

FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Dedication to peace is inseparable from the spirit of St. Francis of Assisi and his followers. The same spirit permeates the work of Franciscans - nuns and friars in the territory of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. In these areas, which in their long history, all until recent times were thorn by numerous war conflicts, Franciscans managed to contribute strongly to the reconciliation and coexistence of people from different cultures and religions, all in the spirit of Gospel. In the last war (1991 - 1995) the Franciscans also devoted themselves ardently to the service of peace. Although they didn't manage to prevent or stop the war, they were anyway trying to prevent crimes and mitigate the sufferings of people.

Pursuing the tradition and their widespread presence, the Franciscans - friars and nuns feel committed to continue searching for always new models of conciliation and to develop new concepts of creating permanent peace.

I. HISTORY

1. PREDECESSOR OF THE INSTITUTE

Minister General of the Franciscan order, Father Hermann Schalück, together with the Head of the Commission for Justice and Peace, Father John Quigley, visited brothers in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1992. Upon the insight in war troubles, he suggested to the brothers provincials to send two friars who would join Franciscan *Commission for Justice and Peace* in Rome, communicate the situation to Franciscan brothers and lobby for the needs of people in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The provincials have designated Fr. Bože Vuleta and Fr. Franjo Radman, whose commitment to this mission lasted all the year 1993. Father John Quigley, Head of Commission joined them in their mission activities. They visited numerous ecclesiastical, political, humanitarian and media institutions in America and Europe, Episcopal Conferences, United Nations in NY and Geneve, NATO in Bruxelles, British and German Parliament, International Caritas, and many Caritas institutions on national level. In cooperation with Franciscan Missions in Burlington, Wisconsin, USA, Fr. Bože was preaching for three months in American parishes, raising aid for refugees from Bosnia, hosted in Croatia.

Upon his return from subject mission, Fr. Bože Vuleta was appointed to the position of head of *Commission for Justice and Peace* at the level of the Conference of South Slavic Provincial Ministers. Besides maintaining contacts with the same, central commission in Rome, the Commission intensified the activity in our territories. The most distinctive projects from that time are symposium „Praštanje [Forgiveness]“, held in April 1995, and the course book „Na putu mira [On Path of Peace]“ drawn for the quiz competition, organised at national youth meeting in Solin, in June 1996.

Upon suggestions by Fr. Mirko Mataušić, president of the Conference of Franciscan Provincial Ministers and the Council of Franciscan Communities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the necessity and models of intensifying Franciscan dedication to justice and peace in our areas have become the matter of consideration. Then president of *Mission center* (Missionszentrale) of German Franciscans, Father Andreas Müller, proposed the Franciscans to establish the institute for peace research, hoping he might obtain financial support for such a project which should require at least ten employees. Fr. Andreas hadn't managed to find funding sources. Nevertheless, the idea has survived.

2. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRANCISCAN INSTITUTE FOR THE CULTURE OF PEACE

Council of Franciscan Communities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina enacted decision on the establishment of Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace on April 16, 1996. Fr. Bože Vuleta was appointed the director of the Institute, and sister Rebeka Anić full time employee. The former *Commission for Justice and Peace*, with its headquarters in Sinj ceased to operate, and its activities were taken over by the Institute, which in October of that same year moved its office to Franciscan Monastery of St. Antonio in Split, where it has remained with its premises until now. (The work in the competence of *Commission for Justice and Peace* on the level of the Conference of South Slavic Provincial Ministers and Council of Franciscan Communities was taken over by the Institute).

