

Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

**JUSTICE, PEACE,
AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION**

COMPANION IN MISSION

Rome 2018

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Biblical

Am	Amos
Col	Colossians
Dt	Deuteronomy
Ex	Exodus
Gal	Galatians
Gn	Genesis
Is	Isaiah
Jas	James
Jer	Jeremiah
Jn	John
Lk	Luke
Lv	Leviticus
Mi	Micah
Mk	Mark
Mt	Matthew
Ps	Psalms
Pt	Peter
Rev	Revelation
Rom	Romans

Congregation

C	Constitution
CC	Constitutions
CCRR	Constitutions and Rules
CONV	Conversion, 2010 Chapter
GNOF	General Norms for Oblate Formation
JPIC	Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation
OMI	Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate
MTW	Missionaries in Today's World, 1986 Chapter
WAC	Witnessing as Apostolic Community, 1992 Chapter
R	Rule
RR	Rules

Church

AA	Apostolicam Actuositatem. Decree on the Apostolate of Laity
ALCP	Apostolic Letter to all Consecrated People
CA	Centesimus Annus
CSDC	Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church
EG	Evangelii Gaudium
EN	Evangelii Nuntiandi
GS	Gaudium et Spes
JW	Justice in the World, 1971 Synod of Bishops
LC	Libertatis Conscientia. Instruction on Christian Freedom and Liberation
LS	Laudato Si'
RM	Redemptoris Missio
RN	Rerum Novarum
SRS	Sollicitudo Rei Socialis

SUPERIOR GENERAL'S MESSAGE

In this special jubilee year of our 200th anniversary of foundation, I would like to present the OMI JPIC Companion in Mission to the entire Congregation. This OMI JPIC Companion in Mission has been a two-year project to review and update the OMI JPIC Vade Mecum of 1997, and it includes important contributions of Pope Francis relevant to the ministry of JPIC. I am grateful to the General Service of JPIC which has labored so intensively on the OMI JPIC Companion in Mission.

We, the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, are committed to the ministry of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation as an integral part of the mission to bring the good news to the poor. This ministry is an essential dimension of our missionary lives. The concern for justice, the commitment to be peacemakers and the care for the gift of God's creation are signs that the Kingdom announced by Jesus is among us. This is especially valued by Oblates and is expressed in the Biblical motto of our Congregation: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Lc 4:18-19)

It is fundamental that this OMI JPIC Companion in Mission become a basic text for all Oblates to read, study, share, and use for discerning concrete actions on behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. I ask that all our Major Superiors and local Superiors familiarize themselves with this resource and use it in fostering continuing formation for the members of our communities and with the lay people associated with us. This OMI JPIC Companion in Mission, is also a document to be used in first formation, so that from the beginning of their missionary journey, young Oblates will have a unified vision of JPIC within our missionary vocation to evangelize the poor and most abandoned.

This OMI JPIC Companion in Mission is an important tool to assist us all in discerning how to respond to concrete calls coming from the voices of the poor, the situation of the exploited, and the damage to the environment, which we encounter in the context of our ministry. Often, we still stand in need of a conversion to JPIC ministry in order to overcome a false dichotomy between questions involving justice, peace-making and protecting our environment on one hand and spiritual, ministerial, and pastoral concerns on the other hand. If we integrate these two dimensions of evangelization, we will not only be more effective in acting for justice, we will be more truly men of the Gospel, spiritually grounded, and holy. To the extent that we hold together these two facets of our lives, the fire of the Spirit will be seen among us. The OMI JPIC Companion in Mission is our Oblate guide to help us hold together these dimensions of our lives in a creative and mutually life-giving manner.

In the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy and in this Oblate Jubilee of our 200th anniversary, let us renew our commitment to the ministry of JPIC as an integral part of evangelization. Mary Immaculate, “help us to bear radiant witness to communion, service, ardent and generous faith, justice and love of the poor, that the joy of the Gospel may reach to the ends of the earth...” (Pope Francis, *Angelus*, February 14, 2016).

Your brother Oblate in Jesus Christ and Mary Immaculate,

Louis Lougen, OMI
Superior General

Rome, May 23, 2016

INTRODUCTION

Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC) Ministry is central and at the heart of our mission as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate. JPIC ministry is our way of life and our way of mission and forms an integral part of our process of Evangelization. We live in a world today that is characterized by rapid changes, both positive and negative. While there are exciting possibilities in our reality today, there are also many destructive elements.

JPIC ministry begins with seeing, to 'really see' – to have a truthful and deeper look at, to take a contemplative stance and a prophetic reading, to be able to discern in light of the values of the Gospel – what is happening in our world today, our common home. JPIC ministry assists us in analyzing the current reality with a contemplative perspective, to see more deeply the structures that generate poverty, devastation of the environment, conflict and violence, and how we might more fully make the values of the Kingdom more visible and functional. This is the reality and the world in which we as Oblates live and minister to the people.

As Oblates we look at the world through the eyes of the Crucified Savior, so that those who suffer will be strengthened with the hope of the power of the resurrection (C 4) which was the perspective and viewpoint of our Founder, St. Eugene de Mazenod. Many Oblates all over the world are working with, among and for the poor, and are therefore exercising this ministry, even though they may not use the terminology JPIC.

Therefore, this handbook OMI JPIC Companion in Mission is a re-issue, with some changes to the original wording of the Vade Mecum, a JPIC handbook which was produced by the OMI JPIC General Service in Rome in 1997. Since the 1992 Chapter, the Central Government of our Congregation has committed itself to providing Oblates with a suitable instrument to help them integrate the needs of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation in their ministry. The General Administration's internal JPIC Committee, chaired by Fr. Daniel Corijn, OMI, Vicar General, prepared the Vade Mecum.

Thus, the OMI JPIC Companion in Mission is the work and product of the OMI JPIC General Service and a wide consultation among many Oblates who are deeply involved with this type of ministry at the grass-roots, national and international levels. The General Council followed the different stages of the text and gave its final approval.

The OMI JPIC Companion in Mission booklet is intended to be a help for all Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate and associates as they seek and strive to integrate into their ministry this vital aspect of the “liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection” (C 9).

As Pope Francis states, the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet, the poorest and the excluded, who are the majority of the planet’s population, and who are often treated in international discussions as an afterthought or as collateral damage. He notes that a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor (cf. LS, 48-49).

Therefore, in this Year of Mercy and the Oblate 200th anniversary, let us be renewed and resolved in our dedication and commitment to the ministry of JPIC. May Mary Immaculate strengthen and inspire us, as she herself is a woman of justice who sang of the new world of God’s kingdom where the poor would be given their fill and find freedom as sons and daughters of God.

Your brother Oblate,

Kennedy Katongo, OMI
OMI JPIC Director

Rome, 2016.

CHAPTER I

THE WORLD TODAY: OUR COMMON HOME

We live in a world that is characterized by rapid change, both positive and negative. While there are exciting possibilities in our reality today, there are also many destructive elements. Thus, the ministry of JPIC helps us to see, to ‘really see’ and have a deeper look at the world and discern, in light of the values of the Gospel, what is happening in our society.

JPIC ministry assists us in analyzing the current reality with a contemplative perspective, to see more deeply the structures that generate poverty, devastation of the environment, conflict and violence, and how we might more fully make the values of the Kingdom more visible and functional. Pope Francis notes that, “we need only to take a frank look at the facts to see that our common home is falling into serious disrepair” (LS, 61).

1. Opportunities

There are many wonderful and positive aspects to our world today. Earth, our home, is a place of tremendous beauty and marvels, filled with life, color and variety. Human insight and scientific understanding have greatly increased our appreciation of the uniqueness of our special planet. Great progress in the areas of education, technology, health and communications enriches life and continually creates new possibilities. People and nations have grown in interdependence to the point where it is possible to speak of the world as a global village. There is a great and widespread awareness of the dignity of the human person, and a concern that human rights should always and everywhere be respected. The Church, religious congregations and many faith traditions have contributed to this consciousness, that is so clearly expressed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, and its gradual acceptance by the different countries of the world has contributed to this, as have religions and churches. There is a discern-

ible growth in social conscience, desire for community and a willingness to tackle injustice and exploitation of all kinds, even if this is not always manifest at the government level.

Other positive aspects include: the increasing effort by people everywhere to participate in the social, political and economic life of their country; the striving for democracy and an end to autocratic rule; the growing recognition of the dignity of women; the rejection of discrimination of all kinds; the concern for peace and reconciliation; the practice of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue; and a growing awareness everywhere of the need to better safeguard and respect the health of the local and planetary environments on which we all depend, coupled with the desire to find more sustainable ways of living.

This latter aspect is becoming more and more pronounced as the serious effects of human activity on the planet become more evident and substantiated. The desire to find a way to live more in tune with the rhythms of nature tightly embraces the desire for justice and peace. More and more people are coming to realize that there cannot be one without the other.

The mass media and modern means of communication – in particular, the Internet – play a tremendous role in providing information, raising awareness, stimulating creativity and breaking down barriers. They are an immense unifying factor and generate much goodwill and solidarity.

2. Challenges

There are, however, many negative aspects to our world today. Despite the progress made in understanding, scientific insight, communications and technology, seemingly intractable problems persist, and the harmful effects of human activity on the well-being of the planet have created an increasingly urgent challenge to the future of humanity. There are solutions and the know-how to address the issues exists. What is lacking, however, is the will. Pope Francis states clearly that “The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable

and integral development..." (LS, 13), which demands "a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet" (LS, 14).

It has become clear that it is not so much what we know as what we believe that will determine the future course of human life on earth. The difficulties that present themselves today represent a call to re-examine our values and to move away from the short term thinking and narrow vision that lie behind so many of the problems in the world.

In this respect, the mass media and modern means of communication have not always served us well. Bias, selective reporting, censorship, political influence, corporate ownership and lack of critical analysis all distort and reduce the quality of information. Glorification of the trivial and sensational is too often preferred to a serious reporting of the issues that matter. The mass media plays a huge role in shaping opinion from advertising to news reporting, and often panders to the more base human desires by promoting conspicuous consumption, unrealistic lifestyles and reinforcing stereotypes without offering alternatives. Tackling the problems facing humanity is difficult without good information and the free exchange of ideas.

