



# FRANCISCAN JUSTICE CIRCLES

Seeking Justice Through Franciscan Action

# Member's Handbook

Franciscan Action Network

# **Member's Handbook for the Franciscan Justice Circles of the Franciscan Action Network**

*Rooted in the Franciscan Spiritual Tradition, Franciscan Justice Circles are intended to enkindle the fire of the Spirit of God within us, so as to move us toward being a community of love in action.*

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## Overview

### What are Franciscan Justice Circles?

Franciscan Justice Circles (FJC) exist to build and strengthen small groups of Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people that will address issues that are important for their communities with an approach rooted in the rich Franciscan tradition of walking alongside the marginalized and showing respect and reverence for all of God's creation. We follow the examples of Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, the original architects of this Franciscan tradition, who transformed how we understand our responsibility to care for every part of society and our environment.



We believe, like Saint Clare of Assisi that the Church "lives and grows when its members are active lovers, not passive listeners."<sup>1</sup> FAN proposes to help each group deepen its knowledge and spiritual awareness of the Franciscan tradition, including the Gospel values of peacemaking, eradicating poverty, caring for creation, and building the Kingdom of God.

The name itself, *Franciscan Justice Circles*, shows that this *Franciscan* approach is shaped by a commitment to *justice*, and dedicated to inclusivity—a *circle* of gathering and encounter where all are welcome. Each Franciscan Justice Circle will develop in a way that reflects its local community, with each group's focus and action reflecting the reality on the ground. The groups will share information on local matters, while working with the national office of the Franciscan Action Network (FAN) to ensure strong advocacy on both the local and national levels.

### Who are FJCs for?

Circles are for both Franciscans and Franciscan-hearted people. Some Circles may be ecumenical or interfaith. *Anyone who wants to delve further into the Franciscan way of life is welcome!* With that being said, it's important to remember the central role of Franciscan spirituality and prayer in this approach. Since Francis and Clare lived as they did because of Christ, Christian prayers and songs will be included in the process. Ideally, each group would have a professed Franciscan, someone who has made a profession with a Franciscan Order, to assist in maintaining this approach.

### How do the FJCs function?

The structure of an FJC includes the following roles (which will rotate to different members over time):

1. A **facilitator (or two co-facilitators)** who will convene each gathering. These are facilitators not instructors. They will keep the group together, encourage listening and mutual support, and help keep the group on track. They will also report back to FAN on the progress of the group (unless another member volunteers to do so).
2. A **spiritual servant** (a professed Franciscan, including Secular Franciscans) who assists in guiding the ongoing formation of the group and building a common

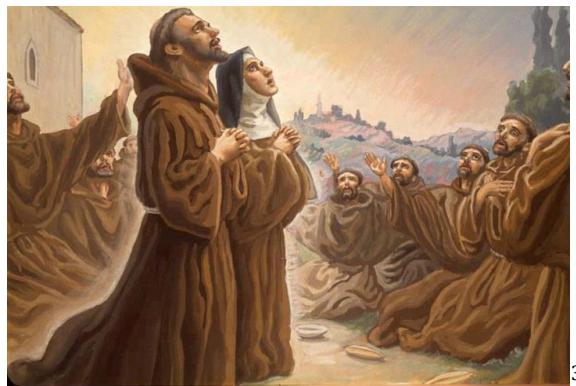
<sup>1</sup> Delio O.S.F., Ilia. *Clare of Assisi, A Heart Full of Love*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007, p.93.



foundation of Franciscan concepts. The spiritual servant helps to keep the members rooted in Franciscan spirituality and the *Franciscan Values guiding FAN*.

3. A **scribe** who will take notes on decisions made and help the group with documenting these decisions in order to aid the group's memory, keeping the process fluid between gatherings so that determinations are not lost.

With openness to God's grace, the FJCs will be rooted in prayer "centered on relationship with Christ, the Word of God incarnate, [which] cannot help but change the life of the believer and the way one lives. Those who enter into Franciscan prayer, therefore, must be ready for change; they each must be willing to become 'another Christ,' for this is where the path of prayer leads, to a new birth of Christ in the lives of the believers."<sup>2</sup>



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Included in the Appendix is the *Framework for an FJC Gathering*, which offers a suggested general framework a group can use to structure each gathering of the Circle.

### How do the FJCs progress?

The process of the FJCs follows four phases. The phases will help guide us through the process, so as to build upon our communal progress towards actively addressing the causes of injustice, while continually deepening our personal integration of Franciscan values.

How long a particular group spends in each phase will vary, and the progression may not always be linear, but each group will progress through all of the phases over time. For instance if a group forms within a religious community and their relationships with one another are well-established, they may accelerate through Phase I or II quickly.