Initial efforts of the Institute were focused on solidarity with refugees and war victims, and forgiveness as direct help to the suffering ones. The employees and associates of the Institute were cooperating with numerous NGO-s, local ones in the territories of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and with international ones as well, which were rather numerous at that time. This cooperation has proved even more the importance of the forgiveness for the process of reconciliation, which had been pursued by the Institute employees already within the activities of *Commission for Justice and Peace*. Some of more significant projects developed in this and in other fields of the Institute activity:

➤ **Forgiveness and reconciliation**

- Results of research among general population and separately among Franciscan friars and Franciscan nuns in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on the issue of forgiveness, carried in 1995, published in: *Crkva u svijetu*, XXXIV, No. 2, Split, 1999
- „*Putovi i stranputice pomirenja* [Paths and Sidetracks to Reconciliation]“, 1997, declaration on current (difficulties)opportunities of the process of post-war reconciliation in cooperation with Centre for peace and human rights from Osijek
- „*Na putu mira* [On Path of Peace]“– course book prepared by Institute, and on March 15, 1999 approved by Ministry of Education and Sports of the Republic of Croatia for use in schools
- „*Mir u Hrvatskoj, rezultati istraživanja* [Peace in Croatia- results of research]“, 2001, research on forgiveness and reconciliation, accomplished in cooperation with Croatian Caritas: []
- „*Oprost i pomirenje – izazov Crkvi i društvu* [Forgiveness and Reconciliation-a Challenge for the Church and Society]“, 2001, international conference
- „*Kršćanstvo i pamćenje – kršćansko pamćenje i oslobađanje od zlopamćenja* [Christianity and Memory - Christian Memory and dealing with Bad Memories]“, 2003, international conference
- „*Dijalogom do mira* [From Dialogue to Peace]“, 2005, Proceedings dedicated to Željko Mardešić, prominent Institute associate.
- „*Bosna i Hercegovina - europska zemlja bez Ustava, znanstveni, etički i politički izazov*“ [Bosnia and Herzegovina - European country without Constitution, scientific, ethical and political

challenge]“, 2013, international conference endeavouring to develop new social agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- „*Nepomireno društvo – nepomirena pamćenja* [Unreconciled Society - Unreconciled Memories]“, 2016, international conference
- „*Vrata svetoga – interdisciplinarno čitanje opusa Željka Mardešića* [Door to the Sacred - Interdisciplinary reading of Željko Mardešić's works]“, 2016, one-day scientific symposium to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the death of Željko Mardešić, organised in cooperation with Faculty of Catholic Theology and Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split

➤ **Social advocacy**

- „*Kultura solidarnosti* [Culture of Solidarity]“, 1996, sociological research
- „*Kultura solidarnosti* [Culture of Solidarity]“, 1997, scientific conference
- Campaign against Sunday work in retailer trade, 2003, launched by the Institute with Caritas Croatia and Croatian Bishops' Conference/HBK through its Centre for the Promotion of the Social Doctrine of the Church. The collected 300.000 signatures were delivered to Croatian government. The bill on the ban of Sunday work was passed, which was contested by Constitutional court, and afterwards followed by the other act, in which the Sunday work was significantly restricted.
- „*Nedjelja radi čovjeka* [Sunday to a Man]“, 2004, document elaborated by organisers of the campaign for work-free Sunday in retailer trade, upon the incentive by HBK.
- „*Slobodna nedjelja: kultura u nestajanju* [Work-free Sunday: fading culture]“, 2014, survey in cooperation with Catholic University of Croatia in Zagreb.

➤ **Integrity of Creation**

- „*Odgovornost za život* [Responsibility for Life]“, 2000, interdisciplinary international conference on human responsibility for nature and environment.
- „*Žeđ na izvoru – moja odgovornost za vodu* [Thirst at spring - my responsibility for water resources]“, 2003/2004, survey which was the starting point for the Institute's determination to lobby for insertion of provisions which shall prevent possible privatisation of water resources in the strategic documents and water related legislation. The pressure exerted by the Institute has obtained valuable results. The Survey was published as the manual, under the same title, 2005.
- „*Družba Adria*“, 2006/2010, campaign against JANAF/*Adriatic Oil Pipeline* project according to which this public company would transport crude oil by pipeline to Omišalj, on the island of Krk, and further by Adriatic Sea in oil tankers to third countries. Besides Institute and FSR/Franciscan Secular Order, HBK Commission Iustitia et Pax and many other NGOs joined the campaign.
- „*Taj divni Božji svijet – vjernik i ekologija*“ [This glorious Divine world - the faithful and ecology]“, 1997, Institute has prepared the third, amended edition of this course book, used in catechism lectures at schools and parishes.
- „*Zrak naš svagdanji - klimatske promjene i globalno zatopljenje* [Our daily air - climatic changes and global warming]“, 2007, survey - course book.