Chief among the negative aspects of the world today is the threat to the healthy working of the global environment caused by human activity. Climate change, extinction of species, resource depletion, the destruction of natural habitats, and pollution of all kinds, threaten not just the quality of life for all today but also the future of generations to come. This is a sobering reality. We can no longer ignore, for example, the cumulative effect and consequences of emitting so-called 'greenhouse' gases into the atmosphere. One aspect of this phenomenon is that those countries with the least resources for adaptation will be most affected. Care of the planet is both an ecological and a justice issue.

We live in a world that has finite resources, yet the dominant economic paradigm operates outside of ecological realities as if resources were infinite.

In *Laudato Si'* we read: "... our attitude will be that of masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, unable to set limits on their immediate

needs” (LS, 11). There is a collision between the demand for incessant economic growth and the capacity of the planet to sustain that growth. This demand for more and more production and consumption is the dominant driver of what could be described as the widespread pauperization of the planet. There cannot be a healthy economy without a healthy planet.

Moreover, the gap between rich and poor everywhere continues to steadily grow, not just between global regions but also within countries that are considered well-developed. It is clear that the opportunities presented by development are unevenly spread. Despite the resources and knowledge at our disposal, “we have to remember that the majority of our contemporaries are barely living from day to day, with dire consequences,” writes Pope Francis in *Evangelii Gaudium* (52). “These dire consequences include poor or inadequate housing, unemployment, lack of religious freedom, lack of access to education and health services and social exclusion, making life for so many in our world today a soul-destroying struggle for survival. Pope Francis clearly states that “the deterioration of the environment and of society affects the most vulnerable people on the planet, the poorest and the excluded, who are the majority of the planet’s population, and who are often treated in international discussions as an afterthought or as collateral damage” (LS, 48-49). The encyclical notes that, “a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor” (LS, 49).

This in turn can lead to more problems: crime, violence, lack of respect for others, poor sanitation, disease, lower life expectation, loneliness, migration and the breakdown of communities and social ties.

Pope Francis continues: “Just as the commandment ‘Thou shalt not kill’ sets a clear limit in order to safeguard the value of human life, today we also have to say ‘thou shalt not’ to an economy of exclusion and inequality. Such an economy kills. How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?” (EG, 53).

The reality of the lived experience of the majority of our brothers and sisters today highlights the inadequacy of the prevailing economic ethos. "Human beings are themselves considered consumer goods to be used and then discarded. We have created a 'disposable' culture, which is now spreading. It is no longer simply about exploitation and oppression, but something new....The excluded are not the 'exploited' but the outcast, the 'leftovers'. In this context, some people continue to defend trickle-down theories which assume that economic growth, encouraged by a free market, will inevitably succeed in bringing about greater justice and inclusiveness in the world. This opinion, which has never been confirmed by the facts, expresses a crude and naïve trust in the goodness of those wielding economic power and in the sacralised workings of the prevailing economic system. Meanwhile, the excluded are still waiting" (EG, 53-54).

There are other negative elements in the situation of our world today. We can think of the millions of people on the move as migrants or refugees, with the human cost of uprooted lives as they face an uncertain future.

Drought, food insecurity, civil unrest and oppression are some of the contributing factors here to the movement of people. People-trafficking and exploitation, particularly of women, is a serious global issue. The production of armaments and their trade soak up a scandalous amount of valuable resources while providing the means for wars and violence to continue. Extreme nationalism, tribalism, racism, discrimination and fundamentalist movements challenge basic human dignity, promote division, and pose threats to peace and security. The persecution of Christians and the denial of religious freedom has also become rampant in our world today.

A lack of respect for life leads to the killing of unborn children through abortion, and of many persons through euthanasia and an indifference to the suffering of others. Corruption, lack of transparency and accountability and unfree elections affect good governance. The power of many transnational corporations, particularly in banking, the extractive industries and communications, exceeds that of many countries, and has worrying implications for democracy and account-

ability. The culture, wisdom and lifestyle of indigenous peoples everywhere is being lost at an alarming rate. Urbanization is everywhere on the increase, and the world population continues to rise with implications for energy, food security and the allocation of increasingly diminishing natural resources, such as clean water.

3. Can we remain indifferent?

When we become aware of the existing evils in our world, the question comes up: can we remain indifferent? What can be done to change all this? And who should work for change? Is it the role of the politicians only, on national and international levels? Or should the Church take a prophetic stance and be the voice of the voiceless? Need she be involved in social matters? Does she have a right to do so? And where do we, as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, fit in?

The great and rapid changes that are taking place in our world have detrimental effects on all, especially on the poorest and most abandoned. Pope Francis says, "Obstructionist attitudes, even on the part of believers, can range from denial of the problem to indifference, nonchalant resignation, or blind confidence in technical solutions. We require a new and universal solidarity" (LS, 14). As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, called to "announce the liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection" (C 9), are we convinced that promoting justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an integral element of the Church's evangelizing mission? *Laudato Si'* clearly states: "... the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology, the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value proper to each creature, the human meaning of ecology, the need for forthright and honest debate, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle" (LS, 16).

At the root of the challenges facing our world today lie questions concerning values, meaning and spirituality. It is becoming more and

more evident that the major problems of our time cannot be understood in isolation, and that they are all interconnected and interdependent. This insight is giving rise to new ways of comprehending the human presence on Earth and our place within the great web of life. Our situation demands a radical shift in our thinking, our perception and our values. In the search for a way of living that enables the flourishing of human life and that is characterized by right relationships, sustainability, respect for the human dignity of all, sensitivity to ecological realities and awareness of the sacredness of life, the Church – and the Oblates – have a crucial role to play.

This is the work of justice, peace and the integrity of creation. It is the Gospel of Jesus Christ that compels us to go out, like him, with compassion and love, to the crowds of the poor and suffering people, and to take their side.

We as missionaries are called to bear witness to the religious dimension of the human journey and to the ethical and spiritual aspects of life on our planet Earth.

Questions for reflection

As an individual, name some of the JPIC issues currently affecting our world today, our common home.

As a community, what practical and concrete steps can we take to respond to these issues?

CHAPTER II

THE FOUNDATION OF OUR MINISTRY FOR JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

After looking at the situation of today's world through the eyes of the crucified Savior (C 4), a faith reflection is necessary, taking into consideration the Biblical Tradition, the Social Teachings of the Church, Theology, and the Oblate Charism.

Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'* tells us: "Given the complexity of the ecological crisis and its multiple causes, we need to realize that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality. If we are truly concerned to develop an integral ecology capable of remedying the damage we have done, no branch of the sciences and no form of wisdom can be left out, and that includes religion and the language particular to it" (LS, 63).

What do these religious teachings have to say about a ministry for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation (JPIC)? Here are some basic elements:

1. The Old Testament

The whole Bible is centered on the double decisive happening: Creation and Salvation. Genesis tells us that, "God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good" (Gn. 1:31). "The creation accounts in the book of Genesis contain, in their own symbolic and narrative language, profound teachings about human existence and its historical reality" (LS, 66). Humankind and nature were both created in right relationship to their Creator and to each other. It was a human act of "injustice" that destroyed the balance of the original right relationship that produced happiness and fulfilment. In His goodness God promised salvation. And since that beginning God has been liberating both humankind and nature (cf. Dt. 22:4, 6; Ex 23:12).

The liberation of the Israelites from an oppressive situation in Egypt (cf. Ex. 3:7-12) and the Covenant between God and the People of Israel (cf. Ex. 19-20) are central in God's plan of Salvation.

God has thus revealed Himself as the liberator of the oppressed and the defender of the poor (cf. Ps. 72: 12-14). It is above all the prophets, like Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah, who unmask the social and political structures of Israel as abominable and sinful in God's eyes (cf. Is. 1:11-17; Jer. 22:13-17; Am. 5:10-14; Mi. 3:9-12, 6:8), and they draw the conclusions for our daily life: to live in right relationship with both our Creator and our neighbor. In *Laudato Si'* we read that, "disregard for the duty to cultivate and maintain a proper relationship with my neighbor, for whose care and custody I am responsible, ruins my relationship with my own self, with others, with God and with the earth. When all these relationships are neglected, when justice no longer dwells in the land, the Bible tells us that life itself is endangered" (LS, 70).

Our God says: "Practice justice and do good. Free the one who is wronged from his oppressor. Do no harm to the foreigner, the orphan or the widow; do them no violence, and let no innocent blood be shed here... Wretched the person who builds his house with stolen goods, its stories with injustice! Wretched the one who makes his fellowman work for nothing and refuses him a salary!" (Jer. 22:3, 13)

The Lord demands from the people faith in God and justice toward their neighbors. Only those who practice justice toward their neighbors can really know God, the liberator of the oppressed. "Do not violate the right of the foreigner, or of the orphan, or take as pledge the clothing of a widow. Remember that you were a slave in Egypt, and the Lord, your God, rescued you..." (Dt. 24:17-18)

As the Lord is just and merciful toward the oppressed and hears the cry of the poor, the same demands are made from each person and from the people of Israel as a whole. On the structural level, these demands for justice and liberation were enforced in the Jubilee Year (cf. Lv. 25: 8-19), that occurred every fifty years as a return to the original just situation concerning persons, land and debt in Israel.

The Prophet Jeremiah invites us to trust in the Lord to find renewed strength in times of trial by contemplating the all-powerful works of God: "Ah Lord God! It is you who made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you... You brought your people Israel out of the land of Egypt with signs and wonders" (Jer. 32:17, 21). For us Oblates, it is the Prophet Isaiah who inspires us just as he did with Jesus of Nazareth with his deep insight and intimacy with the Lord God: "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor..." (Is. 61:1-2). These words will be repeated by Jesus and by our Founder: "Evangelizare Pauperibus Misit Me."

2. The New Testament

Jesus of Nazareth, in his life and words, gives a new and definitive depth to the demands of the Old Testament regarding love of God and love of neighbor realized in the practice of justice as a means of salvation. The whole of humanity and Nature share a common destiny in that they are both creatures and need to be saved (cf. Rom 8). The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10: 29-37) and the Last Judgment scene (Mt. 25: 31-46) show a clear radicalization of those demands. It is the attitude and the deeds of each person toward the poor and the rejected that are decisive for salvation. One cannot love God and refuse to help one's neighbors, who are God's children. The poor have become a strategic place where our Christological encounter takes place.

