

Justice, Peace & Integrity of Creation

*I cannot do all the good that the world needs,
but the world needs all the good I can do.*

Autumn 2018

Greetings from the JPIC team

We met as a group at the end of last year, and again at Chapter, and discussed how we saw JPIC going in the Aotearoa part of our Province. We talked about how we include Melanesia in the Newsletter and also how we support them. Rather than report here on our meetings, we will post the report on the website for you to peruse at your leisure!

Our hope for JPIC is that as well as people being involved in what they are already doing, (many people are already involved in JPIC activities) they might become involved in any of a number of issues, large or small, relating to a particular theme, which would change every three years, or more, depending on what people wanted to do at the end of a three year period. This would be something we could be involved in together as an Order.

Climate Change is to be our first theme or focus. This theme fits all three parts of JPIC -

Justice, Peace (Climate Wars, Climate Refugees), and Integrity of Creation.

Resources will be put on the JPIC website and linked to Work, Study and Prayer. If you have any you think would be good to share relating to this theme, please let your JPIC Animator (Area JPIC rep) know so we can add it to the web resources.

Each Newsletter we report on JPIC work being done by one of our members – not necessarily related to the overall JPIC theme. This edition Blair Matheson reports on his work with the Leprosy Mission in Bangladesh.

We hope that in the next Newsletter we might have a JPIC story from Melanesia. We know there are many to be told.

We thank Margaret Bedggood for her help as we set up JPIC. She has stepped aside and we are delighted to have been joined by Carolyn Huges.

- *Pip Colgan (convenor), Peter Bargh, Marion Fairbrass, John Heberton,*
 - *Carolyn Hughes, Blair Matheson, Br Damian Kenneth SSF*

Reflections while working alongside leprosy affected people in Bangladesh

Today I learnt afresh how we in NZ live in such huge wealth and hardly know we are living.

Today I learnt that wealth doesn't matter.

Today I travelled 2 hours into remote areas meeting 10 ladies who have started businesses and work together helping each other to create funds for their children's health and education and they are such dedicated and tenacious women.



Today I met a young man
2Reflections while working alongside leprosy affected people in Bangladesh

5 who had an arranged marriage at 16 has 9 and 7 year old children. He

is cured from leprosy and with a loan and training, contracts to a car paint shop with his own tools. He held out his hands to show no effects left and holding my hands he thanked me??!! What have I done to receive his thanks? Such genuine gratitude is over-whelming and I realize there is a lot in my culture that by comparison does not have the "genuine" aspect to it.?

We rocket down a "highway" to visit 2 "self-help groups" in rural areas with Leprosy affected families. Courageous beyond belief, cured from leprosy, overcome huge stigma and are part of a community again. (Albeit disabled!!) They kept me busy running a mechanical grain mill making rice flour, feeding rice husks to the sheep in the new sheep breeding business, working in a cow poo worm farm and harvesting spray free tomatoes, fruits and chillies!!

Straight back to lead 2 sessions on business management and sustainability using SWOT and personal analysis. 2 groups of 25 in each so we swap them between us and teach the same things again. They are absolutely passionate and committed to seeing these 3347 businesses survive in the long term. We covered business plans, leadership, market research, disaster plans, problem solving and self-assessment with lots of group work. Travelling for hours each month by motorbike they visit each one of the 287 self-help groups, incredible commitment to see disabled people have and enjoy life.



Have chatted (lots of signage and a bit of interpretation) several times with Mikan who did not know he had Leprosy for years, badly affecting his feet and legs. Imagine turning your feet outwards as far as they can go and then turning them as much the other way so technically they are backwards. He looks after himself, is a leader in one of the groups wearing a special pair of sandals and it humbles me to think of the difference they have made for him, all for NZ\$10. Simple and such effective solutions!!! Do we in NZ complicate it all rather than adding simplicity to sustainability to achieve best practice and results???? We seem to have much more than what we realise!!!!

The limbless beggars are very hard to refuse, overcome by the fact that on the spot I can do nothing for them but need to follow who I am with



so I don't get lost. So, what is more important, me being lost in Chittagong or these peoples' open sores, hunger and the pain in their eyes? I am reminded constantly of the leprosy affected man I came across at the bottom of the market steps in *Yogyakarta*, Indonesia 10 years ago. We shared tears, pain, passed coins and a memory that is fresh everyday. The 'limbless' are like footballs on the street teaming with people, ignoring them, being scuffed by the feet of the wealthy, barked at by the dogs and shouted out by the crowds trying to get by.

I use "today" a lot as the reality I have learnt in this place especially is yesterday has gone, who knows about tomorrow so today is the day!!!
TODAY

More training, program planning, disaster management within the project covering thousands of people, mentoring and the concepts of active listening, followed up with a group exercise on formulating plans to mentor business owners. Along with marketing, sales and cashflow and budgeting and profit and costing!!!

