

< JPIC NEWS PROVINCE OF ST BARBARA >

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NEWSLETTER OF THE JUSTICE, PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION OFFICE

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FAN Office is OPEN FOR Business

The **Franciscan Action Network (FAN)** formally began its mission to transform the world in the spirit of St. Francis and St. Clare on **Saturday, March 8, 2008** during the annual **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** held in Washington, DC. This movement of the ecumenical Christian community, of which **FAN** is proud sponsor, is grounded in biblical witness and our shared tradition of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. The goal of the Ecumenical Advocacy Days is to strengthen the Christian voice and to mobilize for advocacy on a wide variety of U.S. domestic and international policy issues.

Inspired by the lives of St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi and the long heritage of men and women who follow in their footsteps as present day disciples of Jesus Christ, **FAN** is designed to bring a coordinated and effective voice to matters of Justice, Peace and Care for Creation in our world. The particular focus of the **FAN's** advocacy is the U.S. Government and related Washington, DC- based institutions (e.g., World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Organization of American States...). The advocacy topics will be both international and domestic in scope. In these arenas, **FAN** hopes to bring a spirit of healing and reconciliation as they advocate for the transformation of the world, as inspired by the Spirit of God.

FAN activities are developed under the guidance of the **FAN Commission** consisting of 3 commissioners from each of the six regions plus 3 at-large members, representing the 46 different Franciscan entities which have already made a commitment to this new Franciscan voice. At our March 6 – 7 meeting, we, commissioners, reflected and planned further on the change process and social analysis needed to bring an effective Franciscan social transformation to Washington, DC and its institutions. We studied about what is needed in the realities of DC to work for a change process that flows out of Scripture and Franciscan Spirituality through non-violent advocacy.

Guided by the Commission and the four staff members of **FAN Center**, the voice for change will come from the grassroots of Franciscans and Franciscan influenced people in our ministries and contacts which come out of them. We committed ourselves to develop the network of contacts within the committed entities as well as reaching out to not-yet-committed

Franciscan entities with the hope that by October we will have 10,000 committed and registered advocates.

The strength of any network dedicated to social transformation is the people and institutions that comprise it. At present, the **Franciscan Action Network** is made up of recognized Franciscan entities (with clearly elected leadership) based in the U.S. that chose to be associated with the efforts. These entities are both Catholic and Ecumenical, representing the broad reach of the Franciscan message. These entities are congregations and provinces of religious men and religious women, regions of Franciscan seculars, and ecumenical partners, building upon Francis' spirit of crossing "borders" to join in the common invitation of God to transform the world.

We are looking for some further input from this grassroots base before selecting the issue(s) out of the three major themes of 1) peacemaking and peace-building, 2) poverty and human rights, and 3) integrity of creation to focus on initially. We tried to further develop how the three components of **Center, Commission, and membership** will work together making use of the latest of communication technology which is being set up in the Center. **FAN** was formally launched with Scriptural and Franciscan readings including FAN's vision and mission statements and its operational values forming the prayers of the faithful at an inaugural liturgy attended by several hundred people during EAD. In the coming months we, as part of the 'grassroots' of **FAN**, will be receiving invitations to participate in unfolding how these three major themes will be developed.

The **FANetwork** recognizes with sorrow the profound pain and suffering of the people of Kenya in the wake of violence following the controversy over elections in that African nation. Please take the time to download and read our letter of support, along with the other information below as we all offer our prayers of support for the Kenyan people. We hope you will find these four documents useful in sharing with members of your communities of faith to raise awareness of the terrible human costs of the violence in Kenya and what can be done to combat it.

[FAN Letter of Support to the people of Kenya \(PDF\)](#)

[Letter of Response from the Franciscan Family Association of Kenya \(PDF\)](#)

[Newsletter and Update from the Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation Office of Franciscans Africa Jan 08 \(PDF File\)](#)

[Kenya Prayer for Peace and Reconciliation from the Kenyan Conference of Catholic Bishops \(PDF\)](#)

Visit the FAN website for more information about FAN and their new projects:

<http://www.franciscanaction.org/>

Resurrection Politics

Prof Maryann Cusamano Love presented a powerful talk at the launching of the **FAN** Office in Washington DC. You can read a shorter version of her talk on the website:

<https://home.comcast.net/~michaeljkenedy/Both...And%20Archive/Resurrection%20Politics%20by%20Maryann%20Cusimano%20Love,%20America%20%20Magazine.htm>

A brief excerpt of her talk:

Today we face historic opportunities to practice what I call resurrection politics. This is a politics of life and hope, taking issues thought previously dead on arrival, raising them up onto the public agenda, reframing issues with values and powerful images, and thereby changing the political space to include those previously marginalized, by drawing on the language and symbols of faith.

