



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

FRATELLI TUTTI

Of the Holy Father Francis

On fraternity and social friendship

An overview of the Encyclical

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Introduction

Inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis gives us *Fratelli tutti*, a proposal for a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel. It is a call to love others as brothers and sisters, even when they are far from us; it is a call to open fraternity (FT 1), to recognizing and loving every person with a love without borders; it is a call to encounter others in a way that is capable of overcoming all distance and every temptation to engage in disputes, impositions, or submissions (FT 3).

Fratelli tutti does not claim to offer a complete teaching on fraternal love, but seeks rather to consider its universal scope (FT 6).

COVID-19 forced the Pope to interrupt his writing of *Fratelli tutti*. This pandemic has exposed our false securities, our fragmentation, and our inability to work together (FT 7).

In the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or to ignore others, *Fratelli tutti* is an invitation to respond to God's call with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship (FT 6).

The Holy Father hopes that, in these times, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity by acknowledging the dignity of each and every human person (FT 8).

CHAPTER 1

DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD

The first chapter describes for us the dark clouds over a closed world; these clouds extend to all parts of the world, hindering the development of universal fraternity (*FT 9*); they are the circumstances that leave many people wounded by the roadside, discarded and rejected. The clouds plunge humanity into confusion, isolation, and desolation.

The dreams of a united Europe and an integrated Latin America, among others, appear to be shattered (*FT 10*). Myopic nationalism prospers, selfishness grows, and our social sense is lost (*FT 11*). Expressions like “opening up to the world” have been co-opted by the economic and financial sectors. A culture is being imposed that unifies the world but divides people and nations. Individuals are reduced to being consumers and spectators. Globalized society makes us more like neighbours, but it does not make us brothers and sisters. We are more alone than ever (*FT 12*).

Historical consciousness has sunken into the shadows; human freedom claims that it can create everything from scratch; we are urged to consume without limits and to embrace an empty individualism that ignores and scorns history (*FT 13*).

New forms of cultural colonization extend their reach ever farther; native peoples lose their ancient traditions and end up robbed of their very soul, losing not only their spiritual identity but also their moral integrity (*FT 14*).

Under the dark shadows of this ever more tightly closed world, precious words like democracy, freedom, justice, and unity are manipulated and emptied of meaning (*FT 14*). We see people sowing despair and discouragement, hyperbole, extremism, and polarization—these are the strategies for dominating and gaining control over people. The system denies the right of others to exist or to have an opinion. Politics has been turned into marketing (*FT 15*).

Some parts of our human family are readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Persons considered no longer productive or useful are disregarded and discounted by this throwaway culture (*FT 18*) that prevails beneath the dark clouds of our closed world.

Inequality of rights (*FT 22*) and new forms of slavery (*FT 24*) continue to exist. We are experiencing a “third world war fought piecemeal” (*FT 25*). We no longer have common horizons that unite us (*FT 26*). New fears and conflicts are arising, and new walls being built to prevent our encounter with others (*FT 27*). There is a moral deterioration and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility; there is a growing sense of frustration, isolation and despair (*FT 29*).

We are victims of the illusion that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat (*FT 30*). The absence of human dignity is clearly evident at national borders, where countless thousands of refugees are trying to escape war, persecution, and natural catastrophes. While they seek opportunities for themselves and their families, some political regimes do everything in their power to prevent the arrival of migrants (*FT 37*), considering them unworthy of fraternal love (*FT 39*).

Faced with all these problems, we are tempted to isolate ourselves and withdraw into our own interests, but this can never be the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. The path we must follow is being closer to others; it is the culture of encounter (*FT 30*).

The COVID-19 pandemic has revived the sense that we are a global community (*FT 32*). We are called to rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies, and above all the meaning of our existence (*FT 33*).

We experience the illusion of being in close communication with others. Distances are shortened to the point that we no longer have the right to privacy. In the digital world, respect for others is disintegrating, and even as we dismiss, ignore, or keep others distant, we can shamelessly peer into every detail of their lives (*FT 42*).