#### *Phase I: Building Relationships and a Franciscan Foundation*

As FJCs begin, members of the group will come together and build relationships so that they might become a true expression of family, in the Franciscan sense. Members will also ground themselves in the values and spirituality that St. Clare and St. Francis developed and lived.

<sup>2</sup> Delio O.S.F., Ilia, *Franciscan Prayer*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004, pp.2-3.

<sup>3</sup> St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi, n.d. painting, viewed May 28, 2020, <<https://hnp.org/reflection-st-clare-and-the-wisdom-of-lady-poverty/>>





### *Phase II: Living in Solidarity*

Rooted in listening and, in well-established relationships, groups will turn to the heart of the Franciscan approach: the virtues of **solidarity** and **minority**.



### *Phase III: Continuing the Incarnation*

Circles can now plan and prepare for their future actions. The members consider two different, though complementary, ways of walking the path of love: **Social Justice** (removing root causes of injustice) and **Charitable Works** (meeting people's basic needs).



### *Phase IV: Loving through Action*

At this stage, groups will enter the public sphere to speak out against injustice, support those who are vulnerable and oppressed, and mend the broken relationships present among people and between humans and the rest of creation. Like Francis & Clare, each member will become *Fools for Christ* and accomplish what few can imagine!





## Phase 1: Building Relationships and a Franciscan Foundation

**Rooted in Scripture, Franciscan Justice Circles are an invitation to *Come to the Table* and sit beside the Lord, to sit alongside one another.**

**Timeline:** The timeline varies from Circle to Circle. For some, it may take a few months (three to six) to establish relationships of trust and confidence, while other groups may already know each other and will move through this phase faster.

### What to do during this Phase:

a) **Relationship Building** - It is recommended that a newly forming Circle dedicate the first three to four gatherings to starting the relationship-forming process as well as beginning to grow together in Franciscan spirituality.



b) **Franciscan Foundation** - People may be coming to the Circle with only a rough idea of



who St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi were, while others may come with decades of experience in Franciscan living. The goal is to ensure a common, basic understanding of Franciscan values and spirituality. Those who have already gone through Franciscan formation can share stories, testimonies, and wisdom to help those who are at an earlier point

<sup>4</sup> in their Franciscan journey. Even those with more experience can grow and find new challenges as they share their knowledge with others.

c) **Just Engagement: The Power to Change** – After these initial gatherings, the group can consider beginning a program that FAN encourages each Circle to do, an 8-session module: *Just Engagement: The Power to Change*. It is a formation program by JustFaith Ministries that aims to “introduce participants to different advocacy models that are rooted in Christian beliefs and a biblical tradition of justice, and have inspired ordinary and extraordinary change-makers throughout history.” This module provides a foundation in organizing and advocacy from a Christian perspective. While not mandatory, it is a valuable tool to help prepare the Circle for their future actions.

### Recommended Materials to Read or Watch and Discuss:

- Reflection from Pope Francis on Fraternity ([PDF](#), 1 page)
- The Little Flowers of St. Francis, Chapter 15 ([PDF](#), 2 pages)
- Franciscan Values Guiding FAN ([PDF](#), 2 pages)
- Audio recording of Sr. Ilia Delio’s talk on St. Clare ([MP3](#), 54 minutes)
- Introduction to consensus decision making, A short guide to collaborative decision-making for activist groups, co-ops and communities by Seeds for Change, 2020 ([PDF](#), 16 pages)

<sup>4</sup> St. Francis and St. Clare of Assisi in prayer, n.d. painting, viewed May 28, 2020, <<https://www.atonementfriars.org/event/st-francis-and-st-claire-retreat/>>.



**When do we move to the next phase?** Here are some questions to commonly discern, meaning to consider prayerfully as a group and then come to a determination based on group consensus. When the questions have been adequately addressed, the Circle members can move on to the next phase:

1. Is there a stronger sense of community and trust among the Circle members than when we began? Are we comfortable enough with each other that we can disagree on something and still be committed to each other and the group as a whole?
  2. Do we all have a basic and growing understanding of Franciscan values and spirituality, along with a familiarity with the life of St. Francis of Assisi and St. Clare? Do we understand the importance of the **Incarnation** and **Poverty** in Franciscan spirituality?
  3. If agreed upon, have we completed the Just Engagement module?
- 



## Phase 2: Living in Solidarity

**Inspired by Franciscans living the Gospel, the heart of this phase is the ability to listen to the marginalized, as Francis and Clare did to the lepers of their day, thereby discovering a God who lives in every heart.**

**Timeline:** The timeline may vary depending on the backgrounds of those in the group (2-6 months). The hope is that every member further integrates Franciscan values into their life and ample time is given for communal discernment of where God is calling them.

