

ENCYCLICAL LETTER ~~ FRATELLI TUTTI

Chapter Five

A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

154. The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good.
161. Another sign of the decline of popular leadership is concern for short-term advantage. One meets popular demands for the sake of gaining votes or support, but without advancing in an arduous and constant effort to generate the resources people need to develop and earn a living by their own efforts and creativity.
162. The biggest issue is employment. The truly “popular” thing – since it promotes the good of the people – is to provide everyone with the opportunity to nurture the seeds that God has planted in each of us: our talents our initiative and our innate resources. This is the finest help we can give to the poor, the best path to a life of dignity. Hence my insistence that, “helping the poor financially must always be a provisional solution in the face of pressing needs. The broader objective should always be to allow them a dignified life through work”.
166. Political propaganda, the media and the shapers of public opinion will continue to promote an individualistic and uncritical culture subservient to unregulated economic interests and societal institutions at the service of those who already enjoy too much power.
173. I would also note the need for a reform of “the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. “The international community is a juridical community founded on the sovereignty of each member state, without bonds of subordination that deny or limits its independence.” There is a need to ensure the uncontested rule of law and tireless recourse to negotiation, mediation and arbitration, as proposed by the Charter of the United Nations, which constitutes truly a fundamental juridical norm”. There is need to prevent this Organization from being delegitimized, since tis problems and shortcomings are capable of being jointly addresses and resolved.
180. Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as “a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good.
187. Charity, which is the spiritual heart of politics, is always a preferential love shown to those in greatest need, it undergirds everything we do on their behalf. Only a gaze transformed by charity can enable the dignity of others to be recognized and, as a consequence, the poor to be acknowledged and valued in their dignity, respected in their identity and culture, and thus truly integrated into society. That gaze is at the heart of the authentic spirit of politics.
189. We are still far from a globalization of the most basic human rights. That is why world politics needs to make the effective elimination of hunger one of its foremost and imperative goals.
195. In fact, a healthy openness never threatens one’s own identity. A living culture, enriched by elements from other places, does not import a mere carbon copy of those new elements, but integrates them in its own unique way. The result is a new synthesis that is ultimately beneficial to all, since the original culture itself ends up being nourished.
197. Politics is something more noble than posturing, marketing and media spin. These sow nothing but division, conflict and a bleak cynicism incapable of mobilizing people to pursue a common goal. The real, and potentially painful, questions will be, “How much love did I put into my work?” “What did I do for the progress of our people?” “What mark did I leave on the life of society?” “What real bonds did I create?” “What positive forces did I unleash?” “How much social peace did I sow?” “What good did I achieve in the position that was entrusted to me?”