I wish the world could see these 9 field officers, their team of 4 plus the self-help group leaders who look after these approx 3300 businesses. They are keen to learn, want to do their best, have such high goals and

are amazingly confident given what some of them have endured. Their stories are beyond incredible reminding me of the easier existence in NZ. What and how do we do with this "easier existence"?

Today we visited another self-help group who in the last year have saved \$NZ450, a huge amount of money, all recorded and banked, then loaned out again so they can help their neighbours. They talked today about disaster plans and business management. They are pros!!!!!! When you think of their history and how they have "fought" to get there it is mind blowing. Go the human capacity. Makes me wonder how much of our capacity do we use in NZ????? Would make an interesting discussion?

Another culture brings so many differences, underneath those we aren't that different at all. We are all humans!!!

Today marks the end of my Bangladesh visit, what an honour and privilege to be here with these amazing people. At times my heart has been stretched beyond imagination and other times I have laughed myself silly. Other times I have shed tears for being able to see such human strength of character, resolve and commitment.

Today I am reminded of a man I met, healed from Leprosy and now making his way through life like the rest of us and he said with such feeling, "and now I can help others". Today, life is for living and being today!!!!

I am waiting at Chittagong airport to get to Dhaka. I am the only western person and stand out like a sore thumb and remind myself this is how it is for refugees, the homeless, the disadvantaged or disabled in any culture

There is another good discussion!



A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand is part of the A Rocha family of Christian environmental conservation organizations which currently operates in 20 countries around the world. As a family, we focus on environmental science and research, practical nature conservation, environmental education, creation care and advocacy through a variety of programmes and initiatives.

Learn more about them here:

<http://www.arocha.org.nz/education-engagement/rich-living/>

They have begun to produce a series of bible studies on major environmental issues: **Climate Change**, and **Water** are available now. Three other titles are to follow (**Transportation, Food, Stuff and Waste**).

The JPIC Committee encourages each Area to use the first of these studies, Climate Change, during 2018. A hard copy can be ordered online (see web address above) or a PDF can be ordered online for a soft copy. Both are free of charge, though you may want to consider making a donation.

There are four studies in the booklet.

The Changing History of Climate;

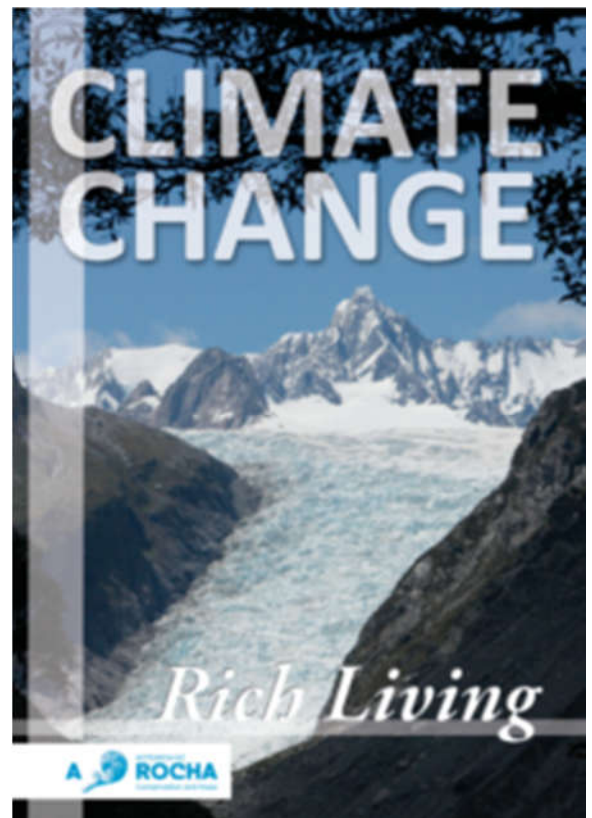
What's Changing and Why it matters;

How Did We Get Here? ;

Responding In Hope.

Each one contains some information, some suggestions for activities or discussion, some biblical passages to consider.

If you are an "Isolated Tertiary" you may also consider getting hold of the booklet and sharing it with friends locally whether or not they are part of your Franciscan Family.





Look what I got for Christmas!



In New Zealand we use over 1 billion plastic bags per year. I had been musing over how to avoid using plastic bags when I buy vegetables for some time. I had even bought some hessian to make my own bags even though I realised it would weigh a little each time I used a bag. Then I got an exciting present.

Today I have gone online and ordered another pack – this time of 4 small bags; 2 mesh and 2 plain cotton. www.myvitabag.co.nz. The bags are made of pure organic cotton. In a pack you can get a mixture of mesh and solid fabric, large and small bags. The bags have a draw-string to close them and are machine washable.

As they are reasonably priced and I can afford them, I have bought – but if someone has more time than money, it would be simple to make bags like this. The only problem I see is that it may be hard to source mesh cotton fabric. Would cheesecloth be a good fabric? Maybe someone can trial that and let us know.

Anyway – I am now off to do my first grocery shop with my cloth veggie bags. Exciting!

Marion Fairbrass