"If a brother or sister is in need of clothes or food, and one of you says, 'May things go well for you; be warm and satisfied', without attending to their material needs, what good is that? Faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (Jas. 2:15-17). All people are created in God's image and likeness. All are God's children. Redemption and salvation are offered to all in and through Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ, who died and rose for all. All are thus truly brothers and sisters.

“There is no longer any difference between Jew and Greek, or between slave and free person, or between man and woman; but all of you are one in Christ Jesus.” (Gal. 3:28; cf. Gal. 6:15; Col. 3:11; Eph. 2:14-18). This is recognition of universal fraternity and a rejection of all barriers and discrimination. It is a call for profound equality between human beings and the foundation for truth, justice and solidarity.

The message of the New Testament is very clear. The central message of Jesus is the Kingdom of God with two basic relational concepts: God is “Abba” of all and all are “Brothers”.

His preaching and every personal encounter are about our relationship with God as sons and daughters and with our neighbor as brothers and sisters. If we do not do this, our offerings will not be acceptable to God: “leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering” (Mt. 5:24).

Jesus considers himself as sent to free people from every kind of evil and to relieve human misery, to proclaim good news to the poor and to free those who are oppressed (cf. Lk 4:16-21). His preaching and the “signs” he worked reveal that God is on the side of the poor. The followers of Jesus are similarly sent out to proclaim the same good news and to work for the coming of God’s Reign, a Reign of justice, reconciliation, unity, peace, joy and harmony with the whole of creation.

Saint Paul in Eph. 3:9 calls this “the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things”. It is this Kingdom of God that JPIC ministry tries to proclaim and to establish in every heart and mind, in every circumstance of life. For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17). It is the following in the footsteps of the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, that gives rebirth to Faith, Hope and Love in the hearts of people.

“Great and wonderful are your deeds, O Lord, God the Almighty! Just and true are your ways!” (Rev. 15:3).

3. The Church's Social Teaching and Experience

Over the centuries the Church has gradually developed a body of doctrine that is usually called the Catholic social teaching or the social doctrine of the Church.

This is in fact nothing else but an expression of the Church's corporate memory of what it believes, enriched by ongoing experience. The social teaching of the Church is thus not a static doctrine but has known a gradual evolution, in line also with a growing world social conscience.

The early Church Fathers spoke passionately of *ta koinonia*, the common goods of the earth. They insisted that these belong to all, and that private ownership that neglects this principle is nothing else but injustice. "Are you not a robber, you who make your own the things which you have received to distribute? That bread which you keep belongs to the hungry" (St. Basil the Great, 4th century).

In modern times Pope Leo XIII published his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1890), thus stimulating a renewed social commitment by the Church. Pope St. John XXIII insisted on "the universal destiny" of material goods and wealth, and on the necessity for an equitable distribution of the world's resources. During and after the Second Vatican Council, the Church repeatedly linked two urgent topics, viz., peace and social justice; in fact, it saw justice as the necessary condition for a stable peace within and between nations. The 1971 Bishops Synod affirmed that, "action on behalf of justice and the participation in the transformation of the world" are seen as "a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel"; the conviction that ecology, or the integrity of creation, is a full-fledged part of this concern gradually came about in the last decades. Structural change as a necessary condition for global social justice was mentioned for the first time by Pope Bl. Paul VI. And Pope St. John Paul II insisted strongly "that the social message of the Gospel must not be considered a theory, but above all else a basis and a motivation for action" (*Centesimus Annus*, 57).

Talk about social justice is thus not enough; it has to be put into practice. By the early 1970s Justice and Peace groups began working all

over the world. This movement was especially strong in Latin America, where Basic Christian Communities began reflecting on the Bible in the light of the experience of poverty. Out of this reflection, liberation theology gradually developed and matured. The Latin American bishops, in the Medellin and Puebla Conferences (1968 and 1979 respectively) confirmed this new method of Christian reflection, declaring that the Church must make a “preferential option for the poor”. Such an option has not remained a theory, but has been lived out in many places, even well beyond the boundaries of Latin America.

Missionaries have always been involved with the social and human development of the people. More recently, however, religious have tried to live their consecrated life in a new way, immersed in shantytowns and refugee camps, among people with AIDS or street children, in the struggle against apartheid, with oppressed indigenous people, or in the decayed inner cities of the industrialized North. In this way they live out their prophetic calling in Church and society.

The Social Teaching of the Church Today

The Social Teaching of the Church is a body of thought on social issues built upon attentive reflection on complex realities of human life, both in society and in the international context, in the light of faith and ecclesial tradition. It is an integral part of evangelization. The Social Teaching of the Church is made up of pronouncements and encyclicals from Popes, and from National Conferences of Bishops’ interventions on social-political issues throughout the world. The Church is obliged to speak out on issues that affect millions of people trying to overcome dire realities such as hunger, famine, literacy, chronic and endemic diseases. The first pronouncement on social matters is dated from 1890 when Pope Leo XIII issued his encyclical (RN) on the social conditions of the workers. It had a long period of gestation prepared by several social-minded Catholics who were impressed by the “social question”, that is, the ongoing poverty and exploitation of the industrial workers.

The Social Teaching of the Church does not intend to give magical solutions to concrete situations. It wishes to contribute with a set of

criteria and moral requirements that must guide the social, political and economic life in each nation facing the troubled international context.

The social teaching of the Church is an evolving theological reflection. It derives from the Church pronouncements on social issues that were under discussion at any given time in history. It provides judgments, values and guidelines. The Social Teaching of the Church aims at denouncing human rights violations, injustice and violence, especially those against the poor. The ethical aspects of life are emphasized. It judges those violations under evangelical criteria and it issues contingent judgments. Its development rests upon changing circumstances.

It seeks to respond to continually changing economic, political, technological and cultural processes. The two essential principles of the Social Teaching of the Church are (1) the dignity and inviolability of human beings and their inalienable rights; and (2) the principle of common welfare and the universal destination of goods. It is always open to interpret new realities and new problems emerging in those areas. It is, therefore, pastoral by nature rather than doctrinal.

4. A Theological Reflection

In reflecting briefly upon the reality of today's world and the salvation and liberation offered by Jesus Christ, we arrive first of all at a theology of salvation, in which salvation is not only a promise for the future but also a reality beginning already here on earth. The Lord's Spirit is given as a divine force, which already here and now builds up the new heavens and the new earth. Such integral salvation ultimately is a question of transforming human relationships through the power of the Spirit as people gradually learn to love, forgive and serve one another. This implies a "conversion" with very practical social implications. Salvation brings the whole creation back to balance, harmony and beauty. The extent of this is seen in the cosmic covenant described by Isaiah in chapter 11: "the wolf lives with the lamb, the panther lies down with the kid; calf and lion cub feed together with a little boy to lead them" (Is. 11:6).

A second theological reflection centers on the value of the human person. In an anthropological vision shaped by Christian faith, we understand that every human being is the image of God, and all that affects a human person affects God. "The biblical accounts of creation invite us to see each human being as a subject who can never be reduced to the status of an object" (LS, 81). Wherever a more humane world is built up, there God's Reign is growing; wherever a human being is disfigured, wounded or crushed, it is God who is disfigured, wounded or crushed. Jesus makes this very clear as he identifies himself with the poor and the suffering. And because every person is an image of God and a sister/brother of Christ, Christian love implies an absolute demand for justice, namely the recognition of the dignity and the rights of one's neighbor.

Another aspect of theological reflection is the relationship between creation and redemption. Creation is not simply material, profane, and therefore of no interest to God. On the contrary, creation is holy; it is the first manifestation of God's mystery, it is God's first word. "Through him all things came to be, not one thing had its being but through him" (Jn. 1:2-3). Creation is the first act of salvation history. All history is in fact salvation history, and in and through Jesus Christ, it becomes redemption history. "The ultimate destiny of the universe is in the fullness of God, which has already been attained by the risen Christ, the measure of the maturity of all things" (LS, 83). "For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and, through him, to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:19-20) (LS, 100).

Even though God is the source of creation and distinct from it, God is also present in the world. God is both transcendent and immanent. Every person is offered a share in the divine life through grace and is called to respond to God's offer. In this sense, all of creation is saved. One cannot therefore accept a separation between spiritual and temporal, between profane and sacred, between natural and supernatural, between body and soul, between Church and World. It was Bl. Pope Paul VI who wrote: "One cannot dissociate the plan of creation

from the plan of redemption. The latter touches the very concrete situations of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored" (EN, 31).

A further part of the theological reflection deals with the theology of sin. The fight against sin is in the center of the Christian life. But what is "sin"? More and more we understand sin as that which goes against life, which is death dealing. Sin is thus not purely the breaking of a law, but the destroying of relationships with God, with oneself, with the community and with nature. It is the expression of evil, hatred, jealousy or greed, the result of deliberate human choices, based on a revolt against God. It involves personal sin as well as social sin.

"Patriarch Bartholomew has spoken in particular of the need for each of us to repent of the ways we have harmed the planet, for 'inasmuch as we all generate small ecological damage,' we are called to acknowledge 'our contribution, smaller or greater, to the disfigurement and destruction of creation'. He has repeatedly stated this firmly and persuasively, challenging us to acknowledge our sins against creation: 'For human beings... to destroy the biological diversity of God's creation; for human beings to degrade the integrity of the earth by causing changes in its climate, by stripping the earth of its natural forests or destroying its wetlands; for human beings to contaminate the earth's waters, its land, its air, and its life—these are sins'. For '...to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God" (LS, 8).

Today we recognize even "structures of sin" in society. They "are rooted in personal sin, and thus always linked to the concrete acts of individuals who introduce these structures, consolidate them and make them difficult to remove. And thus they grow stronger, spread, and become the source of other sins, and so influence people's behavior" (SRS, 36). In final analysis, a theology of the Reign of God is necessary. Jesus proclaimed God's Reign and inaugurated it in his person. It "aims at transforming human relationships; it grows gradually as people slowly learn to love, forgive and serve one another." Its nature "is one of communion among all human beings, with one another, and with God." Building God's Reign means "working for lib-

eration from evil in all its forms". The Reign of God is "the manifestation and the realization of God's plan of salvation in all its fullness" (RM, 15).