You can listen to her entire presentation from the Franciscan Action website:

(Click on to watch the U-tube) :

<http://www.franciscanaction.org/Multimedia.html>

Ecumenical Advocacy Days

March 7-10 was the sixth annual assembly of **Ecumenical Advocacy Days** at Alexandria, Virginia. The theme of this year's Advocacy Days was: "Claiming a New Vision of Security." There were over 700 advocates of all age groups and ethnic and racial roots from all parts of the country and a wide range of Christian church and related institutions. Participants gathered in worship services, theological reflections, general sessions and informational workshops on problems of poverty, human rights, economic, environmental and social justice through the lens of how our US domestic and international policies affect Africa, South-Pacific, Middle-East, Latin-America, as well as the United States.

Between sessions there was opportunity to visit 100+ exhibitors to gather information about organizations working for social justice and change or to purchase books on related topics or other items produced by and for the benefit of 'marginalized' peoples. The presenters of the workshops were for the most part those who are doing grassroots action in the area of discussion. They shared information that is not generally covered in public media. All of the workshops and presentations were to prepare people for their visits with US Congress-persons.

The last day of the conference was spent on Capitol Hill visiting US Senators and US Representatives in pre-arranged appointments. The next to the last day of the conference was spent in extensive training and practicing for these visits; teaching the participants how to most effectively use this time. There was also instruction on how to continue these contacts after returning home.

The main thrust of the lobbying was to advocate for a *change in government priorities away from war to those human concerns at home and abroad which will make people to truly be and feel more secure*. The spirit of the conference was up-beat and hope filled. The **Franciscan Action Network, the OFM ESC-JPIC Committee and OFM Holy Name Province** were among the 50 some sponsors of EAD. We would recommend the conference to anyone who would like to learn more about social justice on a world-wide basis and develop advocacy skills with one's Congress-persons.

Faithful Citizenship – USCCB Website

In order to assist us as we prepare for elections in November, the **US Conference of Catholic Bishops** have approved a new website resource entitled: *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*. (www.faithfulcitizenship.org). It includes a wide range of resources for prayer and worship, educational programs, family discussions, parish social concerns and pro-life committees, diocesan planning and events, and many other groups and ministries.

The most impressive part of this website is that there are separate sections of resources and great outlines and hints for presenting materials in the parish setting, Catholic school setting, and high school setting. There is a wealth of material for any catechist, liturgist, prayer leader, youth leader, young adult advisor, chaplain, or discussion leader to use. Much of the site has materials in English and Spanish.

Public Advocacy – Reflections of a SFO

By **Tom Bellos, SFO**

For sure, to me, politics can be a dirty business, and probably always has been, but also, for sure, our father St. Francis was not afraid to speak the truth with love to power as you can read below his Letter to the Rulers and introductory Commentary.

For those of you with states that have already held national primaries, when was the last time that you have heard any politician from any party use the term "Franciscan values"? When was the last time that you heard any politician, whether local, state or national, seriously advocate her or his going "from Gospel to Life and from Life to Gospel"? Honestly, I think I never have.

We have our work cut out for us, and perhaps we may never be very politically successful in getting the values of Sts. Francis and Clare spoken seriously and reverently in the halls of local, state and national power, but we will never know until we try and until we pray ever more fervently.