Digital campaigns of hatred and destruction emerge from the shadows (*FT 43*). Social aggression expands without shame (*FT 44*), while lies and manipulation proliferate. Destructive forms of fanaticism are promoted, even by religious persons and Catholic media (*FT 46*).

Despite these dark clouds, we need to be aware of the many new paths of hope, for God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family (*FT 54*).

The Pope reminds us that love, justice, and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be built day by day (*FT 11*).

The Holy Father calls us to hope. All men and women experience a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice, and love. Hope can look beyond personal convenience, security, and the trade-offs that limit our horizons, and open us up to grand ideals (*FT 55*).

CHAPTER 2

A STRANGER ON THE ROAD

There is a stranger on the road, wounded and cast aside amid the dark clouds of a closed world. Faced with this reality, there are two attitudes we can take: we can pass by on the other side, or we can stop and be moved by pity. The type of person we are or the type of political, social, or religious movement we belong to will be determined by whether we embrace the injured stranger or abandon him.

The Pope offers us the parable of the Good Samaritan as a ray of light in the darkness (*FT 56*). The parable takes us back to an earlier question, “Where is your brother?” (*Gen 4,9*). God leaves no room for an appeal to determinism or fatalism as a justification for our indifference. Instead, he encourages us to create a different culture, one in which we resolve our conflicts and care for one another (*FT 57*) because we all have one Creator who is the defender of the rights of all.

We are moved and called to expand our hearts to embrace the foreigner. It is a call to fraternal love that extends from the oldest text of the Bible to the New Testament (*FT 61*). Love does not care if a wounded brother or sister comes from one place or another. Love shatters chains and builds bridges; it enables us to create one great family, where all of us can feel at home. Love exudes compassion and dignity (*FT 62*).

The parable tells of the “abandoned” traveller lying injured on the road. Only one person stopped, approached the man, and cared for him personally; he spent his own money to provide for his needs; he gave him his time (*FT 63*).

A sick society is tempted to ignore others, look the other way, and pass by as if unaware of the reality. It doesn’t want to be bothered by sentiment; it refuses to waste time with the problems of others. It is built on an indifference to pain (*FT 64*).

Pope Francis calls us to rediscover our vocation as citizens of our own nations and of the entire world. He summons us to be builders of a new social bond and to be aware that the existence of each and every individual is deeply tied to that of others: life is not simply time that passes; life is a time for interactions (*FT 66*). We are called to rebuild our hurting world, to form a community of men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject a society of exclusion, and who act instead as

neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good (*FT 67*).

The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project (*FT 69*).

The story of the Good Samaritan is constantly being repeated. We can see this clearly as social and political inertia is turning many parts of our world into a desolate byway, even as domestic and international disputes and the theft of opportunities are leaving great numbers of the marginalized stranded on the roadside. Today, we can begin again: Pope Francis calls us to take an active part in healing and renewing our troubled societies. We must foster what is good and place ourselves at its service (*FT 77*). We can start from below and, case by case, act at the most concrete and local levels (*FT 78*).

Difficulties are opportunities for growth, not excuses for a glum resignation. We are called to unite as a family that is stronger than the sum of its individual members. For the whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts (*FT 78*). Reconciliation will give us new life and set us all free from fear (*FT 78*).

Finally, Jesus transforms the form of the question by asking what it means to be a “neighbour” to others. He calls us to be neighbours to everyone, even to those who are distant (*FT 81*). We are called to practice a universal love that is able to overcome historical prejudices, cultural barriers, and petty interests (*FT 82*).

It is important that catechesis and preaching speak more directly and clearly about the social meaning of existence, the fraternal dimension of spirituality, our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters (*FT 86*). Only in this way will we be able to conceive and give birth to an open world, sweeping away all the dark clouds of our tightly closed world.

CHAPTER 3

ENVISAGING AND ENGENDERING AN OPEN WORLD

God is universal love, and since we are part of that love and share it, we are called to universal fraternity, which is openness. There are no “others,” no “them”; there is only “us.” Human beings can live, develop, and find fulfilment only in the sincere gift of themselves to others; they cannot fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons. No one can experience the value of living without having real faces to love (*FT 87*).