A theological reflection on the reality of today's world brings us to the conclusion that action on behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an absolute demand of the Christian imperative of love, a constitutive dimension of preaching the gospel. It is the gospel itself that calls us to become involved in the transformation of the world.

5. The Oblate Charism and Spirituality

The foundational experience of the life and charism of Eugene de Mazenod was formed by his intuition of the meaning of the Cross of Jesus Christ. One Good Friday, as he looked at the Cross, he understood the meaning of the Paschal Mystery for him. He had looked for happiness everywhere else except for where its true source was to be found. From then on, his vision would be the unchanging one that we Oblates continue to express in our Rule of Life:

"Through the eyes of our crucified Savior we see the world which he redeemed with his blood, desiring that those in whom he continues to suffer will know also the power of his resurrection" (C 4).

The experience of that Good Friday enabled Eugene to understand and see himself and the world in an entirely different way. From now on, he would understand and see the world through the eyes of the Crucified Christ who, from the very beginning of creation, has been always present, as Pope Francis reminds us when he says: "In the Christian understanding of the world, the destiny of all creation is bound up with the mystery of Christ, present from the beginning: 'All things have been created through him and for him' (Col. 1:16)" (...) "One Person of the Trinity entered into the created cosmos, throwing in his lot with it, even to the cross. From the beginning of the world, but particularly through the incarnation, the mystery of Christ is at work in a hidden manner in the natural world as a whole, without thereby impinging on its autonomy" (LS, 99).

St. Eugene describes the pain and devastation of the Church at his time. Moved by such pain, Eugene decided to offer his life to work on the restoration of that Church: "The Church, that glorious inheritance purchased by Christ the Savior at the cost of his own blood, has been cruelly ravaged. This beloved Spouse of the Son of God cries terrified at the shameful defection of the children fathered by her" (Preface of CCRR).

Today we are also witnessing the cries of a "sister" (Mother Earth) suffering because of the abuse of her "brothers and sisters", as Pope Francis reminds us by saying that "This sister now cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will" (LS, 2).

The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life. This is why the earth herself, burdened and laid waste, is among the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor; she "groans in travail" (Rom. 8:22) (LS, 2).

But all is not lost, he continues: "The Creator does not abandon us; he never forsakes his loving plan or repents of having created us. Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home" (LS, 13). The trust in a God who does not forget his creation but loves it and wants to save it was what prompted St. Eugene, and continues to drive Oblates today, to ease the suffering in today's world and seek to save both, creation and humanity.

His choice of the Oblate Cross as the only distinctive sign of his missionaries indelibly marked the attitude and ministry of all who follow the charism of St. Eugene, as religious, laity or priests. It is a mission to those "in whom Jesus continues to suffer," as Constitution 5 of our Rule clarifies: "Wherever we work, our mission is especially to those people whose condition cries out for salvation and for the hope which only Jesus Christ can fully bring. These are the poor with their many faces; we give them our preference."

Eugene gave us the lead in the first recorded sermon we have after his ordination to the priesthood. Preaching, in Lent 1813, to those who were on the fringes of society in Aix en Provence – the servants, the menial laborers, the beggars – he invited them to recognize their dignity in the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus: “Let your eyes see for once beneath the rags that cover you, there is within you an immortal soul made in the image of God whom it is destined to possess one day, a soul ransomed at the price of the blood of Jesus Christ, more precious in the eyes of God than all earth’s riches, than all the kingdoms of the earth... Christians, know then your dignity.”

Choosing as his mission-statement the words with which Jesus launched his own ministry, Eugene dedicated his life to becoming the living incarnation of these words: “He has sent me to bring the Good News to the poor...” In 1816 he invited others to join him, and thus the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate came into existence, to participate in this precise missionary vision.

Mary, our Mother and Model, has accompanied us during our whole history. “In the joys and sorrows of our missionary life, we feel close to her who is the Mother of Mercy” (C 10). Her simplicity inspires us today to be poor among the poor, to “bear witness to God’s holiness and justice” (C 9). She has sustained our Faith, Love and Hope in her Son Jesus, which allows us to “preach Christ and him crucified” (cfr. 1Cor. 2:2 in C 4).

Throughout the history of the Congregation, as of the Church, the message of equality, justice and love, has been proclaimed in the name of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since the 1971 Synod of Bishops, and its document *Justice in the World* (JW), this has been seen as part and parcel of evangelization. We Oblates have integrated this vision into our 1982 Constitutions and Rules. “Action on behalf of justice, peace and integrity of creation is an integral part of evangelization” (R 9a).

On some occasions, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate have manifested concern for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation. The 1986 Chapter called upon Oblates “to be witnesses of the Good News to the world, to motivate actions in view of transforming individuals and society,

and to denounce whatever is an obstacle to the coming of the Kingdom” (Missionaries in Today’s World, 14). The 1992 Chapter, *Witnessing as Apostolic Community*, emphasized that “the credibility of our witness depends in part upon our commitment to justice” (n° 21).

For 200 years the Oblates have given their lives to reach out to those whom the structures of the Church are not effectively reaching – “on constant call to respond to the most urgent needs of the Church through various forms of witness and ministry, but especially through proclaiming the Word of God which finds its fulfilment in the celebration of the sacraments and in service to others” (C 7).

Witness and service means always being “close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their values and aspirations” (C 8). The content of our preaching is to “announce the liberating presence of Jesus Christ and the new world born in his resurrection” (C 9).

Our preaching must focus on the liberating message of the Cross with the “prophetic mission” to “hear and make heard the clamor of the voiceless” (C 9). Our Rule of Life continues to spell out that to do this, “action on behalf of justice, peace and the integrity of creation is an integral part of evangelization”.

Mary, as the first disciple of Jesus, bears witness to this in her prophetic song which proclaims God’s justice: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant...”

Questions for reflection

Concerning the foundation of JPIC Ministry, how do I describe my personal call in this area and what am I going to do about it?

What can we do as a community to satisfy our needs in this area of JPIC foundations and Oblate Spirituality?

CHAPTER III ACTION ON BEHALF OF JUSTICE, PEACE, AND INTEGRITY OF CREATION

1. Motivated by a religious missionary vision

In our JPIC ministry, as in all other ministries, we are acting as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, i.e., as religious missionaries. We are called to witness in this world of ours as consecrated persons and as apostolic communities. As consecrated persons we will act with a religious motivation and purpose, we will work for the coming of God's Reign. And as members of apostolic communities, we will opt for teamwork rather than for individual commitments. "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth." (LS, 92)

The attention to issues of Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is a dimension of all our ministries. It has to be integrated and expressed in our preaching, our catechesis, our sacramental celebrations, our presence to people, our solidarity of compassion, our lifestyle, individually and in community. It affects each and every one in his daily life and mission. Some Oblates, however, are called to animate their brothers in this important area of the apostolate and to exercise the special ministry of being present "where decisions affecting the future of the poor are being made". But "whatever their work, Oblates will collaborate, according to their vocation and by every means compatible with the Gospel, in changing all that is a cause of oppression and poverty" (R 9a).

Furthermore, as Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, our contribution is not only a matter of doing something, it is also a way of living and witnessing. Through our vow of chastity "we free ourselves for a love which reaches out to everyone and challenge the tendency to possess and use others for selfish purposes" (C 15). Through our vow of obedience we challenge the spirit of domination and we stand

“as a sign of that new world wherein persons recognize their close interdependence”, in common submission to God’s will (C 25). Through our vow of poverty we have committed ourselves to a simple life style, in solidarity with the millions of poor and marginalized people. “Such sobriety, when lived freely and consciously, is liberating. It is not a lesser life or one lived with less intensity. On the contrary, it is a way of living life to the full” (LS, 223).

2. Links between Justice and Evangelization

The world today, as already noted, is marked by serious injustices, which keep the greater part of humanity from building up and enjoying a just and fraternal world. The statistics are alarming and show tremendous inequalities in access to the earth’s resources (cf. LS, 90). Listening to the Word of God in order to better discern the divine plan for salvation, one becomes aware that the person of Jesus Christ and the liberating force of the Gospel can bring about change.

Evangelization contains a call to conversion, a call to turn away from sin, to love God and neighbor. It is the Church’s responsibility to give witness before the world of the need for love and justice contained in the Gospel message. In that sense the Church needs to act on behalf of justice and to participate in the transformation of the world. There is an essential link between Justice and Evangelization, as the 1971 Bishops Synod clearly indicated; justice is a constitutive dimension of preaching the Gospel. Also Bl. Pope Paul VI was very clear on this point: “It is impossible to accept that in evangelization one could or should ignore the importance of the problems... concerning justice, liberation, development and peace in the world” (EN, 31).

Evangelization thus not only aims at individual conversions; it has also to do with changing unjust structures, the “structures of sin”, as St. John Paul II calls them. “The recognized priority of freedom and of conversion of heart in no way eliminates the need for unjust structures to be changed. It is therefore perfectly legitimate that those who suffer oppression on the part of the wealthy or the politically powerful should take action, through morally licit means, in order to secure

structures and institutions in which their rights will be truly respected... It is therefore necessary to work simultaneously for the conversion of hearts and for the improvement of structures" (LC, 75). This is urgent, when healthy "social structures which, for a long time, shaped cultural identity and their sense of the meaning of life and community" (LS, 145) are damaged. Trying to bring about a better world only by the conversion of hearts without the transformation of unjust structures is utopian, while working for the transformation of unjust structures without the conversion of hearts is a materialistic illusion. Both are necessary to bring about justice, peace and integrity of creation.

3. An Instrument for Action: Social Analysis

Today, people are bombarded with information through the media. They are also confronted daily with all kinds of problems that have to be solved. If we are to make sense of all that information and if we want to be relevant and effective in tackling these problems, we have to seek to understand the society in which we live, to analyze it, see what forces are at work and what is causing the problems we encounter (cf. LS, 135). We have to discover the networks that exist at the heart of our everyday life, networks of power, of persons, of action groups, transforming them into "a network of solidarity and belonging. In this way, any place can turn from being a hell on earth into the setting for a dignified life" (LS, 148).

This analysis of the causes is called "social analysis". It helps to attack social evils at their roots. Without an awareness of the causes, we confine ourselves to treating symptoms. Vatican II insisted: "The cause of evils, and not merely their effects, ought to disappear" (AA, 8; cf. LS, 141).