### What to do during this Phase:

a) **Franciscan Values** - Once relationships are well-established, an FJC can turn to the core of what it means to embody Franciscanism: the values of **solidarity** and **ministry**. These are listed in the Glossary of Terms with a basic definition that can be the basis for deeper exploration and reflection. As Circle members, you can offer your own contribution of prayer /readings /songs that can assist the group in its Franciscan formation. Materials listed below can also assist in this process.

b) **Dolcezza Encounters** - After having read and reflected on the materials mentioned, the



Circle is encouraged to plan at least two "Dolcezza" (pronounced Dol-Chay-Tza) Encounters. The goal is to experience that which is "bitter" to us and to become vulnerable and grow from an encounter with someone(s) with whom we have little or no experience. These must be planned with great respect and open communication. Circle members will be neither "do-ers" nor volunteers, but simply visitors, focused on encounter—listening and getting to know new people.

<sup>5</sup> St. Francis kisses the leper, n.d. image, viewed May 28, 2020,  
[http://www.cmq.org.uk/CMQ/2013/Feb/St\\_Francis\\_and\\_Leper.html](http://www.cmq.org.uk/CMQ/2013/Feb/St_Francis_and_Leper.html).



c) **Discernment** - Having become more familiar with Franciscan spirituality and having grown through multiple Dolcezza Encounters, members of the Circle will quiet themselves to listen. After privately praying about their Encounter experiences, the Circle comes together as “brothers and sisters minor” to hear the voice of God and discern together with which group “in the margins” of their local area they can become one at heart. This may be a group already being served by Circle members, but new possibilities should also be considered.

#### **Recommended Materials to Read or Watch and Discuss:**

- Compassion and Kinship, TED Talk by Greg Boyle, SJ ([Link](#), 20 minutes)
- The Telling Takes Us Home: A Reflection on the People's Pastoral Letter video ([Link](#), 11 minutes)
  - “The Telling Takes Us Home: Taking our place in the stories that shape us, A People’s Pastoral from the Catholic Committee of Appalachia.” 2015.  
(Particularly, “Integral Ecology and the Culture of Encounter” and “Practicing Resurrection in Crucified Places”.) ([PDF](#), 84 pages)
- “How Should We Think About the Poor?”, Article by Bishop Kenneth E. Untener ([PDF](#), 4 pages)
- Catholic Social Teaching Handout (USCCB) ([PDF](#), 2 pages)
- Blog article “When Fighting Poverty, Listen to the Impoverished” by James Abro, Nov. 7, 2019. ([Link](#), 4 minute read)

**When do we move to the next phase?** Here are some questions for discerning if it's time to move on to the next phase:

1. Have we had ample opportunities to listen? In the Dolcezza encounters? To each other? To God?
2. Have we been uncomfortable? Has that affected us?
3. Have we grown in our understanding of the virtues of Solidarity and Minority?
4. Do we all have an increased understanding of Franciscan spirituality and how St. Clare and St. Francis lived out their call to be a Living Gospel?
5. Have we made time to pray and discern where God is calling us to act?





## Phase 3: Continuing the Incarnation

**Rooted in Scripture, we respond to God's call by envisioning next steps to address injustice, following Jesus' example of servant love.**

This phase is about putting love into action. We now look to **preparing** and **planning** for concrete action, when members embrace each person "in the margins" as Emmanuel, God who is with us!

**Timeline:** The time needed will vary from Circle to Circle (between 2-6 months).

### What to do during this Phase:

a) **Two Feet of Love in Action** - Inspired by Pope Benedict XVI's encyclicals *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love) and *Caritas in Veritate* (Charity in Truth), the USCCB created formation materials to help us explore what our personal and communal call to put God's love into action actually entails. "There are two different, but complementary, ways that we can walk the path of love." One is **Social Justice** (addressing root causes, improving structures) and the other is **Charitable Works** (meeting people's basic needs, aiding individual persons).

As an example, you could focus on one of the following areas:

- Peacemaking (Gun Violence, Interreligious Dialogue, etc.)
- Human Dignity (Migration/Asylum, Trafficking, Fair Wages, Healthcare, etc.)
- Care for Creation (Access to Clean Water, Food security, Climate Justice, etc.)