As you know, at our SFO National Meeting in October 2007, we voted overwhelmingly to support FAN. We will walk and pray and work with Sisters and Brothers from the First, Second and Third Order Regulars. We will try to speak the Truth with Love in a unified, focused and prayerful voice. Please pray for your Commissioners, please pray that somehow, some way, each of us may be more successful in speaking the Truth with Love to Power at all levels of our nation's political life

"A Letter to the Rulers of the People by Saint Francis of Assisi":

The Poverello, as we learn from his early biographer, Thomas of Celano, did not hesitate to address himself directly to the rulers of the world. The First Life, 43, narrates an incident in which Emperor Otto IV passed the friars' hovel at Rivo Torto, near Assisi, on his way to Rome to be crowned by the Pope. Francis sent a friar to call out repeatedly that his glory would last only a short while. The Second Life, 200, expressed his wish that emperors would enact laws that on Christmas Day more than the usual amount of hay be given to the birds, the oxen, and the asses. He would have no fear, then, to write such a letter as this to remind rulers of their responsibility before God.

To all mayors and consuls, magistrates and rulers throughout the world, and to everyone who may receive these letters: Brother Francis, your little and despicable servant in the Lord

God, sends his wishes of health and peace to all of you.

Pause and reflect, for the day of death is approaching. I beg you, therefore, with all possible respect, not to forget the Lord or turn away from His commandments by reason of the cares and preoccupations of this world, for all those who are oblivious of Him and turn away from His commands are cursed and will be totally forgotten by Him. And when the day of death does come, everything which they think they have will be taken from them. And the wiser and more powerful they may have been in this world, so much greater will be the punishments they will endure in hell.

Therefore, I firmly advise you, my lords, to put aside all care and preoccupation and receive with joy the most holy Body and the most holy Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ in holy remembrance of Him.

And you should manifest such honor to the Lord among the people entrusted to you that every evening an announcement be made by a town crier or some other signal that praise and thanks may be given by all people to the all-powerful Lord God. And if you do not do this, know that you must render an account before the Lord your God, Jesus Christ, on the day of judgment.

Let those who keep this writing with them and observe it know that they will be blessed by the Lord God."



CATHOLIC LOBBY DAY IN SACRAMENTO

On April 22nd, **Larry Dunphy, OFM** and I joined the gathering of 700+ Catholics from throughout the state for the Catholic Lobby Day activities here

in Sacramento, CA. We began with Mass at the Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, presided by Bishop Weigand and assisted by 7 other bishops from the California Conference. Following the Mass we all processed to the main steps of the State Capitol Building for a spirited rally.

Larry and I joined the Diocese of Stockton delegation of 120 persons. With such a large group we were able to have the legislators come to us to for a few precious minutes of lobbying on four issues: health care services for elderly prisoners; immigration reform; and budgetary cuts in social services.

After some time to reflect about what happened at the lobbying session with Diocese of Stockton delegates, I came to the realization that this was the best example of a 'group' learning process I have ever participated in! The legislators or their aides came 'by appointment' to the Cathedral where all 125 of us could meet with them in four separate 20-minute-sessions throughout the afternoon. Four volunteers were chosen for each appointment. Each volunteer wrote up their own testimony and presented it to the legislator as the rest of us listened. The organizers of these four gatherings had the insight to realize that though not all of us could have the opportunity to speak, we all did have the opportunity to learn from each volunteer's speaking experience. In the time in between the legislators' appearances, the organizers gave some comments about what was good and could be better in a volunteer's presentation and arguments. With each succeeding group the quality of the presentations improved dramatically. By the fourth session, we heard powerfully personal, moving testimonies with clearly articulated recommendations and actions for the part of the legislators.

We progressed as a group from very intellectual arguments to intellectual arguments balanced with moving personal stories. Coaching for a group of 120 persons is NOT EASY! Since the participants were different at every session, you cannot say that *only a few folks* got to practice. But instead, we **all** got to practice together. I sincerely believe that **we all learned what to do next**. In many, many ways this was a cooperative learning experience. We all vicariously learned how to lobby. And most certainly, everyone in the room gained much more confidence in lobbying and practicing the fine art of advocacy.