There are various models of "social analysis". As religious missionaries we are primarily interested in Christian models. Three such Christian models are indicated here. They are: (1) "revision de vie"; (2) the pastoral cycle; (3) missionary analysis.

a) *“Revision de vie”*

This model follows strictly the “SEE-JUDGE-ACT” dynamic. It takes as starting point a precise experience in life, or a concrete situation lived by a group or a person. It describes the facts and analyses the situation. It sheds the light of God’s Word onto this reality and sees it within the context of salvation history. It calls for meditation and prayer, leading to conversion. Action then follows, which is seen as a mission in today’s world.

SEE

Objectives

- to gather the maximum amount of information
- to deepen the experience and situate it in a larger context

Gathering information

1. Describe the event, the experience - in detail: What are we talking about? What are the facts?
2. Who are the persons involved? What are they doing? What do they say? To what kind of thinking or values are they referring? What kind of interests are they defending?
3. How does the event happen? What are the different steps? What kind of forces are at play here? Who are the allies and who are the enemies?
4. And for the members of the group: What obstacles have we met? Have we committed any mistakes in strategy? What lessons do we draw from the experience?

Deepening the experience and situating it in a larger context

What does this experience or this situation reveal:

- concerning the functioning of society, and
- concerning the possibilities of action in the places of influence and on the forces that structure society?

JUDGE

This is the time

- of listening to the WORD,
- of CONVERSION
- of PRAYER

Objectives

- to receive God's Word
- to change our way of looking at things and to purify our motivations
- to meditate in prayer on the given experience and on the "calls" that it contains.

Receiving God's Word

- Go further than a superficial bringing together of the given experience or situation and a certain biblical text.
- The aim is to situate this precise commitment in the totality of the History of Salvation, in order to become aware of the value and the greatness of the responsibilities taken on. This is done through meditating on a certain biblical text; one could also refer to the liturgical year, which is the greatest actualization of the History of Salvation.

Changing our vision and purifying our motivations

- What are the "idolatrous" movements that have infiltrated our analysis of life? The desires to build one's own glory? The search for power? For revenge?

Meditating in prayer on the "calls" of the experience

Where is God sending me? What is our mission?

- so that God's name may be sanctified
- so that God's will may be done
- so that God's Reign may come

ACT

This is the moment of working on a strategy:

- What are we going to do?
- Which objectives do we want to reach?
- Which persons do we have to meet?
- What information, facts, do we need?
- What plan of action do we work out?
- Which role is each one going to play?

Finish with a Prayer to the Lord who sends us on a Mission.

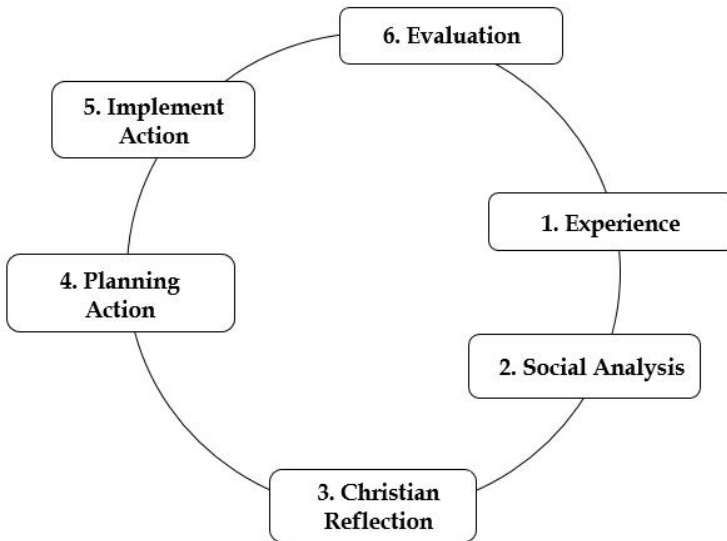
[This model is based on experience and described by Fr Jean-Pierre Caloz OMI.]

b) The pastoral cycle

This is a six-stage process of analysis, reflection and action. An evaluation of the action that has been taken makes us reflect again on our experiences in the light of the action taken, going on to identify the problems as we perceive them now after our action has, in some way or another, given birth to a new reality. And so the cycle starts again, around and around, ever deepening our analysis and always making our action more relevant and more effective. Because of this dynamic of continuity, this process is also called “the pastoral spiral”.

In **step one** we reflect on our experience and try to identify problems. This is usually relatively simple, although different people may identify different problems. After having identified several problems, come to an agreement to tackle one specific problem at the time. Choose a problem about which the group feels strongly. Take a common and current problem that is not too big to tackle. Get all the information possible about it. Look at the history – when did it begin and when did we become aware of it? Is it part of our culture or is it a tradition?

Step two is the real social analysis, that is, the analysis of the causes.



This is probably the most important stage of the process, and yet, many people are inclined to pass over it and move directly to planning an action. Sometimes the causes will be very obvious; sometimes it may be difficult to expose the real root causes. Do not hurry. Go deep. Ask why, and why, and why. The following and similar questions could be used:

a) Questions about cultural structures:

Here we examine education, mass media, cultural activities and religion, and we ask ourselves:

- What is their content?
- Who controls them?
- What influence do they have?
- What values do they transmit?

b) Questions about social structures:

Here we examine social standards and social status.

- Who gains people's support and loyalty in this situation?
- How does this happen?
- Who loses people's support and loyalty?

- What is helping to change the situation? And what is not?

c) Questions about economic structures:

- Who is growing richer from this situation?
- How do they become rich?
- Who is growing poorer from this situation?
- What are people doing to change it?

d) Questions about political structures:

- Who is gaining power from this situation?
- How do they gain power?
- Who is losing power from this situation?
- What are people doing about this situation?

In **step three** we do some Christian theological reflection. We ask ourselves what God has to say about our problem. How does the Bible, the Word of God, tackle this problem? What did the prophets have to say? What did Jesus do and say? Are there any Church documents which may enlighten us? Try to imagine what God would say if the Lord were to speak to us now about this situation. In silence, we listen for a while to God speaking in our hearts. Try to leave aside your own thoughts and feelings, but listen to the Lord. This is a moment of conversion, as we come face to face with the example of Jesus.

Afterwards, the group shares what came through in the silence. This may be a saying or a story from the Bible, a text from Church documents, an aspect of our charism, or some other symbol of faith, a song, a poem, a picture, a drama, etc. The group prays then for light and strength to do what God wants done about the problem.

Step four is planning action in order to tackle some of the identified causes of the problem. In planning an action, we have to address causes that we can do something about; we have to identify possibilities for effective action.

One way of doing this is to brainstorm for concrete and possible actions to be taken. Then the group chooses one action and plans it in detail:

Who will do what, when, where and how? It can be very helpful to role-play the action and come up with an alternative plan of action.

During **step five**, we implement the planned action. Many times, we make plans, and many times they just remain plans. Therefore, we emphasize this step, because all planning is useless if it does not, in some way or another, lead to action. Step five may take quite some time.

Step six is the evaluation of the action done, leading into a new reflection on our experience in the light of the action taken, going on to identify the problems as we see them now that our action has in some way changed the reality or changed our perception of that reality. And so we begin a new “pastoral cycle” with an ever deeper analysis and a new more relevant and effective action.

In evaluating the action, the following questions may be useful:

- What was done and what was the result?
- What were the successes? What were the failures?
- What have we learned for the future?
- What is the Lord saying to us now?
- How do we see the situation now?
- Repeat the cycle and take further action.

[This model, slightly adapted by Fr Daniel Corijn, OMI, was taken from: LUMKO INSTITUTE (Ed.) Love Your Neighbor. Christian Social Analysis, South Africa, 1989.]

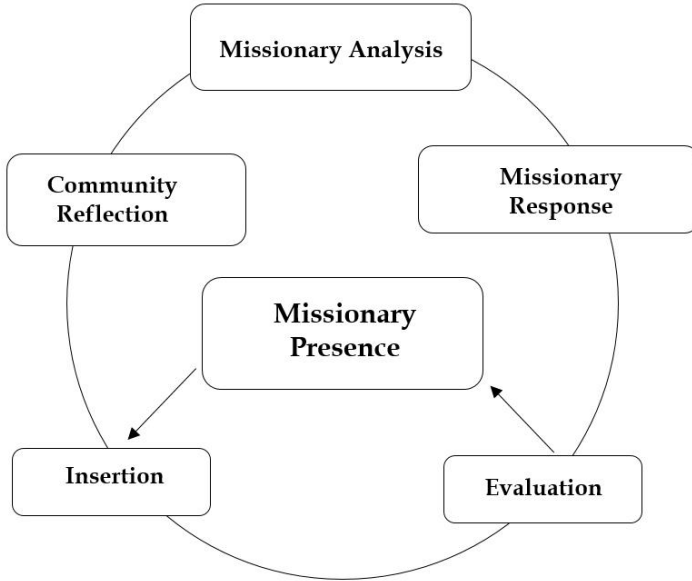
c) Missionary analysis

Here we have a method of analysis within a broad concept of a missionary praxis. This method is grounded in the reality of our missionary presence within the Church and tries to integrate elements of what is known as the pastoral cycle with elements of the Oblate charism.

Through our missionary presence we seek to hear people’s need for salvation and to be part of a response to this need, favoring the most abandoned, and the groups least touched by the Church (CC 1-5). This method of missionary analysis includes community reflection and missionary planning as two essential phases of the process.

Social analysis is best done in a group, a team, or a community. The interaction of the group members is an important element of the process.

Missionary Presence



Our missionary presence is the integrating dimension of Oblate apostolic community. It has a clear value base, an organic structuring and an interactive dynamic. It exists essentially for others. The 1992 Chapter was clear in this regard: “It is not primarily for its own sake, then, that our common life exists: it is flesh for the world” (WAC, 8).

Insertion

Our missionary presence as “flesh for the world” must be incarnated. This is a conscious experience of insertion as a way of being “close to the people” (C 8) in order to hear the call of Christ “through people’s need for salvation” (C 1) and “proclaim Christ and his Kingdom to the most abandoned” (C 5). It is more than being located somewhere or being assigned to a ministry. It is being in mission.

Community Reflection

An appropriate tool of reflection for an apostolic community is that of corporate reflection. In such a process the members function as a body, as a group of individuals within a whole. It is a way of building up a missionary presence that can get in touch with and share around the experience of insertion. This process has a number of precise steps and requires some specific attitudes.