For instance, if focusing on food insecurity, one could respond through *charitable works* by: volunteering at a food bank/soup kitchen or participating with a gleaning network that organizes volunteers to glean. Gleaning is the traditional biblical practice of gathering crops that would otherwise be left in the fields to rot or be plowed under after harvest and then getting that food to those who are food-insecure. One possible way of responding through *social justice*, meanwhile, might be: raising awareness about food deserts and advocating for legislation and economic reform that would help reduce food insecurity.

b) **Pastoral Circle** (also known as Circle of Praxis) - Before planning any action, the Pastoral Circle (see the recommended resources and questions below) can be a helpful tool to use when planning how we will respond to an issue. The Pastoral Circle provides a way of analyzing reality and actions with authentic theological reflection and aims to transform that reality. This process should also include consistent prayer, while keeping in mind various tools and teachings, mentioned below, to ensure that the Circle members avoid imposing on other people or engaging in unintended patronizing behavior.

c) **Considerate and Intentional Planning** - Throughout your reflections and planning, it would be wise to periodically check yourselves with this message shared by Lila Watson, an aboriginal Australian Activist and Educator:

*If you have come to help me  
You are wasting your time,  
But if you have come because your liberation is bound up with mine  
Then let us work together.*



Trying to help someone without first getting to know them and without a spirit of **minority** (by asking what can be done and how can one contribute), does not align with the approach of Francis and Clare. We must not assume that we know best about the needs of others, rather when we encounter them **be open to listening, adapting and following the lead of the group directly experiencing their struggle.**

While charitable works and social justice are both important, we hope that each Circle will place an emphasis on planning actions that address *why* certain forms of injustice exist and *how* they can be approached in a way that addresses any structural problems.

St. Francis knew that it was necessary to tend to those who were suffering, and as exemplified in his Letter to the Rulers of the People, he also recognized the importance of seeking encounters with people in power in order to address the causes of social injustice. We likewise hope to open the doors of conversation so that policymakers may hear the voices of those who are oppressed and marginalized and make the necessary changes in light of the inherent dignity of all people and all of Creation.



d) **Action Plan** - Once the Circle members have determined which issue or situation they feel called to address and have prayerfully analyzed it using the available tools, such as the Pastoral Circle, as a guide, it is time to work out the details of an action plan. When trying to change systems or address policies, it can be helpful to learn how to change a law or how to contact a member of Congress, for example. FAN is here to assist you in this process and connect you with any specific information you may need. We urge you to read through the materials in the Appendix.

#### **Recommended Materials to Read or Watch and Discuss:**

- Two Feet of Love in Action Facilitator's Guide (USCCB) ([PDF](#), 1 page)
- Introduction to the Pastoral Circle video ([Link](#), 8 minutes)
- Pastoral Circle ([PDF](#), 5 pages)
- St. Francis' Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples ([link](#)) and Leonardo Boff's modern day version of this letter ([PDF](#), 2 pages)
- Article: On Civility in Political Communication by Fr. Albert Merz, OFM ([PDF](#), 3 pages)
- Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing ([PDF](#), 1 page)
- What is Advocacy? ([PDF](#), 3 pages)
- Advocacy Planning Cycle ([PDF](#), 9 pages)



### To complement the questions involved in the Pastoral Circle process:

- How can we come to form (or strengthen) a relationship with people in this identified group on the margins, getting to know them before planning any actions?
- What are the people in this group undergoing and how are they responding?
- What are the individuals (not just the outspoken ones or the leaders) saying and expressing? How do they feel?
- How are the voices of the underserved being lifted up?
- What will we do to be in solidarity with this group?



**When do we move to the next phase?** Here are some questions to help in discerning when it's time to move on to the next phase:

1. How have we explored the two feet of putting Love into Action - social justice and charitable works?
2. How do we understand St. Francis' examples of social justice?
3. How developed is our initial action plan?

How have we grown in our approach to Franciscan spirituality since the beginning of this phase?

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### Phase 4: Loving through Action

We move as sisters and brothers into the public sphere to speak the truth to power, seek justice for the oppressed, and put right the relations that are broken among people and between people and creation. Like Francis & Clare we become *Fools for Christ* and do the unbelievable!

**Timeline:** This phase will be ongoing; however, it will be necessary to continually evaluate the current issues and plan new actions. Planning resources from Phase III may be especially useful to revisit in these moments.

