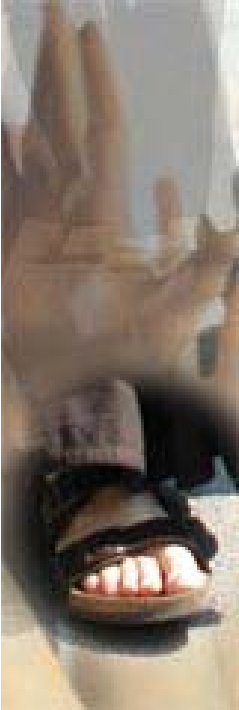


JPIC Reflections



This brochure is one of a series on various themes in justice, peace and the integrity of Creation. You may read them on 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.

Cesar Chavez: A Commitment to Non-violent Social Change by Mark Schroeder, OFM

St Francis, the Sultan and the Quest for Peace by Jack Wintz, OFM

Walking the Talk by Larry Dunphy, OFM

Peace . . . A Call From Assisi by Pope Benedict XVI

“We can’t wait for others to lead us in the renewal of the Church ...”

Ray Hardwick, SFO

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How have you been a breach mender in your neighborhood?

What has been a recent insight of yours from your breach mending experiences?

ACTION:

What have you done with a recent insight?

How might you share this insight?

PRAYER:

Almighty God, whose will it is to heal all division and discord among those who call upon the name of your Son. We thank you for the good will shown in your servant John, and we pray that we may always be ready to hear our fellow Christians with humility and a willingness to learn, and may also speak the truth in love, to the healing of faction and the renewed witness of your people; though Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in unity with the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

Justice, Peace & the
Integrity of Creation

**Bl. JOHN XXIII,
POPE,
BREACH MENDER,
SECULAR FRANCISCAN**

by Ray Hardwick, SFO

June, 2007



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PROVINCE OF
SANTA BARBARA



Bl. John XXIII: a Breach Mender, a SFO and Pope by Ray Hardwick, SFO

The power of the world uses force in its own defense. The power of God uses and used love for the salvation of humankind. There is an incident from Blessed John XXIII's life which so fully illustrates this new line of power and authority which God introduced to the world with the mystery of Bethlehem.

John was then the Patriarch of Venice. He learned that one of his priests was leading a rather irregular life and had been frequenting a place where no ecclesiastic should be seen. John could have suspended the priest from his ministry; he could have used all the force of his authority and crushed him with power. But what he did was to one day wait outside the place which the priest was accustomed to frequent. When the priest saw him, he grew pale, but John took him by the arm and, as if nothing was wrong, gently requested him to go with him to his residence. When they reached John's study he knelt down before the priest and asked him, "Please, Father, hear my confession!" And he did it with great humility and kindness.

When the priest had absolved him, John put his arm around his shoulder and said, "My son, I would like you to meditate on the marvelous gift that God has given you of forgiving men's sins, even those of your own Archbishop. May this encourage you to avoid sin as far as possible in your life out of gratitude to Christ."

We do not know what happened afterwards, nor do we need to know. But this whole incident speaks of peace, goodness and understanding, of salvation that does not humiliate, of authority that serves, of the greatest who makes himself the least in order to better reveal the image of Christ in the world.

ACTION

We are also called to be Breach Menders and peacemakers, bringers of **GOOD** News to those whose lives we touch. Good Pope John is a glowing example of what Francis desired all of his followers to be; lovers who are loyal to the Church and who call her to be the example of Christ in the world.

We can't wait for others to lead us in the renewal of the Church, but we must be leaders in bringing the love, the compassion, the forgiveness and the healing **Christ** to the special part of the world in which we live.

Such as a Cardinal speaking, during the Second Vatican Council, simply said that if, during twenty centuries of Christianity, the Church had preached as often about Christ's words, "Woe to you rich!" as it had about the primacy of Peter, Communism surely would never have existed." This prompted John XXIII to say, "**The Gospel has yet to be discovered.**" Let us seek to discover the truly radical Gospel preached by Jesus.

One last word of wisdom from Blessed John XXIII, "**See everything, overlook a great deal, correct a little. Prudent is he who can keep silent that part of the truth which may be untimely, and by not speaking it, does not spoil the truth of what he said.**"

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