- „*Okoliš naš svagdašnji* [Our daily environment]“, 2015, side event organised by the Institute in cooperation with Dubrovnik Diocese and held in Dubrovnik along with the presentation of the Encyclical Letter *Laudato si'* of the Holy Father Francis.
- **Woman in Church and society**
- „*Više od zadanoga – Žene u Crkvi u Hrvatskoj u 20. stoljeću* [More Than A Given - Women in the Church in Croatia in the 20th Century]“, 2003, doctoral thesis of sister Rebeka Anić; she encouraged the Institute to involve these issues in its activities.
- „*Muško i žensko stvori ih - žene i muškarci u življenju i u službi Božjega poslanja* [He created them male and female - women and men in life and in God's service]“, 2005, research among general population and separately among priests and nuns, results published in 2008.
- „*Nasilje nad ženama – teološko-pastoralni izazovi* [Violence Against Women - Theological-Pastoral Challenges]“, 2006, Proceedings.

3. DISTINGUISHED ASSOCIATES OF THE INSTITUTE

Željko Mardešić (1933 - 2006), sociologist and phenomenologist of religion. He cooperated with the Institute during the Homeland War, and particularly in post-war period, all until the end of his life, dedicating strong efforts to the issues of peace, promotion of dialogue and spirit of the Second Vatican Council and Gospel achievements. He participated in planning and designing symposiums, panels, round tables, meetings and gatherings. He considered Institute as important and rare place of peacemaking. Institute has raised the procedure of granting him the honorary doctorate and published the proceedings dedicated to him „*Dijalogom do mira* [From Dialogue to Peace]“ (2005). On the tenth anniversary of his death, the Institute, in cooperation with Faculty of Catholic Theology and Faculty of Humanities and Social sciences in Split, organised one-day scientific symposium dealing with his opus: „*Vrata svetoga – interdisciplinarno čitanje opusa Željka Mardešića*“ [Door to the Sacred - interdisciplinary reading of Željko Mardešić's works]“, 2016.

Fr. Špiro Marasović (1944 - 2013), theologian, philosopher, writer, professor of social doctrine of the Church. Franciscan himself, he recognised in the Institute true opportunity for peace advocacy and promotion of social doctrine of the Church. Moreover, Institute for him was the place of dialogue, encounters and possibility to promote important, however practically marginal issues of the Franciscanism: forgiveness, reconciliation, integrity of creation. He was lead author of the first comprehensive sociological research „*Kultura solidarnosti*“ [Culture of Solidarity]“, 1995. He interceded at Faculty of Catholic Theology and University of Split for the award of honorary PhD title to Željko Mardešić. He participated in preparation and devising of symposiums, round tables, presentation of publications and in liturgical celebrations related to the work of the Institute.

4. INSTITUTE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Since the Council of Franciscan Communities itself is not registered as legal person in the Republic of Croatia, it simply cannot incorporate another legal entity, and therefore Franciscan Institute for the Culture of Peace was registered as the association on August 19, 1999; whereby it hasn't ceased to exist as the ecclesiastical institution, established by the Council of Franciscan Communities. Institute was founded with the objective of promotion, development and improvement of justice, peace and integrity of the creation, as much in Croatia as in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

- **Directors of the Institute:**

- **Employees of the Institute:**

- **Organisational structure:**

Assembly - the highest organ of the Association, consisting of all physical persons, members of the Association.

Governing Board - elected and appointed by the Assembly, performs whole range of activities according to the art. 22 of the Association Statute.

President - elected and appointed by the Assembly, on consent of its chairman. Represents and acts on behalf of the Association, also performing the other activities in compliance with the law, Statute and Association bylaws.

Vice president - elected and appointed by the Assembly. Replaces President in all the activities in case of his absence or impediment.

