

JPIC supplement to candidacy formation
by Andrew Conradi, ofs (JPIC National Animator), 2016
Some ideas/points that could be included at the discretion of the formator

CANDIDACY

Chapter 18 “Being Faithful”

The Franciscan Journey (Updated version 2010) by Lester Bach, OFM Cap.

Note: *Understanding JPIC (UJPIC)* can be found here:

<http://www.franciscanvoicecanada.com/> Click on “Understanding JPIC” at the foot of the page. [It is best to get it from this source as it will post the amendments quickly after they are made so you will get the latest updated version here]

1.

From *FJ* p 198: “*Signs of the times* – as we develop a sensitive spirit, alert to God-at-work in our lives, our Church, and our world, we recognize what the world is telling us.”

From *UJPIC*:

“See, Judge, Act

3.2.104. The *See, Judge, Act* model is the process by which the Catholic Church reads the signs of the times and responds to JPIC and other temporal issues. Belgian priest, later Cardinal, Joseph Cardijn (1882-1967), ministered to poor workers and in 1912 founded the *Jeunesse ouvrière chrétienne* (JOC - Young Christian Workers). It received approval from Pius XI in 1925. Cardijn wrote in 1896: “In order to act well, it is necessary to see and judge well.” The process of *See, Judge, Act* has become a potent way of reading the signs of the times and engaging in action for justice in a way that is transformative. Although long practiced by the JOC and similar Catholic Action organisations it received a boost during Vatican II and is widely known and used in the Catholic Church.

3.2.105. Pope John XXIII spoke about the *See, Judge, Act* method during the Second Vatican Council in 1961 and in *Mater et Magistra* wrote that “it is not enough merely to formulate a social doctrine. It must be translated into reality. And this is particularly true of the Church's social doctrine, the light of which is Truth, Justice its objective, and Love its driving force.” (n. 226) His solution was the *See, Judge, Act* methodology (1961, *Mater et Magistra*, nn. 236 & 237):

“There are three stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice. First, one reviews the

concrete situation; secondly, one forms a judgment on it in the light of these same principles; thirdly, one decides what in the circumstances can and should be done to implement these principles. These are the three stages that are usually expressed in the three terms: look, judge, act.

It is important for our young people to grasp this method and to practice it. Knowledge acquired in this way does not remain merely abstract, but is seen as something that must be translated into action.”

3.2.106. This method, for “reading the signs of the times,” became widespread in the social-pastoral work of many bishops’ conferences and national and diocesan justice commissions. It will be outlined in more detail under Methodology of JPIC Work.

3.2.106.a. It has deep roots in the Roman Catholic Church. The method that we now know as the See, Judge, Act has a long history that can be traced to the mid 19th century "Observation Method" developed by Frédéric Le Play. Le Play was a classmate and friend of Alphonse Gratry at the Ecole Polytechnique in Paris during the 1820s. Another of Le Play's friends, was the philosopher Léon Ollé-Laprune, who spoke of the need to "see clearly, judge well and conclude (decide)". The work of these men was in turn picked up by Marc Sangnier and the leaders of the Sillon movement at the turn of the 20th century. The Sillon transformed Le Play's "method of observation" into their "method of democratic education" for promoting and maximising "the consciousness and responsibility" of each person through their study circles. A Sillon counsellor, the Dominican philosopher, AD Sertillanges wrote of the need to "seek, judge, and act".

3.2.106.b.

These methods also proved influential in Belgium where a young Victoire Cappe gave a talk in 1911 divided into three parts, namely facts, principles and solutions. These were some of the intellectual and methodological roots of the *jocist* method developed by Belgian priest, later cardinal, Cardijn that has since become famous as the "See Judge Act" method. (seejudgeact.org. No date) Christian socialist Paulo Freire’s famous *Pedagogia do Oprimido, 1968, (Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970)* was also based on this method but also includes Marxist analysis, which gets it into trouble with the Church!

3.2.106.c.

“Raised in a Roman Catholic home, Freire insisted that he never abandoned

his faith despite the strong influence of Marxist philosophy in his writing. Rarely mentioned in biographies is his participation in Catholic action movements and the influence of Latin American liberation theologians in the development of his ideas.” (Clare, no date) His ideas can perhaps be summed up in this quotation from him: “Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”

(<http://seminariumblog.org/general/semclass/pop-culture-pedagogy-danger-seminary-curriculum/>)

3.2.107. In their “Message to the People of God,” the Bishops, united at the Synod on “The New Evangelization for the Transmission of the Christian Faith” declared: “A field in which the light of the Gospel can and must shine in order to illuminate humanity’s footsteps is politics. Politics requires a commitment of selfless and sincere care for the common good by fully respecting the dignity of the human person from conception to natural end, honoring the family founded by the marriage of a man and a woman, and protecting academic freedom; by removing the causes of injustice, inequality, discrimination, violence, racism, hunger and war. Christians are asked to give a clear witness to the precept of charity in the exercise of politics. (Synodus Episcoporum, XIII Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops 7-28 October 2012, Message, n.10)

3.2.107.a. The Bishops then tie together charity, justice, the new evangelisation, social doctrine of the church and social and political life in these sentences (n.12):

“The gesture of charity, on the other hand, must also be accompanied by commitment to justice, with an appeal that concerns all, poor and rich. Hence, the social doctrine of the Church is integral to the pathways of the new evangelization, as well as the formation of Christians to dedicate themselves to serve the human community in social and political life.”

3.2.108. A thought-provoking quotation on action or *praxis*: G.K. Chesterton who, in *What's Wrong With The World* (1910), reminded us that: “Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it has been found difficult and not tried.”

3.2.108.a. If we look at the world through the eyes of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) it is clear he and the Church have *seen, and judged* as these headings and paragraphs indicate: “[No to an economy of exclusion](#) [53-54] [No to the new idolatry of money](#) [55-56] [No to a financial system which rules rather than serves](#) [57-58] [No to the inequality which spawns violence](#) [59-60] [The economy and the distribution of income](#) [202-208] [Concern for the vulnerable](#) [209-216]”

Now it is up to us to act! From UJPIC:

“5.1.22. For FI [Franciscans International at the UN in New York and Geneva], its vision is a global community built on Franciscan values, in which the dignity of every person is respected; resources are shared equitably; the environment is sustained; and nations and peoples live in peace. The ministry of Franciscans International at the United Nations flows from its Vision.

5.1.23. Advocacy is the main ministry of FI. This reflects the belief that in addressing systemic injustice, which is the root cause of so much poverty and pain in the world, positive change can be brought into the lives of those who suffer most.

5.1.24. Since it is impossible for FI Advocates to address every issue brought to their attention by the Franciscan Family, the three primary priorities are (1) Extreme Poverty, (2) Environment [creation], and (3) Peace-Building. Other priorities include Contemporary Forms of Slavery, Indigenous Peoples and Women and Children. In 2013 FI had to drastically downsize staff because of financial constraints.

Doug Clorey, a Canadian, is the President of the FI Board of Directors
<http://www.franciscansinternational.org/>

Questions for reflection:

- 1. Do you have enough time to be aware of all that is going on in the world?**
- 2. If not, should someone be delegated to do that? If so who?**
- 3. How to choose which issues to focus on? Are you aware of the issues that the OFS National JPIC Action Plan has chosen? (see UJPIC 6.1.14.)**