Missionary analysis

In the process of doing a missionary analysis, situations are focused as objectively as possible; contributing factors and forces are examined; consequences are probed; interrelationships and linkages are recognized; actors, whether individuals, groups or institutions, are identified. For us as Oblates, a good starting point is to be consciously present to, with and for all the people where we find ourselves. If we are in a parish, we must see it as a window through which we see the reality of the people and a door that lets us enter into their journey in a life-giving way.

Our missionary analysis starts with a look at the local reality. What is being lived at this level? What feelings are being experienced? What insights are emerging? What calls are being heard? What are the expectations? Possible responses?

This analysis must then move to a more global level. What is the context of our insertion? What is being experienced there? What are people's needs of salvation? Why do these exist? Who are the most abandoned? Why are they in such a state? Who are those least reached by the Church? Why is this so? What is the situation of mission? Why does such a situation exist? What are the tensions, the change processes involved?

After sufficient reflection on the local and global realities, the following three steps can be completed and a summary statement prepared:

a) Focusing the situation

What is life giving and what is death dealing for the people? It is important to be concrete and to look for connections between the elements at play. This step requires an ongoing dialogue with all the persons involved.

b) Identifying the issues

What are we dealing with? We need to name the issues. Are we dealing with something at a social, a cultural, an economic, an institutional or an ecclesial level? Is it local, national or global? Is it something that already has been identified by others? How are they understanding the situation?

c) Examining contributing factors

What are the causes? What are the driving forces behind the causes? What are the linkages between the causes? This step may call for consultation and research. People working in various disciplines may be brought together to discuss the situation.

Once some kind of a summary statement is arrived at, it is good to do some theological reflection, to look at the emerging issues through the eyes of faith. There are two challenges involved. The first relates these issues to our Christian faith. What responses are we invited to give as Christians? The second relates these issues to our Oblate charism. What responses are we invited to give as missionaries? These considerations impact on our own evangelization and ongoing conversion.

Missionary Response

Our missionary response consists of missionary planning and implementation.

Missionary planning has to do with choosing the means for our mission, making choices about the future, conveying meaning to every aspect of our activity. The first step is to be clear about the mission we want to pursue with the people of a given area. There is the long range, the object of our hope; there is the short range, the object of our love. Both are to be carried out in a spirit of faith. Beyond that there is

the challenge of acquiring the necessary skills related to the planning process and of having access to the necessary resources.

Implementation is about choosing strategies that are feasible. The overall plan must be divided into specific projects with concrete lines of action. What, who, where, how, at what cost and by when, are basic questions that need to be addressed for each project. Additional factors such as the availability of appropriate leadership, clear means of accountability, and modes of collaboration, should be factored into the step of implementation.

Evaluation

Evaluation has to do with an honest, continual review of our missionary presence and activity. Is our presence authentic? Is our activity effective? It is not simply a technical review. It must take into consideration elements such as the direct or indirect impact of our presence and activity. What persons and what structures are being affected? What collaboration is being fostered? What effect is all this having on the local Oblate community? Are we living our charism in a way that attracts others? Are lay associates being integrated? Are we reaching out to youth? A grid incorporating the various calls from recent General Chapters would be helpful.

[This model has been prepared by Fr Ronald Carignan OMI]

Questions for reflection

What are some of the JPIC elements that motivate my religious missionary vision?

In my day to day experience, what links do I find between Justice and Evangelization?

In responding to JPIC issues, what are some of the Social Analysis tools or instruments that we know of?

CHAPTER IV THE JPIC DIMENSION IN FORMATION

Oblate formation “aims at the integral growth of a person and lasts a lifetime ... It involves us in an ever-renewed conversion to the Gospel” (C 47). This call to conversion, renewal and integral growth is not limited to first formation but more so for on-going formation as “the very life and future of our Congregation, indeed the success of our mission, depend in large part upon our willingness to look to our own renewal” (GNOF, 266). Constitution 69 calls and reminds us that on-going formation helps the Oblate to examine how he achieves unity between his life and his mission at all stages of his development. The formation program must consider the five pillars of Oblate formation for the good of the whole person: spiritual, human, communal, intellectual and pastoral/missionary dimensions, and all of that in the light of our charism.

The call of Pope Francis to Consecrated Religious, in his Apostolic Letter, says, “I am counting on you ‘to wake up the world’, since the distinctive sign of consecrated life is prophecy... Radical evangelical living is not only for religious: it is demanded of everyone. But religious follow the Lord in a special way, in a prophetic way.” This is the priority that is needed right now: “to be prophets who witness to how Jesus lived on this earth... a religious must never abandon prophecy” (ALCP, 2).

This implies that formation today has necessarily to be directed toward an evangelization in the fullest sense of the word, a total evangelization, of which ministry for Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation is recognized as an integral part (cf. R 9a).

In this context, a number of elements seem to be indispensable for an integrated formation of Oblates as missionaries in today’s world.

1. An attitude of profound respect for each human person

Today there is a lot of talk about human rights and it is said that it is the duty of governments to respect those basic rights. But it is also the

duty of each individual person and of all groups within society. It surely is also the duty of the Church. Today the Church understands, better than ever before, that defending human rights and care of the environment are fundamental aspects of human and Christian life.

A profound respect for the human person and the care of the environment is the basic attitude which has to be instilled and developed during the formation process. It is very important that Oblates in initial and ongoing formation become aware and develop in themselves this fundamental attitude of respect toward the whole of creation redeemed by Jesus the Savior. Pope Francis, in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*, stresses that "a true ecological approach always becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" (LS, 49). This demands each community include respect and care of the environment as an integral part of community life and mission.

2. An attitude of love for the poor

A second attitude that has to be developed during the Oblate formation process is our love for the poor. The Oblate's mission is to evangelize the "most abandoned..., the poor with their many faces" (C 5). Oblate formation therefore must foster a missionary love for the poor. It is essential that it communicates an understanding and appreciation of the mission proper to Jesus, such as He himself described it at the synagogue of Nazareth (see Lk. 4:16-30), and concretely lived it until he died on the cross. Oblate formation also communicates an understanding and appreciation of the mission to the poor as lived by St. Eugene de Mazenod and his first companions.

This love for the poor is one of our motives to vow evangelical poverty. The 1986 General Chapter insisted on this point: "We choose to be poor to enter more perfectly into communion with Jesus and the poor (C 20). We want to be close to them so as to share what they have and what we have..." (MTW, 16). "We need to strengthen the conviction that we are one single human family" (LS, 52).

Our love for the poor thus demands a real solidarity with them, which allows us to be evangelized by them. In *Missionaries in Today's World*, it is said that we Oblates, want to be near to the poor "in order that we might learn to see the Church and the world from their perspective and to see them through the eyes of the crucified Savior" (MTW, 16). Real solidarity with the poor is not spontaneous; it has to be learned and consciously accepted.

"Many of the poor live in areas particularly affected by phenomena related to warming, and their means of subsistence are largely dependent on natural reserves and eco-systemic services such as agriculture, fishing and forestry. They have no other financial activities or resources which can enable them to adapt to climate change or to face natural disasters, and their access to social services and protection is very limited. Our lack of response to these tragedies involving our brothers and sisters points to the loss of that sense of responsibility for our fellow men and women upon which all civil society is founded" (LS, 25).

If we have a true love for the poor, this will surely influence our life style: we will then live a simple life, witnessing to evangelical detachment. It happens, however, that by becoming religious or priests, we obtain a social promotion. We are then tempted to live like rich people, using money as if there were no limits to our resources. The 1992 General Chapter recommended a far more intense formation on the financial level: "Train Oblates in formation to take care for and share the material goods at their disposal and to use money wisely" (WAC, 36). Our lifestyle has to express clearly our love for the poor.

3. Being with the poor

It is not enough to have a profound respect for each human being. It is not enough to really love the poor; Oblates in formation need to experience the life of the poor and the situations of marginalization and injustice. One of the strategies to make this happen is "immersion" in poor areas. Already the 1986 Chapter stated: "We encourage Oblates to establish communities in poor areas" (MTW, 25). And again: "Our formation houses will be located, whenever possible, in

poor areas and they will be characterized by a simple lifestyle so as to provide a concrete experience of poverty” (MTW, 160). Immersion in poor areas is a very striking element of formation in Latin America. Of course, formation remains the goal; immersion in the situation of the poor is the context in which formation takes place. It stimulates a simple lifestyle, an active solidarity with the poor, a participation in their struggles for justice, a discovery of the value of work and money.

Presence to the poor may also happen through pastoral and missionary experiences in poor areas. Pastoral and missionary initiation has become an integral part of our formation programs; more and more such experiences take place in poor areas. They can be very profitable when the young Oblate is helped in his experiences through proper supervision, accompaniment, evaluation and integration.

4. Oblate formation

This OMI JPIC Companion in Mission hopes to assist formators and candidates for missionary tasks as part of Oblate Formation. It is also an important aspect of formation concerning our Lay collaborators in mission (cf. R 37a, 49d). The General Norms of Formation (GNOF) directory provides methods and concrete programs to guide Oblate Units in forming their own Oblate Formation Programs.

These can be found at the GNOF, no. 397 under the title “Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Program”. What follows is a synthesis:

a. Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Program (GNOF 13.7, 397)

Formation is a preparation for the tasks of the Mission. Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation are a non-negotiable part of the ministry of every Oblate. Our Constitutions and Rules state: “Ministry with the poor or minority groups requires an understanding of socio-economic conditions and of the social teachings of the Church” (R 69b), and asks us to be “critically aware of the integration of our life and mission at all stages of our development” (C 69) (cf EG: The Social Dimension of Evangelization, nos. 176-258; The Church’s teaching on social questions, no. 182).

b. *Pre-Novitiate* – *Exposure to those living in poverty and reflecting on the causes of injustice*

During “Come and See” sessions or at the pre-novitiate, candidates should be exposed to situations of poverty: with prayer and reflection; asking why regarding the homeless, youth with addictions, the unemployed, immigrants, and pollution. They will be accompanied in making a critical analysis of reality, seeking causes of injustice. This is a good place to become familiar with Oblates working among the poor and to begin reading the signs of the times.

c. *Novitiate* – *Systematic study of Oblate spirituality to help the novice integrate his pastoral experience and to become true disciples of Christ*

Our Constitutions and Rules, Chapter documents and Oblate history are permeated with inspiring thoughts and authentic witnesses to our option for the poor. Special study of Gospel themes related to JPIC gives the basis for understanding the mission with those living in poverty.