After our full day of lobbying, the **Social Action Committee of St Francis Parish** hosted a simple meal for six parishioners and **Secular Franciscans from St Boniface Parish, San Francisco and St Elizabeth, Oakland**. During our simple meal we also shared about the various social action actions being done at each of our parishes. We're looking forward to next year and we hope that others will join us at next year's Catholic Lobby Day. (**Franklin Fong, OFM**)



JPIC WORKSHOP AT THE ANTONIANUM, ROME



Joe Rosanzky, OFM (photo), and **Vicente Felipe, OFM** co-directors of our Curia's JPIC Office hosted 30 friars and 15 laypersons from around the world for a 10-day course on JPIC. We had a variety of speakers who each presented topics ranging from: Biblical roots of commitment to Justice and Peace, perspective of Catholic Social Teaching and OFM General Constitutions, reading the signs of the times, a Franciscan view of JPIC: non-violence and the care for creation, JPIC structures in the Order and the Mission of the

provincial animator, relationship between poverty and peace, the anthropology of Gaudium et Spes, Integration of JPIC into Formation and Evangelization, basic principles of Catholic Social Teaching (universal purpose of goods, solidarity, subsidiarity, common good), conflict resolution, inter-religious perspectives from Islam, Buddhism, Hindu, conflict resolution, issues of international justice: international organizations (World Bank, IMF, World Trade Organization), trade, control of natural resources, poverty, arms trade, migrants and refugees, and a development model with environmental issues (sustainability of development and of the environment). All talks were simultaneously translated into three languages – Italian, Spanish and English.



Joining me in this JPIC course were **Shirlee Sullivan and Bob Lavelle**, both of the **Social Action Committee of St Francis Parish, Sacramento**.

The “*Ahaa*” Moment for Gorbachev

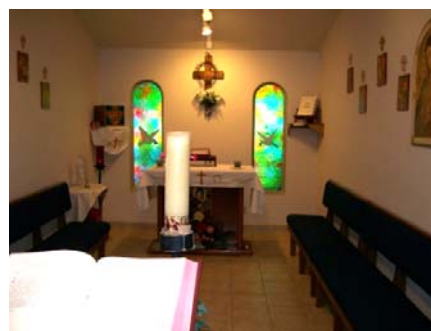
Many of us often hear about conversion stories involving political leaders. Here is some coverage on a recent trip of M. Gorbachev to Assisi that you might find interesting. Malcolm Moore is a reporter working in the UK who often reports items with an interest towards spirituality and faith development. The life of Francis continues to speak to those with ears to hear.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2008/03/19/wgorbachev119.xml>

Delano JPIC Ministry



The daily Mass community in Delano, CA have a ministry of prayer and personal witness in their time with the friars at Casa Juan Diego. This community of faithful led the way in remodeling the Portiuncula Chapel which was re-dedicated about 10 months ago. With this prayer-community's support, the



local friars are active in their parochial ministry, prison and detention ministry, hospital ministry and school chaplain ministry.

OMSB JPIC Ministry



During a recent visit in April to the **Old Mission Santa Barbara Parish**, local parishioners were actively engaged in raising money for the local outreach to the needy in the Santa Barbara region, “**Casa Esperanza**”. They shared with me their continuing support to assure the needed supplies were available at the ‘Casa’. By donations of locally made breads,

they were able to raise much needed monies for this local ministry.



About 75 parishioners and the local friars joined in a program given by **Jack Clark Robinson, OFM** on “**Franciscans, Immigrants, & America's Original Sins: Racism, Prejudice, and Xenophobia**”. This program was co-sponsored by our

JPIC Office, the English Speaking Conference JPIC Council, and the Mission Archives Library. This program was recorded and will be used as part of our ESC programs in the US.

Tucson JPIC Ministry



On March 2, 2008, **Derechos Humanos**, during their fifth annual "Corazon de Justicia Awards Dinner", gave out eleven awards in various fields of human rights and justice to members of the Tucson community. **Kat Rodriguez** presented **David Buer, OFM** (see photo) the heart-shaped award: "**Corazon de Justicia Award**" for his dedication in the struggle for justice and human rights in the Tucson community. **Kat** was a former member of our **JPIC Council**. **David** was joined by his parents and over 250 guests as he and others received awards for their contributions to Community Empowerment, Environmental, and Immigrant Rights.

Derechos Humanos has several projects that work to build solidarity and facilitate the empowerment of community: 1) educational work around abuse documentation; 2) to build coalitions with other social justice organizations and community groups; 3) to raise awareness about the human rights crisis on the U.S.- México border through the documentation of migrant deaths; and 4) to raise awareness about the environmental degradation and violations of Indigenous sovereignty and rights of mobility and passage in border communities.

You can find out more about their projects from their website:

<http://www.derechoshumanosaz.net>

