

THE FRANCISCAN SEVEN YEAR PLAN – SUMMARY

Introduction

The Franciscan family comprises different orders, all of which follow the teachings of St Francis and St Clare. The Franciscan orders are the Minors, Conventuals, Poor Clares, Capuchins, Third Order Regular and Third Order Secular. Some are enclosed and live a life of prayer; others actively spread the gospel and bring hope to the lives of the poor and marginalised. The Franciscan communities are present all over the world and undertake many and varied ministries, depending on location and need. There are approximately 500 different and juridically independent orders and congregations.

Franciscan spirituality is rich in ecological wisdom and all the orders are aware of the need to care for creation. An inter-Franciscan group for Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation (JPIC) disseminates resources and information specifically on this topic. As there is always more to do and an ever-greater need for environmental care this Seven Year Plan is presented on behalf of all the orders, with the blessings of the Ministers General, and will be distributed widely; implementation will be the responsibility of the communities as they see fit for their situation.

THE WAY FORWARD

Intensify the work of consciousness-raising within the family

The life of St Francis and St Clare was based on love and service to God, and their spirituality has a particular understanding of the experience of God through the wonder and beauty of Creation. The requirement that we care for Creation is inherent in Franciscan spirituality and is already disseminated through the JPIC group and this work can be further enhanced and extended.

The family can also build on and take inspiration from work already underway, such as the Franciscan project for environmental education at the Margil Institute in Mexico. Resources such as the Earth Community, Eco-audit for Religious communities and a seminar entitled ‘Creation at the Heart of Mission’, have already been developed. These can be promoted and other material made available to help communities educate their members and provide practical solutions to problems.

Encourage Franciscans to establish local teams which can serve as auditors for buildings and other assets

Ecological management of buildings and other assets is vitally important. The family can learn from and build upon the success of projects already underway such as the environmental assessment of Franciscan Renewal Centre in Arizona and in the Franciscan centre in Graz in Austria.

Intensify the work of Franciscan scholars in developing a Franciscan eco-spirituality

The rich wisdom that is inherent in Franciscan spirituality has much to offer the family and wider world. This wisdom is greatly needed and we will build upon the work already done.

Put together a data-base of best practices of the Franciscan family

A data-base of good practice will be invaluable for both the family and wider community. For example, our eco-pastoral work in Indonesia with local farmers, tree planting in Kenya, our work in the Amazon and with fish farming in Democratic Republic of Congo have all produced good results which will act as an inspiration and guide to others.

Track in greater detail the effects on the eco-system of the measures put in place

Promote collaboration with other organisations working on these issues

Franciscan spirituality and life demands we care for Creation. In order to do this in the best way possible we will form partnerships and collaborative relationships with other bodies to help promote this cause and establish best practice as quickly as possible.