One discovers the need for deepening a personal and communitarian life style that is congruent with our mission with the poor. Living in right relationship, among ourselves, with all peoples, and with the whole of creation in a sustainable and reverent manner, is one of the biggest challenges we face today. For that, one needs to have a deep and integrated spirituality.

d. *Post-novitiate* – *Integrating our personal, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and pastoral lives in community*

This is a privileged moment in the life of an Oblate to do some special study in the following areas: Biblical themes such as the Exodus, the prophets, social teachings of the Church, Human Rights, non-violent social activity, conflict resolution, climate change, migration, etc.

Sharing experiences, reflecting theologically, and praying will help the Oblate to realize that concepts and words are not enough; the heart too must be engaged. A life lived in justice, peace and integrity of creation cannot be imposed on anyone; it must emerge from within the person out of his concern and love for the poor, the marginalized,

and the oppressed. Weekend and summer pastoral experiences, and the year of regency / internship are all opportunities to exploit and deepen one's knowledge and experience of JPIC ministry. All of this is reinforced by *Gaudium et Spes* from Vatican Council II and, more recently, by *Evangelii Gaudium* of Pope Francis. Here our model is Jesus Christ who was present to the poor whom he welcomed and defended. This requires a deep spiritual life in proximity to the lives of the poor.

e. Ongoing formation – From indifference to a new mentality

The first five years of priesthood and onwards are critical for passing from ignorance to indifference to a new mentality and engagement to embrace the poor of today.

This is when conversion of the heart will push for conversion of the feet which will result in conversion of the “eyes” (to see) and head (attitudes) and heart (compassion), giving courage to the tongue (to speak) and the hand (to act).

Once that conversion begins to happen, one will realize that one is before a huge web, not knowing how and where to begin. The Oblate will also see structures that seem complex and unchangeable. It is here that one must enlarge the discernment, seek alliances and ways to act in solidarity with the poor and with people of good will, learning together the tools of analysis and courses of action.

Analysis should lead one to make a judgment and take a decision in the light of the Gospel, in communion with the Church and with the community. These are not once and for all decisions; they are steps, actions we have to reassess and modify constantly. Continuing to discern our lifestyle is a life-long endeavor: to be concerned with promoting sustainable development, promoting a natural ecology that is both spiritual and social; to develop an economy of the use of our goods, in solidarity with the poor.

But the heart must be free: one working for JPIC does not carry the injustices of the world on his shoulders. God has a Master Plan, a design of salvation that is unfolding. One must “denounce evil” but never at the expense of others, as we are all equally loved by God. And one

becomes credible only if one is ready to “renounce” within oneself what is not just and true. Working for JPIC requires personal integrity, deep humility, selfless motives, single-minded purpose, and deep faith, “even willing to give up their lives if need be” (Preface of Constitutions and Rules)! One needs a deep spirituality, to be a contemplative, to do the work of JPIC.

f. Concrete suggestions for all phases of formation

- to set up an interdisciplinary approach with representatives from the various General Committees (Formation, JPIC, Finance, Brothers) (cf. R 49e);
- to plan the entire formative process in an integrated way;
- joint efforts to promote awareness and develop animation programs at each level of formation, and in the personal and communal life of Oblates;
- to plan, prepare and evaluate programs and projects;
- to provide systemic formation and commit ourselves to the values and spirituality that must accompany us at all levels of formation and of our lives;
- to respond in a concrete way to the challenges of the world we live in today, according to our Oblate charism and spirituality;
- to see how JPIC can become an integral part of evangelization in the ministerial work of the majority of Oblates: parishes, formation, etc.;
- To prepare Oblates for specialized ministry through academic programs such as Political Science, Public Policy, International Relations, Conflict Resolution, Peace, International law, Human Rights and Development.

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church is an excellent tool for JPIC ministry and formation. It has to be integrated into our Oblate formation program. Pope Francis has expanded the Social Doctrine of the Church with *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si'*, putting them at the heart of evangelization.

5. Social analysis

In order to be able to apply the social teaching of the Church to a concrete situation, it is necessary to know that situation thoroughly. Social analysis is a useful tool in order to come to grips with the local and universal situation. It opens our eyes to understand why things are the way they are. It makes us aware that there are people who work for changing unjust structures, people who feel responsible to work for a better world with the help of all existing resources put together.

Experience teaches that we cannot presume that young seminarians, when they enter the seminary or the novitiate, know in depth the social, economic, political situation of their country and of the world. They have gradually to learn how society works, and in this learning process, they have to be helped by experts in the field. Becoming acquainted with instruments of analysis, they will understand more clearly how the social, economic and political power structure of society is established and maintained. There are various models of social analysis that all have some value. For Christians it is important to verify our analysis, asking what God's plan for society might be. During the formation years, seminarians should get acquainted especially with forms of Christian social analysis.

It is especially important that, in the course of academic preparation for religious life and ministry, the social doctrine of the Church necessarily be included in the regular course of studies, and, if it is not, then those responsible for guiding the formation process need to find other ways and means of assuring a good preparation in this area.

Questions for reflection

Do you know what JPIC experiences there are in the formation houses of your Unit?

What have you read or studied on JPIC recently?

CHAPTER V ANIMATION PROGRAM

Action in favor of justice, peace and integrity of creation is required today more than ever, as an integral part of the Church's evangelizing mission and of our Oblate charism. No doubt, many Oblates are involved in JPIC actions, without perhaps describing them as such. We can only encourage these Oblates to continue in that direction. The program outlined in this chapter is intended to help, in a more systematic way, the animation of the Congregation on the level of ministry for "Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation". The purpose of such animation is to reach the local level, where JPIC ministry is exercised in the name of the community.

1. Objectives

a. Objectives situated on the level of basic aims and purposes

- i. That Oblates and their collaborators have an overall view, and an ever deeper knowledge, of the Church's social teaching;
- ii. That JPIC ministry be more and more integrated into every form of Oblate pastoral ministry; that it be truly part of our missionary identity, according to the requirements of our own charism;
- iii. That Oblates and their collaborators be in fact engaged in networks that strive by non-violent means to promote more justice through the transformation of structures on local, national and international levels.

b. Objectives situated on the level of formation

That Oblates and their collaborators be enabled

- i. To look at the world;
 - 1) With the eyes of the compassionate Jesus;
 - 2) With the eyes of someone who reads reality critically (social analysis);
- ii. To understand the link between Evangelization and Justice;
- iii. To understand the link between structures and injustice;

- iv. To understand ministry for justice, peace and integrity of creation as one of the constitutive elements of our Oblate charism.

c. Objectives situated on the level of action

- i. That individual Oblates act in accordance with the above mentioned principles;
- ii. That Oblate communities take these principles into consideration when elaborating their missionary project;
- iii. That each Province, Delegation and Mission establish a JPIC Committee;
- iv. That each Oblate Region establish a JPIC network for the Region;
- v. That, on a Congregation-wide level, a proper JPIC Network be operative.

Questions for reflection

Do I agree with the Objectives?

Which one challenges me the most?

How can we as a community put them into practice?

2. Animation for Action

Our activity in favor of justice, peace and integrity of creation is rooted in, and draws its dynamism from, the dignity of the human person, as well as from the hope that the Gospel brings; both of these dimensions are to be perceived through the lens of our own Oblate charism.

a. Elements of Strategy

- i. Recourse to several types of activity: information, conscientization, prayer, immersion, changing life style, finances in relation to the requirements of JPIC;
- ii. Realism in action: undertake what is feasible;
- iii. Action adapted to the different groups to be animated;
- iv. Use of an understandable language with an evangelical flavor: ministry in terms of caring for suffering people, ministry of compassion, ministry of (local and/or international) solidarity, making human life more fully human.

b. Animation

i. For those already engaged in JPIC ministry:

1. That they be encouraged to continue this work;
2. That they be invited to integrate more and more the aspects of the Oblate charism into their activity in favor of justice, peace and integrity of creation;
3. That they be invited to share their vision and experiences with other interested Oblates.

ii. For other Oblates

1. That sessions be organized at the level of a Province or an area wherein would be treated the theology and spirituality that are at the basis of social commitment;
2. That Oblate newsletters/reviews carry items concerning JPIC ministry.

iii. For Oblates in first formation

1. That the social doctrine of the Church be thoroughly studied;
2. That concrete experiences of JPIC ministry be integrated into the formation programs;
3. That immersion in the world of the poor be encouraged;
4. That responsible stewardship and use of material goods be promoted; and,
5. That efforts be made toward a simple life style (cf. LS, 224).

iv. For lay people

For the lay people, taking into account our Chapter call (CONV, 5 C) as well as the OMI JPIC priorities, we are committed:

- 1) To always be close to the people with whom we work, taking into account their values and aspirations (cf. C 8).
- 2) To seek out new ways for the Word of God to reach their hearts often calls for daring; to present Gospel demands in all clarity should never intimidate us. Awareness of our own shortcomings humble us, God's power makes us confident as we strive to bring all people – especially the poor – to full consciousness of their dignity as human beings and as sons and daughters of God (C 8).

- 3) That with them, we recognize ourselves as being God's people, belonging to Jesus' family, called to be light and salt (cf. Jer. 31:33, Mk. 9:50; 1 Pt. 2:9f; Mt. 5:13-16; LS, 84); "Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other" (LS, 86).
- 4) To encourage them to be politically involved for the common good in a spirit of service, developing justice (cf. Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, No. 66), because "injustice is not invincible" (LS, 74);
- 5) To support them to develop their own talents and charisms; starting with first formation, we should be open to learn with them, and let us be inspired by their examples (cf. R 7f);
- 6) That the concrete experiences in joint projects (parishes, schools, other and innovative ministries) in different parts of the world may strengthen us in the common concern for the building of a better world; those projects, always must be realized in dialogue and with transparency (EG, 183; cf. LS, 182).

v. For those responsible for Oblate finances

- 1) That Provinces/Delegations engage themselves in financial planning that involves a conscious effort for justice;
- 2) That their financial reports manifest the degree to which concern for justice forms a part of their administration of temporal goods;
- 3) That particular attention be given to placing our investments so that they do not favor enterprises that exploit people but rather are, in some way, of benefit to the poor (cf. R 150b);
- 4) That attention be given, by individual Oblates and by Provinces/Delegations, to the cost of their life style, in comparison with that of ordinary people in their milieu.

