

## **The “Why” of Franciscan Solidarity Tables**

*Rooted in the Tradition of St Francis and St Clare, the Franciscan Solidarity Tables are intended to enkindle the Spirit of God within us, to move us toward being a community of love in action. In justice and support, we are inspired to set tables of peace and friendship, which nourish action in the public square.*

### **Opening Prayer:**

### **A Prayer for our Earth**

All-powerful God,  
you are present in the whole universe  
and in the smallest of your creatures.  
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.  
Pour out upon us the power of your love,  
that we may protect life and beauty.  
Fill us with peace, that we may live  
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.  
O God of the poor,  
help us to rescue the abandoned  
and forgotten of this earth,  
so precious in your eyes.  
Bring healing to our lives,  
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,  
that we may sow beauty,  
not pollution and destruction.  
Touch the hearts  
of those who look only for gain  
at the expense of the poor and the earth.  
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,  
to be filled with awe and contemplation,  
to recognize that we are profoundly united  
with every creature  
as we journey towards your infinite light.  
We thank you for being with us each day.  
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Justice, Peace and the Integrity of Creation are above all values of the Kingdom of God. As such, God Himself is involved in and committed to the task of making the world a place that is just and reconciled, providing a dignified life to all creatures. Among the values of the Kingdom of God, justice and peace are received in groups/communities. Saint Francis was aware of God's mission as Creator, Liberator, and Redeemer. As Franciscans, we are called like Saint Francis to rebuild the Church – restoring it to a place that is just and reconciled.

In the Beatitudes, Jesus declares that those are blessed who hunger and thirst for justice (Mt 5: 6). Equally blessed are the "peacemakers; they shall be called children of God" (Mt 5: 9). Jesus also indicates what is important in the Christian life: "Seek first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness" (Mt 6: 33). Jesus Himself sought first the Kingdom of God and His justice and showed hunger and thirst for justice and was persecuted because of it. He was the source, the giver and the cause of peace.

The Spirituality of Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation is integral to the Gospel and what it means to be Christian. Pope Paul VI defines: the mission of Justice and Peace is that of "keeping the eyes of the Church open, its heart sensitive and its hand prepared for the work of charity which it is called upon to realize in the world."

Our Franciscan Spirituality calls us to journey with and not just help our brothers and sisters. We live our faith in the world, helping others to understand and act on the social dimensions of the gospel in their everyday lives. Like Saint Francis, we are not only called to rebuild the church; we are called to be like our Incarnate God, who is attentive and present to all of life and creation

"Franciscans are social in nature. Franciscans live the Gospel in public, in the public sphere, not in individual privacy. The Incarnation was and is a social event. I repeat a social event. It's a big party! Let's make it good! Our "evangelical life" orients us toward engaging society and its members. We care for everyone in society, and thus the common good has a prominent role in the Franciscan tradition. There is universality to our social vision, and we should be able to contribute something to the globalization of human culture today.

"Franciscans are action-oriented. We need both feet on the ground to do this work – faith, and action. For us, learning, study, and philosophy are, at least in part, derivative of a human social experience, of action, of serving, of loving. This too is rooted in the Incarnation: Christ's embodied action.

"We practice a spirituality of social engagement, in dialogue with society, the needs of its members, especially the suffering and vulnerable. At our best, we Franciscans are creative, manifesting the creativity of God through our social innovation. This may be pastoral, practical, prophetic, or some combination of the above.

"Franciscans are not content with understanding alone. We want to express our understandings through love, through practical action."

**--Brother Keith Douglass Warner, OFM**

Justice, Peace, and Integrity of Creation is simply an intrinsic part of our spirituality in action. Our Franciscan call is based on the Gospels; JPIC is also based on the Gospels. It bubbles up from the Gospels. It is lived out from the Gospels. JPIC is not just something we do; it is who we are, as followers of Jesus in the way of Saint Francis of Assisi. It is an attitude that influences what we do and how we minister, with God, with ourselves, with other people and with creation.

It is from this place that the Franciscan Solidarity Tables are being started. We look to create places where we learn and grow to serve and advocate as Franciscans, and Franciscan Hearted people can gather to support and work together. We intend to provide formation in our spirituality, our Franciscan values for those who may need it. We provide resources and help each to grow to serve and advocate as Franciscans. We cannot do this alone just as Francis did not do it alone. We will help them look at how justice and peace issues are intrinsic to the Gospel life of Franciscans. We will help each group explore and develop their plans for action and advocacy in their locale. We will help them develop a connection to the National office. The overall purpose is to create a network of Franciscans around the country who can pursue JPIC issues in their local area in connection to the Franciscan Action Network national office.

**Suggested Songs:**

For the Beauty of the Earth – Foilliot S. Pierpoint

There is a Longing – Anne Quigley

We Remember – Marty Haugen

You are Mine – Davis Haas

**Suggested Resources:**

“Care of Creation” by Ilia Delio, 2008

“Laudato Si”, Papal Encyclical by Pope Francis, 2015

Handbook for Animators of Justice, Peace and Care of Creation Secular Franciscan Order 2018

"Eager to Love" by Fr. Richard Rohr, OFM, 2016

**Closing Prayer:****The Praises of God****St Francis of Assisi**

You are holy, the only God,

And your deeds are wonderful.

You are strong. You are great.

You are the Most High. You are Almighty.

You, Holy Father are King of heaven and earth.

You are Three and One, Lord God, All Good.

You are Good, all Good, supreme Good,

Lord God, living and true.

You are love. You are wisdom.

You are humility. You are endurance.

You are rest. You are peace.

You are joy and gladness.

You are justice and moderation.

You are all our riches, and You suffice for us.

You are beauty. You are gentleness.

You are our protector.

You are our guardian and defender.

You are our courage.

You are our haven and our hope.

You are our faith, our great consolation.

You are our eternal life, Great and Wonderful

Lord, God Almighty, Merciful Savior. Amen