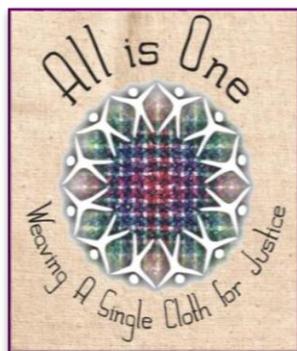


## **JUSTICE AND PEACE AND THE INTEGRITY OF CREATION (JPIC)**

In *The Joy of the Gospel* Pope Francis points out some of the challenges of today's world, and encourages us to say "No to an economy of exclusion...no to the new idolatry of money...no to the financial system which rules rather than serves...no to the inequality that spawns violence... Yes to the challenge of a missionary spirituality...no to selfishness and spiritual sloth...no to a sterile pessimism...yes to the new relationship brought by Christ...no to spiritual worldliness...no to warring among ourselves."



### **All is One – Weaving A Single Cloth For Justice.**

I had the gift of participating in the Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Conference held in Toronto. With prayer, song, ritual, presentations, small and large group sharing, the participants listened, learned and, hopefully, left more deeply committed to live our vocations to be peace bearers. The conference's main speaker was Sr. Carol Zinn SSJ, a past president of the LCWR.

As I look at my many pages of notes, I'd like to share today just a few inputs.

## **The Conference Context – The TRC (Truth and Reconciliation Commission)**

94 recommendations from the TRC were presented to Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches and to the government who ran and supervised residential schools. The horrific impact of the residential schools on the past and present lives of Canada's indigenous peoples was profoundly acknowledged. Some participants of the TRC were also present at this JPIC conference. It was sobering to hear about the struggles, the pain and the loss of family, culture and identity suffered by many in residential schools. The TRC gave a real context to our JPIC sharing. The days were grace-filled as we heard about the diverse and committed efforts of many religious and other organizations who advocate and who help to bring awareness and healing.

### **Pope Francis**

Although this happened after the conference, it is important to note that during his recent trip to Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay, Pope Francis apologized for the "many grave sins committed against the native peoples of America in the name of God." Our Holy Father continued, "I humbly ask forgiveness, not only for the offences of the Church herself, but also for crimes committed against the native peoples during the so-called conquest of America." Pope Francis leads by example! The Holy Father's witness was definitely in keeping with the tone and desire of this JPIC conference.

### **Sr. Carol Zinn, SSJ**

Sr. Carol's presentations helped to 'situate' our reflections. I'd like to share a few of Carol's key thoughts, not necessarily her exact words:

God is a God of relationality who desires our transformation away from 'I' to 'We'.

- The back drop for our Justice and Peace ministries is to acknowledge that Religious Life is no longer a labour force but rather leaven in the world. (Mt. 25)
- Justice must be chosen. It is God's grace that takes us out from institutions to be leaven (a presence in the world).
- We need to accept that there is a huge shift in religious life today. What is behind us is gone. We can't go back or long for what used to be.
- The focus is on relationships – socially, theologically and politically. Structures are venues that hold relationships but the structures will change as relationships change.
- Where do we experience hope and passion? What is God saying to us today?
- Are we at the margins or standing with the marginalized? Are we choosing relationships over revenge or inclusion over isolation and protectionism? Pope Francis reminds us that if we don't the Church will never be compassionate and merciful.

## **A change of heart is required.**

Sr. Carol reminded us that Pope Francis speaks to the heart of every person. We are all very capable of selfishness and the individualism that excludes. Ecological conversion is necessary at every level – among the movers and the shakers who control and shape the global economy and among every living person. God's creation is meant to be enjoyed by everyone. This planet is our common home. We have to take care of it and maintain it and heal it where it is hurting.

There is still more to share from the JPIC Conference. But for now, is there something from the above that challenges you to be the new leaven for Justice and Peace in our world?



**Do you not know that a little leaven  
spreads through the whole batch of dough?  
(1Cor. 5:6)**

*How do you envision our role  
in our present world reality?*