#### What to do during this Phase:

a) We suggest you continually measure your plans of action against these questions:

- *In the case that we ourselves are not directly part of the affected group, are we proclaiming ourselves to be the voice of the people on the margins or are we empowering our sisters and brothers to speak for themselves while walking with them to offer support?*
- *When we are directly part of the affected group, are we intentionally seeking out the involvement and perspectives of those members of the group who are quieter or have difficulty attending the spaces destined for sharing, consultation and planning?*



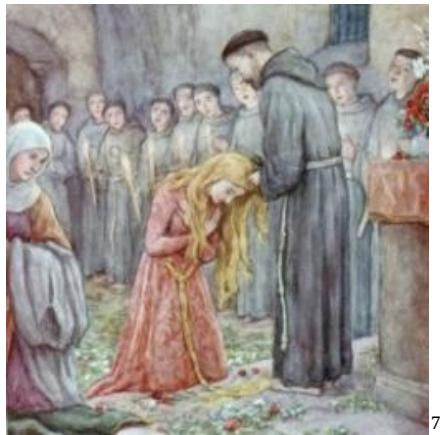
b) Continual growth in Franciscan spirituality is vital for Love in Action. The experience of forming an FJC and growing together in community can help us to “claim our dependency on God and our neighbor in whom God lives, to live as poor persons in relation to the poor Christ whose poverty is the wealth of love.”<sup>6</sup>

c) During the process, it’s wise to remember that faith transcends partisanship. Our Franciscan identity’s focus on minority and solidarity prevent us from seeking to gain more personal power, privilege and prestige in society.

d) We are stronger when we are united, and we are more likely to achieve our vision when we work together with others. Each Franciscan Justice Circle will be part of a network of Circles across the country. Each Circle is encouraged to seek out local partners in advocacy efforts, as well. FAN can provide some support to the Circle to help coordinate connections.

#### **Recommended Materials to Read or Watch and Discuss:**

- A Call to Conscience: Catholic Teaching and Civil Disobedience ([PDF](#), 2 pages)
- The Enduring Power of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.’s Principles of Nonviolence, A Pastoral Reflection ([PDF](#), 36 pages)
- “To Hell with Good Intentions”, article by Ivan Illich ([PDF](#), 7 pages)



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#### **How to maintain growth and motivation in this phase?**

1. Have we reached out to local groups to strengthen our advocacy efforts?
2. Do we continue to pray and seek time for silence and community-building?
3. Have we re-visited the Pastoral Circle and Action Plan to evaluate the new contexts?
4. What have we learned so far? How can this help us to plan better in the future?
5. What areas of Franciscan spirituality can we explore with more intentional focus?
6. How are we caring for ourselves? Could we do better?

Through the FJCs, we hope to contribute to being true conduits of God’s love, peace, and justice in our community. May the Spirit bless and guide you on the journey.

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<sup>6</sup> Delio O.S.F., Ilia, *Clare of Assisi, A Heart Full of Love*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007, pp. 116-117.

<sup>7</sup> St. Clare of Assisi renounces the world, n.d. image, viewed May 28, 2020, <<https://www.getfed.com/st-clare-of-assisi-noblewoman-to-lady-of-poverty-5865/>>.



## Appendix

### **Framework for a Franciscan Justice Circle Gathering**

While these are not step-by-step directions, we provide you with a sample framework. For the sake of unity and continuity, we ask that you include some common elements in each gathering, such as time for prayer and sharing.

#### **a) Opening Prayer**

While the [Prayer Suggestions document](#) has ideas, feel free to use your own prayers. As people seeking to follow St. Francis' and St. Clare's way of responding to God in their lives, both prayer and community are vital to the process of becoming what God created us to be.<sup>8</sup>



#### **b) Song**

At the end of the Appendix, there is a list of songs to give you some ideas. However, part of the richness of being an FJC is the unique Good brought to the Circle by each member, and we encourage you to share your own song suggestions with each other. Those with musical gifts can share them with the group. Live instruments or vocal leaders are not always necessary; groups may play recordings instead.

#### **c) Seeing God**

Each person takes a turn to share just one way that they saw God in the past week. You may wish to assign an object that the speaker may hold, and then pass on to the next speaker to prevent interruptions. The “central theme of Francis’ ‘way of life’ is Incarnation.”<sup>9</sup> This practice of sharing how we recognize the presence of God all around us is connected to the Franciscan focus on seeing God incarnate, whether in mundane, awful, or splendid moments.

#### **d) Reflection/Discussion/Planning**

This part of the gathering will vary each time.



Before the Closing Prayer, it can be helpful to review logistics for the next gathering and the various responsibilities (i.e. Where? Who leads prayers? Who provides refreshments?)

<sup>8</sup> “For Clare, prayer without community cannot lead to the fullness of our self-identity, since it is in community that the mirror of our identity is reflected in the other, the neighbor whom we are called to love. Love transforms because love unites, and it is in loving our neighbor through compassion that we become more ourselves, and in becoming more ourselves, we become Christ.” Delio, O.S.F., Ilia, *Clare of Assisi, A Heart Full of Love*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007, p. 51.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 73.