Secretary - elected and appointed by the Assembly among members of the Association and employees, performs numerous professional-administrative tasks assigned by the Assembly.

Employees - Governing Board decides on hiring the employees.

II. SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS

- Recognisability and experience in issues of forgiveness, reconciliation, ecology in the Church and society
- Organisational experience
- Heritage of close link with the achievements of Željko Mardešić
- Probable financial stability in long run
- Possibility of support by Franciscan communities in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina
- Wide sphere of activity
- Possibility of thematically different projects
- Possibility of work with different target groups

WEAKNESSES

- Failure to fully regulate the relations between the Council of Franciscan Communities and Institute
- Unresolved funding of „overhead costs“ of the Association
- Lack of strategy
- Scarce use of web site
- Unclear membership status
- Unfinished process of adjustment with legal regulations
- Failure to implement financial plan (due to subsidiarity)
- Orientation to a single donor
- Neglected cooperation with groups of associates, NGOs, institutions and individuals

OPPORTUNITIES

- Role of Institute between/in the Church and society
- Need and scarce coverage of topics dealing with forgiveness, environmental issues and social justice in the Church
- Donors' confidence
- High quality communication with Franciscan communities
- Access to Church premises
- Invitation by the Church Magisterium to deal with the topics, recognised by the Institute
- Adjustment of Institute strategy with strategy of Franciscan orders

THREATS

- Risk of cessation of financial support by VFZ/Council of Franciscan Communities (already decreased)
- Reduction of support by VFZ to formal support only

III. MISSION

- Promotion and lobbying for:
 - culture of peace, stimulating forgiveness, dialogue and reconciliation among members of Franciscan communities and among other stakeholders in contact with them;
 - youth education for social commitments, enabling them to become competent and self-confident in their response to social challenges;
 - integrity of environmental approach, based on Catholic Church doctrine and charisma of St. Francis of Assisi, promoting the awareness on responsibility for life, theology of creation and water management issues.

- Together with the other members of Franciscan family cooperate with wider Christian community in promotion and implementation of values inherent to above specified fields of activities.

- Cooperate with other similar institutions and associations in raising awareness about subject values and their implementation in the life of social community and life of each individual.

- Connect individuals, institutions and associations, dealing with the same or similar issues.

IV. VISION

Institute considers itself as the Franciscan centre, pursuing the promotion of culture of peace, dialogue, social sensibility and ecology. Its driving force is Franciscan relation of love towards God Creator, brothers people and all created. Transformation of the Institute into Franciscan Centre for the Culture of Peace would enable Franciscan friars, nuns and interested laymen to deal in a short or in long run with different topics comprised in the current activities and interests of the Institute, to meet each other, to get to know each other better and to cooperate, to have interprovincial centre for retreats, withdrawal into peace, solitude and prayer, good prerequisites for intellectual work and social dedication. It might also serve as single venue for organisation of seminars, study days, weekend or weekly training programmes for different groups. This vision might be realised faster if identifying, transforming and suitably settling some (abandoned or almost abandoned) monastery which could be taken over by the Council of Franciscan communities and make it available to the Institute.

V. PRIORITY FIELDS OF ACTIVITIES

➤ **Culture of peace**

- Peace:
 - reconciliation
 - forgiveness
 - inter-religious dialogue
- Social justice:
 - workers
 - women issues
 - marginal groups

➤ **Environmental issues**

- water and sea
- responsibility for life
- theology of creation

➤ **Education**

- spirituality
- social competences
- academic cooperation

VI. MONITORING OF STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLEMENTATION /MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Institute employees draft the Strategy which should be approved by the Governing Board. The implementation of the strategic plan is monitored by the Institute employees, who evaluate it once a month, and accordingly report to the Governing Board at least every six months. Governing Board analysis the report and approves it or not.

VII. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Institute is funded from the grants provided by the Council of Franciscan Communities and purpose funds granted by donors. Institute shall make efforts to extend the pool of donors by its active involvement in fund-raising events and enhancing the relations with present and possible private donors.