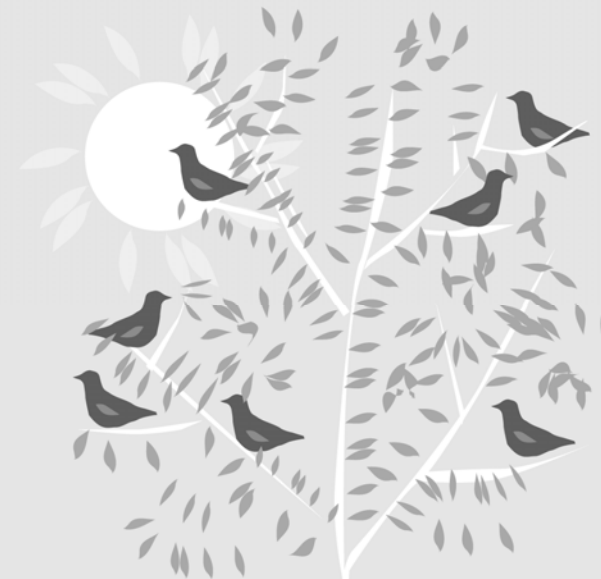
PRAYER:

Loving God, of peace and justice, be with us as we work and pray towards changing the hearts of all who use violence as a solution to life's problems. Guide us all to act responsibly to bring peace and welfare to humankind. AMEN

**Justice, Peace & the
Integrity of Creation**

Violence In Our Everyday Lives

by John Gutierrez, OFM
Brochure #112



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**PROVINCE OF
SANTA BARBARA**



Violence In Our Everyday Lives by John Gutierrez, OFM

One evening there was a stabbing victim at the Emergency Room. A young man arrives late one night. He is very strong and had been stabbed in the chest. He has been in an argument with his brother who stabbed him in their kitchen. The brother then realized that his brother needed help. Some family members started CPR and someone else called the 911.

When he arrived, he was needing help to breathe. I started his breathing assistance with a respiratory bagging. His chest was exposed from inside-out. The bagging was the only way of giving him the ability to breathe. A few moments later, he died.

I was struck trying to figure out what had happened. ---

A fight?

A stabbing?

A man dies?

And another one is in custody?

We tried very hard to save him and we were not able to save him. The body was placed in a room for the police, and his mother showed up. "Where is my son?" she yells out. The pain is indescribable for all of us. I referred her to the police and charge nurse.

This tragic event of the evening haunted me for the weeks to follow. From that evening onward, the long drives home gave me much time to reflect about the story of Cain and Abel. I felt really sad and hopeless in the face of the violence.

If I could, I would have stopped all the violence in the world. It was very good for me to be there in the Emergency Room and to be present and to bring God's presence to these folks. I could not do much to change the outcome of the evening's violence – not the mother, not the son, not the perpetrator. But my presence had some sort of witness value.

I used that whole incident as a basis for my reflections during lent and my annual personal retreat. For days I read and re-read this Cain and Able story. We all know that God asks, "Where is your brother?"

Cain's response: "Am I my brother's keeper?" The most profound line - "What have you done?" asks God! "Your brother's blood cries out to me!" That is the question for the mother Eve, for each other, and for all of us as we *face the violence in the world.*

I was always very touched by God's response to Cain. You will always be a wanderer! Everyone will want to kill me! And God says no, they won't; I will put my mark on you!

These are the ashes placed on my forehead.

Footnote:

John Gutierrez, OFM is a friar who has worked in an Emergency Room for many years. He brings his love of people to those times when pain and suffering are the dominating emotions in a crises moment.