

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 Nonviolent Social Change by Mark Schroeder, OFM

Cesar Chavez: Catholic Social Teaching in the Fields by Carolyn Colburn, SFO

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

Walking the Talk by Larry Dunphy, OFM

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

**"May weapons be silenced
and may hate yield to love,
offense to pardon,
and discord to unity!"**

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

How has hate yielded to love in your life?

How has offense yielded to pardon in your life?

How has discord yielded to unity in your life?

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

Peace - - -

A Call from Assisi

Reflections of
Pope Benedict XVI
on the occasion of his visit
to Assisi.

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PROVINCE OF
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Peace . . . A Call From Assisi

Pope Benedict XVI



Dear brothers and sisters,

Eight centuries ago, the city of Assisi would have found it difficult to imagine the role that providence was assigning to it, a role that has made this city well known

throughout the world, that has made it an authentic "place of the soul." An event that happened here imprinted on this city an indelible character. I am referring to the conversion of young Francis. After 25 years of an aimless and mediocre existence that was centered on seeking worldly pleasures and successes, in a moment of interior recollection, he opened himself to grace and gradually recognized in Christ the ideal for his life. My pilgrimage to Assisi today seeks to recall this event, to live its significance to the fullest.

I have stopped with particular emotion at the small church of San Damiano where Francis heard from the crucifix the directive "Go, Francis, and rebuild my church" (2 Cel 1,6,10). It was a mission that would start with the full conversion of his heart and would, in turn, become Gospel leaven handed in abundance to the Church and society.

I have visited the place in Rivotorto that, according to tradition, housed the lepers who St. Francis approached with mercy, thus beginning his penitent life. I have also visited the sanctuary of the saint's humble dwelling where he lived with the first brothers.

I have been to the Basilica of St. Clare, his "little plant," and this afternoon, after a visit to the Cathedral of Assisi, I will stop at the Porziuncola where Francis, in the shadow of Mary, directed the expansion of his fraternity and where he breathed his last. There, I will meet the youth where the young Francis was converted to Christ, and who may then also speak to the hearts of the young people.

At this moment from the Basilica of St. Francis where his mortal remains rest, I wish to make mine his prayer: "O Most High, Almighty God, good Lord, to you, praise, honor and blessing" (Brother Sun Canticle, 1). Francis of Assisi is a great teacher of our faith and our praise. When he fell in love with Jesus Christ, he found the face of God-Love; he became his passionate singer and an authentic "minstrel of God." In light of the beatitudes, we understand the meekness and humility with which he related to others, becoming a witness and agent of peace.



From this city of peace, I want to send my greetings to representatives of Christian communities and other religions who, in 1986, accepted the invitation of my venerable

predecessor to come here, to the homeland of St. Francis, for a World Day of Prayer for Peace. I consider it my duty to issue an urgent and heartfelt appeal from this place to stop all armed conflicts that are bloodying the earth. May weapons be silenced and may hate yield to love, offense to pardon, and discord to unity!

We feel here the spiritual presence of all those who weep, suffer and die at war or because of its tragic consequences in any part of the world. Our thoughts are directed in particular to the Holy Land, a place so loved by St. Francis, to Iraq, Lebanon and all the Middle East.

The populations of these places have experienced for too long the horrors of war, terrorism, blind violence, the illusion that force can solve conflicts, and the refusal to listen to the reasoning of others and do them justice. Only a responsible and sincere dialogue, sustained by the generous support of the international community will be able to end so much suffering and give new life and dignity to individuals, institutions and people.

May St. Francis, man of peace, obtain for us from the Lord, the grace of an increasing number of people who will agree to become "instruments of peace" through thousands of small gestures in their daily lives. May those who are in positions of power be motivated by a passionate love for peace, an indomitable will to obtain it, and may they choose the adequate means to reach it.

May the Holy Virgin, who the "little brother" loved with such a tender heart and to whom he sang with such inspiration, help us to discover the secret of peace in the miracle of love that took place in her womb with the incarnation of the Son of God.

ASSISI, Italy, JUNE 17, 2007 (Zenit.org).

A translation of the address Benedict XVI gave to the crowds gathered at the Basilica of St. Francis in Assisi, where the Pope led the praying of the midday Angelus.