

0.0. INTRODUCTION

- ⑥ In the “pueblos jóvenes” on the outskirts of Lima, Valentino hews the raw rock of the mountainside to make a home for his pregnant wife and two children. Driven off his land first by terrorists and then by the military, he joined the flood of displaced people, refugees in their own land. Without employment and suffering from TB, yet with an indomitable spirit, Valentino coaxes life into plants flowering in tin cans.
- ⑥ During the recent war in Bosnia, 80,000 young girls and women were raped between the ages of 8 and 80.
- ⑥ Huddled on a mat in her grass hut a young Rwandan refugee woman lies dying of Aids. She is the sole support of her two young sisters and her infant child.
- ⑥ More than half of the world’s tropical forests have disappeared since 1950. They are disappearing at the rate of an acre a second. They are home to indigenous peoples and millions of species. They regulate climates, prevent floods and landslides. They are the source of more than half of our medicines.

For a Christian to remain silent and unmoved in the face of such tragedy, such violence and destruction is a denial of the Gospel. At the opening of his public ministry Jesus proclaimed the role of the Christian:

**The spirit of the Lord has been given to me,
for he has anointed me.
He has sent me to bring the good news to the poor
to proclaim liberty to captives
and to the blind new sight,
to set the downtrodden free,
to proclaim the Lord’s year of favour.**

Luke 4:18-19

**Jesus also said:
I came that you may have LIFE,
and have it in abundance.**

Jn. 10:10

Human beings and the rest of God’s creation are being deprived of LIFE. A passion for justice, a desire for peace and non-violence, a concern for the integrity of all creation (JPIC) are essential

to the living out of the gospel. They are not an optional extra but a way of life. Action for justice and participation in the transformation of the world are a constitutive dimension of preaching the gospel and essential to the Church's mission of liberating the human race from every oppressive situation (Justice in the World #5).

Justice and Peace are not new words in our vocabulary, nor are they new concepts in theology and missiology; however, they have taken on a new meaning as we continue our search for the WHY, WHAT and HOW of Mission and of a New Evangelisation, at the dawn of a new Millennium; the expression, Integrity of Creation is relatively new, and is being given increasing importance due to the present precarious state of our planet.

Commitment to JPIC differs from Social Action or Social Ministry in that it is about a way of life which leads to JPIC becoming an integral dimension of all our ministries/activities.

In some contexts and among some groups, for various reasons, there is a felt need to call commitment to JPIC by some other name. Among the suggestions proposed are the following for your consideration :

- ◆ A renewed Call to Discipleship.
- ◆ A renewed Biblical Agenda.
- ◆ Promoting the Reign of God in today's world.

When we talk about JPIC, there is often a discussion on the term "poor" as to whether it can be broadened to include those in need psychologically, spiritually, emotionally, etc. In this manual the term **poor** refers principally to those who are materially poor; the other categories of poor also need to be treated with justice, but this would be matter for reflection and action at another level.

0.1. DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF JUSTICE

We can find many answers to the question, “Why should anyone work for Justice?”

People work for justice:

- ◆ because of their brothers and sisters who are suffering and will continue to suffer until there is justice;
- ◆ because they dream of a world in which all will be equal and treated according to their dignity;
- ◆ because of a belief that it is in the interests of all that justice should be done;
- ◆ because of who God is;
- ◆ because the Gospel tells us to seek the reign of justice;

because of who we are, created in the image and likeness of God, taught by the Saviour, and formed by the Spirit.

Let us look at a number of different ways of understanding what justice means:

- a)** Justice is associated with the balance of justice. It is defined as the giving to each one what each one deserves. In this sense it is a question of nothing more than reward and punishment.
- b)** Justice has to do with the needs, rights and obligations of the human person in society. Each one has the responsibility to act towards others in a way that ensures what they need for their life, rewards good actions, and respects basic rights, and in turn to see that each individual receives what is necessary for his or her own human existence.
- c)** Justice relates to people's character. This meaning places at the centre of attention neither the socially desirable outcome nor obedience to the moral law. Rather personal character is stressed. Justice is neither some public state of affairs, nor is it conformity to an objective moral standard; but it is what the just person actually practises; there is a moral skill, an excellence of justice, as of other virtues.
- d)** Justice is a question of right relationships between people, between people and creation, between people and God. The quest for justice is the effort to build constructive and liberating relationships between all of these.
- e)** Finally justice can be understood as God's way of being and acting. In God's way of doing things there are all of the other four understandings of justice, but with the added element of gratuitousness. God is always just, but God's justice is something more. We have it in the story of the Good Samaritan and in the story of Job. Divine justice holds out the ideal for us of doing what is over and above, and of a justice that goes beyond our limited view of what is right and just. It is justice without a strict measure, justice with generosity, justice which does all that is required and a

little more. Where this justice abounds, joy abounds, all of creation is honoured and safeguarded and there is peace. It is both God's gift and something for which people have to work.¹

¹ Cf. S. Murphy S.J. "The many ways of Justice: Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits", *The Month* 26 (1994) 2.

0.2. WHY A MANUAL FOR JPIC PROMOTERS?

Through our regular sharing of experiences, reflections and searching for ever-more relevant responses the group of JPIC promoters representing more than 50 international Religious Congregations in Rome (see Appendix 7 for list) felt the need to create a manual. Also, in our contacts with our sisters and brothers in the field, requests have been made for a “tool” to help those who are searching for the HOW of mission in the context of today’s world.

The suggestion for a manual was first made two years ago. While working on this manual we have become increasingly conscious of the already existing work-books, documents and audio-visual aids which are available for formation in JPIC. This manual is intended to be only an additional tool, and in no way contains all the answers to today’s questions on the injustices and violence being done to humanity and the environment.

The following are the major themes that are included in the manual:

I. Reading the signs of the times.

II. Biblical foundations for jpic.

III. The social teaching of the church and social analysis.

IV. Re-imagining religious life.

V. Re-imagining mission.

Hopefully, it can serve as :

- ◆ a helpful manual for JPIC promoters.
- ◆ a tool for formators, pastoral workers and animators at the institutional or grass-roots levels.
- ◆ a “Confidence-builder” for those who are sincerely searching.

This Manual for JPIC Promoters provides guidelines to move from silence and powerlessness in the face of poverty, injustice and violence; to be more effective purveyors of good news, proclaimers of liberty and freedom; to be perceivers of new dreams and visions, in our quest to be At the Service of LIFE.

0.3. HOW WAS THIS MANUAL PREPARED?

- a)** A drafting committee of four JPIC promoters prepared a 1st draft which was distributed to the promoters at one of the meetings for comments and suggestions.
- b)** In the light of comments received, the committee prepared a 2nd draft, and this was given to a group of three promoters for their “critique” which was discussed at a joint meeting with the drafting committee.
- c)** An editing committee which included members from the drafting committee and a new member edited the 3rd draft, which was then distributed to a group of fifteen JPIC promoters (representing all continents) who were willing to review it, and give their comments in view of the final draft.
- d)** The manual in its present form was published in June 1997.

Please note:

- ◆ While preparing this Manual we have tried to be aware of the diversity of contexts (political, economic, cultural, social and religious) of those who will be using this manual. Please feel free to leave aside what does not apply to your particular context.
- ◆ The statistics given in the manual have been taken from various UN documents, reports and other reliable sources. Some of these could be out-dated by the time you use this manual on account of the rapid changes taking place, but we have included them here to help those who may otherwise not have access to such facts.
- ◆ This manual has been prepared by an inter-congregational group. You are invited to enrich it with your own charism, with extracts from your institute documents, and stories/examples from members of your congregation.
- ◆ As mentioned earlier, this manual is not a complete programme that touches all issues of JPIC.
- ◆ This is not a book to be read right through at a stretch: it is a resource guide and a “companion” on your JPIC journey.

It is only a working tool. It needs to be completed by each one of you. You can add to this manual your own material which can help you in your own particular context. If you have material which you consider important to be shared with other religious congregations and groups, kindly send them to your Institute JPIC co-ordinator or the JPIC contact person in your General Council, requesting him/her to share it with the JPIC promoters group in Rome. Any feed-back and comments on this manual will also be welcome.

Rome, 1997.