### e) Closing Prayer

Please see the Prayer Suggestions document for ideas and feel free to bring in your own prayers and creativity. In addition, we ask that all Circles end their prayer time with this final Closing FJC prayer:

#### Closing Prayer for FJC

Most High, glorious God  
we praise You and we thank You  
for the many good people and blessings  
You have bestowed upon our Justice Circle.  
We ask today that Your spirit of truth and goodness  
enlighten us as we embrace  
the opportunities and challenges of this day  
and give us true faith,  
certain hope and perfect charity,  
sense and knowledge, Gracious God,  
as we seek to live out your gospel.

### f) Refreshments (or in the middle of the gathering to provide a break, if desired)

Sharing food and drink can help to facilitate conversation and build relationships. However, we also want to be sensitive to people's budgets and time, so we encourage each Circle to decide as a group whether or not they would like to include time to share a snack or something to drink. We would encourage whatever is shared to be simple unless there's a special occasion and it is agreed upon by all.



THE LORD'S SUPPER (1953)

<sup>10</sup> *The Lord's Supper*, by Fritz Eichenberg (Germany & U.S., 1953), viewed June 2, 2020, <<https://www.plough.com/en/topics/culture/art/the-witness-of-jesus>>.



## **Franciscan Justice Circle Group Guidelines**

Having an agreed upon set of guidelines allows for all current and future members of an FJC to understand the expectations for themselves and each other. In order to foster ownership of your Circle's guidelines, it's recommended that you set time aside at the beginning of the process to allow all members to give their input and reach an agreement on what the group's guidelines will be. After the initial guidelines for your Circle are set, they should be changed only with unanimous consent and they should be reviewed by everyone whenever a new member joins the Circle. Please kindly send a copy to the FAN Director of Franciscan Justice Circles to have on record. Here are some possibilities and ideas:

- Treat each other with respect in all forms of communication and in all actions. Listen respectfully, even when the other's point of view is different from your own or uncomfortable. Interruptions and side conversations are not permitted.
- Always be honest and open with the other Circle members.
- When not understanding another member's perspective or disagreeing with it, try to look for clarification or greater understanding in a loving way.
- Confidentiality: What is shared in the group remains there, unless the members agree that it can be shared outside.
- Acknowledge and respectfully accept the differences that we have as individual persons.
- Each person is expected to participate and shares a responsibility for the group's experience.
- During a moment of reflection or in the time between Circle members sharing, allow for silence.
- Give each person the opportunity to speak. In a time of sharing or dialogue, before speaking a second time, members will wait until those who have not spoken and would like to speak are given the chance.

Questions to ask:

- How will the group make decisions? Keep in mind that the goal is to build consensus whenever possible, or in other words, that all Circle members agree to commit to finding solutions that everyone supports or at least can live with.
- How will the group handle conflict should it arise?
- Who will (co)facilitate the gatherings? Will you rotate?
- How long will the (Co)Facilitator, Spiritual Servant and Scribe serve in their roles? How will new people be chosen to fill those roles?
- What are the attendance expectations? What does one do if they cannot attend?
- What is the cell phone policy?
- How is it decided who speaks next?
- How will logistical questions re: meeting time & possible refreshments be decided?



## **Additional Resources for All Phases**

These supporting materials can be found on the FJC Resources page of the FAN website.

- **Franciscan Spirituality**

- There is a wealth of material from the Commission on the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition, [www.franciscantradition.org](http://www.franciscantradition.org) where you can become a member for free and access writings and videos.
- Franciscan Nonviolence: Stories, Reflections, Principles, Practices and Resources, by Ken Butigan, Mary Litell, OSF and Louis Vitale, OFM. Pace e Bene Nonviolence Service.
- *St. Francis and the Foolishness of God*, by Marie Dennis, Cynthia Moe-Lobeda, Joseph Nangle, OFM, and Stuart Taylor, 1993/2015
- *Eager to Love: The Alternative Way of Francis of Assisi* by Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, 2016
- *Surrounded by Love: Seven Teachings from St. Francis*, by Fr. Murray Bodo, OFM, 2018

- **Care for Creation**

- *Care of Creation: A Franciscan Spirituality of the Earth* by Ilia Delio, OSF, Keith Douglass Warner, OFM and Pamela Wood, 2008
- “Laudato Si”, Papal Encyclical by Pope Francis, 2015 ([PDF](#))
- “Creation as the Body of God” [article](#) by Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM ([Link](#), 4 minute read)
- “Religious by nature: An interview with Keith Warner, OFM on the environment” ([Link](#), 10 minute read)