Questions for reflection

What would you like to propose for your community to be more coherent in JPIC aspects?

Whom would you like to invite (politician, religious, academic) for your community (district) meeting?

OMI JPIC CONGREGATIONAL PRIORITIES

These four Priorities were first developed in 2009 and were revised in 2012 following a process of both consultation and discernment by the Central Government and the OMI JPIC General Service. This process took into account: the 2010 Chapter mandate “to develop fresh animation for mission and for discerning new missionary strategies and major missionary challenges...” (Conversion in our Oblate Mission n° 1, p. 24), the Church’s universal call for a New Evangelization, expressed in the Propositions of the 2012 Synod to address the challenges of our time (n° 13-16, 19, 21 and 24), and our own Oblate Charism, expressed in the first 10 Constitutions and Rules, to evangelize the poor, discovering with them who Christ is.

It is also very clear that these priorities are ad intra: Witnessing Jesus Christ faithfully through our Oblate Charism demands that we put these priorities into practice first in our own Oblate Community Life. And ad extra: The way we organize our community is our first missionary commitment in witnessing and building the Kingdom of God, preached by Jesus, as the Good News for all Creation, all men and women.

Human Rights

We commit ourselves to work especially in promoting the rights of all people, as individuals and as communities, with special emphasis on Indigenous Peoples and Migrants. We commit ourselves so that all peoples should be respected in their right to life from conception to life’s natural end, and to have access to basic human needs as well as the right to enjoy the free exercise of civic, political, social, religious and cultural rights, and to have a healthy community to live in.

Peace and Reconciliation

We should be attentive to include in the initial and ongoing Oblate Formation curriculum the specific training in the area of conflict resolution and reconciliation at the social, religious and political levels,

for instance between ethnic groups. This training should also include the breach that has been identified and recognized between humankind and the earth in various and sundry situations and contexts.

The OMI JPIC Committee should create a team of Oblates and laity that could be assembled to be a resource for Oblates and others for the work of reconciliation, especially in zones of conflict where Oblates are working.

Ecological and Economic Sustainability

We commit ourselves to an integral relationship between humanity and nature as gifts of God, and protection of the environment and commitment to ecology. We will work to establish local economies that are economically viable, environmentally sound, socially responsible, as well as practice ethical and responsible investing.

Education and Formation

We are committed to the promotion of basic literacy and education as a fundamental right, and the need to empower people in their search for greater dignity and opportunities. We believe that preparation and updating for this dimension of our mission should be included in all of our formation programs. This includes the different stages of initial formation, ongoing formation, and leadership training programs that are planned at different levels of the congregation.

We act so that lay people and Oblates together assume responsibility for our mission. Catholic Social Teaching and JPIC training needs to be an integral part of our formation programs for Oblates and the laity.

APPENDIX I

GENERAL NORMS FOR OBLATE FORMATION (GNOF)

The following is taken from the *General Norms for Oblate Formation* (GNOF), p. 140-143 (N° 397).

397. Formation is a preparation for the tasks of the Mission. Justice and Peace and Integrity of Creation is a non-negotiable part of the ministry of every Oblate, (Acts 33rd General Chapter 1998, no. 16). Our Constitutions and Rules state, “Ministry with the poor or minority groups requires an understanding of socio-economic conditions and of the social teachings of the Church” (R 69b) and asks us to be “critically aware of the integration of our life and mission at all stages of our development” (C 69).

Pre-novitiate – *Exposure to poverty, reflecting on injustice*

During Come and See sessions or at the pre-novitiate, candidates should be exposed to situations of poverty. With prayer and reflection this allows them to see situations of poverty or injustice or, if poverty is familiar, to see it in a different way. They would be invited to ask why? Reflecting on the situation of homeless youth, unemployed persons, of immigrants, or pollution allows one to begin making a critical analysis of reality, seeking causes of injustice. This is a good place to become familiar with the Oblates working among the poor and to begin reading the signs of the times.

Novitiate – *Study, experience and spirituality to become a true disciple of Christ*

Constitutions and Rules, Chapters, and the history of the Oblates are permeated with inspiring thoughts and inspiring witnesses about Oblate mission to “the most abandoned”. Special study of those that deal with JPIC, along with Chapter documents, gives the basis for our option to the poor. Studying the vow of poverty, one discovers the need of deepening a personal and community life style that is congruent

with our mission to the poor. In community life we accept responsibility for one another.

Living in right relationship among ourselves, with all peoples and with the whole of creation in a sustainable and reverent manner is one of the biggest challenges we face today. For that, one needs to have a deep and integrated spirituality.

Post-novitiate – *Integrating our personal, emotional, intellectual, spiritual lives*

Study the social teachings of the Church and a deeper study of special biblical themes such as exodus, the prophets, human rights, active non-violence, conflict resolution, climate change, immigration, etc.

Experiences, reflection and prayer will invite the Oblate to realize that concepts and words are not enough; the heart too must be engaged. JPIC cannot be imposed on anyone; it must emerge from within the person out of his concern and love for the poor, the marginalized, and the oppressed. Week-end and summer pastoral experiences, the year of regency/internship are all opportunities to exploit and deepen one's knowledge and experience of JPIC ministry. Formation to a missionary love and solidarity with the poor is where we become aware of unjust situations of which the poor are victims. All of this is reinforced by *Gaudium et Spes*. This exposure to the plight of the poor is the launching pad for a conversion of the heart and a feeling of compassion and indignation at an unjust situation. Here our model is Jesus Christ who was present to the poor whom he welcomed and defended. This requires a deep spiritual life.

Ongoing formation – *From indifference to a new mentality*

The first five years of priesthood and onwards are critical for passing from ignorance to indifference to a new mentality and engagement to embrace the poor of today.

This is when conversion of the heart will push for conversion of the feet which will result in conversion of the "eyes" (to see) and head

(attitudes) and heart (compassion), giving courage to the tongue (to speak) and the hand (to act).

Once that conversion begins to happen, one will realize that one is before a huge web, not knowing how and where to begin. The Oblate will also see structures that seem complex and unchangeable. It is here that one must enlarge the discernment, seek alliances and ways to act in solidarity with the poor and with people of good will, learning together the tools of analysis and courses of action.

Analysis should lead one to make a judgment and take a decision in the light of the Gospel, in communion with the Church and with the community. These are not once and for all decisions; they are steps, actions we have to reassess and modify constantly. Continuing to discern our lifestyle is a life-long endeavor: to be concerned with promoting sustainable development, promoting a natural ecology that is both spiritual and social; to develop an economy of the use of our goods, in solidarity with the poor.

But the heart must be free: one working for JPIC does not carry the injustices of the world on his shoulders. God has a Master Plan, a design of salvation that is unfolding. One must “denounce evil” but never at the expense of others as we are all equally loved by God. And one becomes credible only if one is ready to “renounce” within oneself what is not just and true. Working for JPIC requires personal integrity, deep humility, selfless motives, single-minded purpose, and deep faith, “even willing to give up their lives if need be” (Preface of Constitutions and Rules). One needs a deep spirituality, to be a contemplative to do the work of JPIC.

Concrete suggestions for all phases of formation

- to set up an interdisciplinary approach with representatives from the various General Committees (Formation, JPIC, Finance, Brothers) (cf. R 49e);
- to plan the entire formative process in an integrated way;

- joint efforts to promote awareness and develop animation programs at each level of formation and in the personal and communal life of Oblates;
- to plan, prepare and evaluate programs and projects;
- to provide systemic formation and commit ourselves to the values and spirituality that must accompany us at all levels of formation and of our lives;
- to respond in a concrete way to the challenges of the world we live in today according to our Oblate charism and spirituality;
- to see how JPIC can become an integral part of evangelization in the ministerial work of the majority of Oblates: parishes, formation etc.
- to recognize, call and prepare Oblates to specialized ministry through forums, courses, conferences, seminars, fellowship opportunities, and academic programs such as Political Science, Public Policy, International Relations, Conflict Resolution, Peace, International law, Human Rights and Development.

APPENDIX II SOCIAL TEACHING OF THE CHURCH

Encyclicals and Other Official Documents

Rerum Novarum, Leo XIII (15 May 1891)

Quadragesimo Anno, Pius XI (15 May 1931)

Mater et Magistra, John XXIII (15 May 1961)

Pacem in Terris, John XXIII (11 April 1963)

Populorum Progressio, Paul VI (27 March 1967)

Octogesima Adveniens, Paul VI (14 May 1971)

Laborem Exercens, John Paul II (14 September 1981)

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis, John Paul II (30 December 1987)

Centesimus Annus, John Paul II (1 May 1991)

Caritas in Veritate, Benedict XVI (29 June 2009)

Laudato Si', Francis (24 May 2015)

Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church: <http://goo.gl/ZcyZpH>

Note: Please consult the Social Documents of your national Conference of Bishops and, for Ecumenical purposes, consult JPIC documents from the World Council of Churches.

APPENDIX III

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly,

Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote

respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, or to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each State.

Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

Everyone has the right to a nationality.

No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17

Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, and housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29

Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

Approved by the Superior General in Council on May 23, 2016
Rome, Italy

OMI JPIC PRAYER

*God, Father of all,
you have created the world as our common home.
Through the Word and your Spirit
you have brought forth life in which we delight.
Help us to treasure this gift of life.*

*Grant us your strength
that we may love and protect all life on earth.
Fill us with your peace and love
that we may live in harmony with all of creation;
may we recognize others as our sisters and brothers.*

*Following our Founder St. Eugene de Mazenod,
help us to leave nothing undared
in our ministry of Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation
so that the “liberating presence of Jesus Christ
and the new world born in his resurrection” (C 9)
become a reality today.*

*As Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate,
help us to be close to the poor of this world with their many faces.*

*We implore from Mary, our Mother,
the strength to stand at the foot of the Cross
where many of our brothers and sisters suffer today.*

*This we ask you, Father of all, through the intercession of our
Mother Mary, Saint Eugene and all our Blessed Oblates. Amen.*

