



Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation



A Change in Leadership

by Sharon Winzeler, OFS



Carolyn Townes, OFS & Joe Makley, OFS

Joe Makley, OFS, is the new national animator for Justice and Peace and the Integrity of Creation. He replaces Carolyn Townes, OFS, who was appointed to the position in 2013 by the late Tom Bello, OFS. Bello asked Townes to work on educating Secular Franciscans on JPIC issues.

The National Executive Council paid tribute to Caroline (Carolyn) for her 10-year term with a retrospective slide show featuring her work on the JPIC commission.

Carolyn said goodbye with a talk on kindness. “When we show kindness to others, it inspires them to do the same, creating a chain reaction that spreads joy and positivity. As Franciscans, we are called to be instruments of peace, in our Order, in our Church, and in our world.”



Tribute to Carolyn Townes, OFS

Joe has worked with the JPIC commission since 2016 and became vice chair in 2019. He and his wife, Patricia, belong to the Holy Family Fraternity, which meets at St. Catherine of Sienna Church in Norway, ME. Professed in 1996, Joe has worked in JPIC-related issues at the local, regional, and national levels.

Joe shared, “Since being appointed, I reviewed our history, especially the transition from the Apostolic Commissions to JPIC in 2007. The hope then was to reflect on who we are as foundational to what we are doing. We are to support the sincere, daily conversion described in our Rule, and facilitate reflection on that, leading to action. For example, while meditating on the Canticle of the Creatures, we may hear it in a new way, in our hearts, and rediscover our love for God in creation and a new awareness of the sins we have committed against nature.”

Joe also spoke of following the inspiration of initiatives led by his predecessor Carolyn. He explained, “Another example would be the Faith and Racial Equity course facilitated by Carolyn Townes during the summer of 2021. We had books to read, but the main thing was listening. The time she invested in hearing and telling stories, sometimes tough stories was vital to our understanding of JPIC. In depth, we practiced Paragraph 19 of our Rule. We listened in love, open to conversion, just like Father Lester Bach emphasized so strongly in Franciscan Journey. That kind of listening is still central to who we are, a visible sign of our penitential walk.

Working in conjunction with the wishes of the National Executive Council, Joe has plans for the future of JPIC. On public issues, he will work in concert with the National Executive Council and the other commissions and committees to provide good Catholic information, a Christ-centered Franciscan response, connections to one another, and timely opportunities to pray, reflect, and act.

Joe emphasized that, in addition to the planned activities, he'd work to facilitate better understanding of Catholic Social Teaching, through hosting or connecting with one or more online seminars. Much of the increase in JPIC activity over the last few years was organized remotely, including focus groups on Care for Creation, Immigration, and Spirituality of JPIC, all of which were led by members in the regions who did their planning remotely. So, there will be more chances to connect and share and serve. Communications are a focus that should be a two-way conversation.

He invited members to contact him or other commission members directly. Their contact information is available on the Secular Franciscans USA website.