- **Poverty and Human Rights**

- [Faireconomy.org](#) has resources and activities around economic justice for group workshops; including resources on the following topics: Taxes, Race, Income, Wealth, Debt, CEO Pay, Migration, Housing, Policy, History.
- A Toolbox: Human Rights, Sustainable Development & Climate Policies: Connecting the Dots (Franciscans International) ([PDF](#), 30 pages)
- Handbook: Making Human Rights Work for People in Extreme Poverty, A Handbook for Implementing the Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights (Franciscans International and ATD Fourth World) ([Link](#), 60 pages)

- **Catholic Social Teaching**

- Himes, O.F.M, Kenneth. *101 Questions and Answers on Catholic Social Teaching*. New York: Paulist Press. 2013.
- “Faith, Charity, and Justice”, article by [Ernesto Cortés, Jr.](#) April 22, 2007 ([Link](#), 6 minute read)



## Glossary of Terms

### Consensus Decision Making

A creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement in a group. Instead of simply voting and the majority gets their way, a consensus group is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports – or at least can live with. When everyone agrees with a decision, they are much more likely to implement it. In the long run, people are also more likely to stay involved in a group that is committed to hearing their views and meeting their needs. Consensus enables a group to share power and build a stronger community.<sup>11</sup>

### Dolcezza Encounter



This is an immersion experience where members will visit with those who are somehow “on the margin,” in situations traditionally not seen as “comfortable.” The term *dolcezza* (pronounced Dol-Chay-Tza) is the Italian word for “sweetness.” This is a reference to the original Italian line of St. Francis' *Testament*, when he spoke of his encounter with the leper, writing that “what had seemed bitter was turned into sweetness of soul and body.” The key component of

<sup>12</sup> these experiences is engaging in personal encounter with those you are visiting.

### Formation

“Francis visualized a specific future for his followers. He had called them to conversion...”.<sup>13</sup> For Franciscans, formation is more than “learning”; it is a continual spiritual conversion experience. As an *ongoing* process, formation should lead the individual to evaluate themselves before God and consequently shift, turn or change their actions.

### Franciscan Intellectual Tradition

The collection, preservation, and articulation of the distinct theological and spiritual vision that animates the Franciscan movement require knowledge of the Franciscan Intellectual Tradition. This tradition “...was developed in a more systematic manner by such academic theologians as Alexander of Hales, Bonaventure, Roger Bacon, Peter of John Olivi, John Duns Scotus, and William of Ockham, as well as by vernacular theologians such as Angela of Foligno and Veronica Giuliani.”<sup>14</sup>

You can visit <https://www.franciscantradition.org/> to access the foundational documents of the Franciscan Tradition and other resources.

### Incarnation

The mystery of the Word of God made manifest. “God, who is Infinite Love, incarnates that love *as the universe* itself. Then, a mere 2,000 years ago, as Christians believe, God incarnated in personal form as Jesus of Nazareth. Divine incarnation took the form of an

<sup>11</sup> For more information see: “Introduction to consensus decision making. A short guide to collaborative decision-making for activist groups, co-ops and communities”, Seeds for Change, <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus> Accessed Aug. 15, 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Francis kisses the leper, n.d. image by Printed Psalms Publishing TM, viewed May 28, 2020, <<http://franciscanhermits.weebly.com/news/dont-be-afraid-to-kiss-some-lepers>>.

<sup>13</sup> Moons OFM, Anselm, “The Challenge of Lay Missioners” in the *World Care newsletter of Franciscan Mission Service, 1990*, <https://franciscanmissionservice.org/2015/04/throwback-thursday-anselm-moons-ofm-and-the-challenge-of-lay-missioners/> Accessed Aug. 10, 2020,

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.franciscantradition.org/about-us> Accessed Feb. 4, 2020.



Indwelling Presence in every human soul and in all creatures, but each in a unique way.”<sup>15</sup> God’s overflowing goodness and love was made known in the human person of Jesus, “the one through whom all things were made and in whom all things find their completion.”<sup>16</sup>

## Minority

In Francis’ Earlier Rule he wrote that the brothers would be called ‘friars minor’ or ‘lesser brother’, and in the next line he wrote, “Let one wash the feet of the other.”<sup>17</sup> This emphasis on minority was very intentional, and the concept of aligning oneself with those on the peripheries and without power is not optional for those who wish to follow Francis’ way of living the Gospel. As Pope Francis has said, “Since Christ and the Gospel were the fundamental option of his [St. Francis of Assisi] life, in all certainty we can say that minority, while not lacking its ascetic and social motivations, was born from contemplation of the incarnation of the Son of God, and is summarized in the image of making oneself small, like a seed. It is the same logic of “becoming poor, though he was rich” (cf. 2 Cor 8:9). The logic of “renunciation”, which Francis implemented to the letter when he “divested himself of all earthly goods, to the point of nakedness, in order to give himself entirely to God and to his brothers and sisters”.[3]...Franciscan minority is presented for you as a place of encounter and of communion with God; as a place of encounter and of communion with your brethren, and with all men and women; and finally, as a place of encounter and communion with creation.”<sup>18</sup>

## Poverty

“Although material poverty was important to him [St. Francis of Assisi], it was not the goal. Rather, material poverty was an outward sign of a much deeper, interior poverty...material poverty is the first step (but a necessary one) toward true poverty in which we recognize that everything we have, including our lives, is gift.”<sup>19</sup> Living in poverty requires dependency on others and acknowledging that daily: “Poverty calls us to be vulnerable, open and receptive to others, to allow others into our lives and to be free enough to enter into the lives of others. While Clare (and Francis) calls us to be poor so that we may enter into relationship with the poor Christ, they also ask us to be poor so as to enter into relationship with our poor brothers and sisters in whom Christ lives.”<sup>20</sup>

## Solidarity

Solidarity is about a shared commitment to the common good, rooted in the belief that we all belong to each other and are part of one human family. “At the core of the virtue of solidarity is the pursuit of justice and peace. Pope Paul VI taught that ‘if you want peace, work for justice.’”<sup>21</sup>



<sup>15</sup> Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, <https://cac.org/incarnation-weekly-summary-2019-12-28/> Accessed Dec. 28, 2019.

<sup>16</sup> Delio O.S.F., Ilia, *Franciscan Prayer*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2004, p. 2.

<sup>17</sup> St. Francis of Assisi, The Earlier Rule (*Regula non bullata*), Ch. 6 Line 4.

<sup>18</sup> Address of Pope Francis as quoted in article “Franciscans: Pope Reminds Minority a Place to Encounter God”, by: Zenit Staff, November 23, 2017, <https://zenit.org/articles/franciscans-pope-reminds-minority-a-place-to-encounter-god/> Accessed Feb. 4, 2020.

<sup>19</sup> Delio O.S.F., Ilia, *Clare of Assisi, A Heart Full of Love*, Cincinnati: St. Anthony Messenger Press, 2007, p. 19.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 11-12.

<sup>21</sup> “Solidarity”, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. <http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/what-we-believe/catholic-social-teaching/solidarity.cfm> Accessed February 4, 2020.



## Song Possibilities for FJC Gatherings

The following are suggestions to give you some ideas. Please let us know of songs that your Circle most enjoys, so that we may add them to the list.

- For the Beauty of the Earth – Foilliott S. Pierpoint, 1864
- There is a Longing – Anne Quigley, 1992
- We Remember – Marty Haugen, 1980
- You are Mine – David Haas, 1991
- We are Called --David Haas, 1988
- All Creatures of Our God and King --St. Francis of Assisi, tr. by William H. Draper, 1855-33.
- Here I am Lord - Daniel L. Schutte 1981
- Let Justice Roll Like a River – Marty Haugen, 1991
- The Summons - John Bell, 1987
- Come to the Feast - Bob Hurd, 1994
- Table of Plenty - Dan L. Schutte, 1992
- Pan de Vida - Bob Hurd, 1988, 1995
- Bread for the World - Bernadette Farrell, 1990
- City of God - Dan L. Schutte, 1981
- All Are Welcome – Marty Haugen, 1994
- Canticle of the Sun – Marty Haugen, 1980
- Pescador de Hombres/Lord, You Have Come - Cesareo Gabarain, 1979, 1987
- Prayer of St. Francis - Sebastian Temple, 1967, 2003
- We Are the Light of the World - Jean Anthony Greif, 1966
- Cry of the Poor - John Foley, S. J., 1978
- This Is My Song - verses by Lloyd Stone and Georgia Harkness, 1964
- Blest Are They - David Haas, 1985
- Tend the Ground, Curtis Stephan, 2016
- Canticle of the Turning, My Soul Cries out with a Joyful Shout. Tune: Star of the County Down, Irish traditional arrangement by Rory Cooney, b. 1952
- If You Eat Each Day - Bryan Sirchio, from *Songs For Justice Walkers*
- Open My Eyes, by Jesse Manibusan, Copyright: 1970, 1988, 1998 spiritandsong.com
- Come to the Table -Michael Card, 1984
- Will you not Listen? - Michael Card, 1992
- The Basin and the Towel - Michael Card, 1994
- God's Own Fool - Michael Card, 1985
- Do Something - Matthew West, 2014
- Give me Your Eyes - Brandon Heath, 2009
- Instrument - Matt Maher, 2016 (an interpretation of the Prayer of St. Francis)
- Franciscan songs by Cathy Tisel Nelson,
- Come to the Table - Sidewalk Prophets, 2015