Life exists where there is bonding, communion, and fraternity. Life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity (*FT 87*). Every healthy, authentic relationship opens us to others; we cannot reduce our lives to ourselves or to relationships with a small group (*FT 89*).

Hospitality is one specific way of opening ourselves and encountering others (*FT 90*). The spiritual stature of a person’s life is measured by love, which is the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life’s worth. The greatest danger lies in failing to love (*FT 92*). Love is more than just benevolent actions; these have their source in a union that is directed towards others, considering them of value, worthy, pleasing and beautiful beyond their physical or moral appearance. Only this way of relating to one another makes a social friendship possible that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all (*FT 94*). Here, we see the seeds of a vocation to form a community composed of brothers and sisters who accept and care for one another (*FT 96*).

This universal openness is existential rather than geographical; it has to do with our daily efforts to expand our circle of friends, to reach out toward the margins, to include those whom I do not naturally consider a part of my circle of interests even though they are close to me. Every brother or sister in need, when abandoned or ignored by the society in which I live, becomes an existential foreigner (*FT 97*). There are persons who are treated as “hidden exiles,” persons with disabilities who feel that they exist without belonging and without participating. They may be citizens with full rights, yet they are treated like foreigners in their own country (*FT 98*).

A love capable of transcending borders is the basis of “social friendship,” the condition of possibility for universal openness (*FT 99*). The future is not monochrome: our human

family needs to learn to live together in harmony and peace, without having to be all exactly alike (*FT 100*).

Those who form social groups that exclude any outside presence that disturbs their identity and style of life thereby also exclude the possibility of becoming neighbours; they can only be “associates”, partners in the pursuit of particular interests (*FT 102*).

Fraternity is not born only of a climate of respect for individual liberties, or even of a certain administratively guaranteed equality (*FT 103*). Nor is it achieved by an abstract proclamation that “all men and women are equal”. Instead, it is the result of conscious and careful cultivation of fraternity (*FT 104*).

Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere (*FT 106*); every human being is valuable and has the right to live with dignity and to achieve integral development. That basic right cannot be denied by any country (*FT 110*).

To achieve these ideals, Pope Francis calls us to do what is good for ourselves and for the whole human family and thus to advance together towards an authentic and integral growth (*FT 113*). He calls us to solidarity, to thinking and acting in terms of community. Solidarity means giving the lives of all priority over the appropriation of goods by a few. It means combatting the structural causes of poverty and inequality; it means remedying the lack of work, land and housing; it means struggling against the denial of social and labour rights (*FT 116*). All other rights having to do with the goods necessary for the integral fulfilment of persons, including that of private property or any other type of property, should in no way hinder these rights but should actively facilitate their fulfilment (*FT 120*).

No one can remain excluded (*FT 121*). Development must ensure human rights—personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples (*FT 122*). Business activity should always be clearly directed to the development of others and to eliminating poverty (*FT 123*).

We will have peace only when we are able to provide land, housing, and work for all. Real and lasting peace will be possible only on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of the whole human family (*FT 127*).

CHAPTER 4

A HEART OPEN TO THE WHOLE WORLD

We experience social friendship, we seek what is morally good, and we practice social ethics because we know that we belong to a universal family. We are called to encounter, solidarity, and gratuitousness.

The conviction that all human beings are brothers and sisters forces us to see things in a new light and to develop new responses (*FT 128*). When our neighbour happens to be an immigrant, complex challenges arise. As long as no substantial progress is made to avoid unnecessary migrations—and that means creating the conditions needed for a dignified life and integral development in the countries of origin—we are obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs, and where they can find personal fulfilment (*FT 129*). We must do our best to welcome, protect, promote, and integrate those who arrive. To that end, we should increase and simplify the granting of visas, adopt programmes of sponsorship, open humanitarian corridors, provide housing, guarantee personal security, grant access to basic services, and ensure consular assistance, among other things (*FT 130*).

The arrival of persons who are different from us becomes a gift when we receive them with open hearts and allow them to be true to themselves (*FT 134*).

Gratuitousness is the ability to do things simply because they are good in themselves, without concern for personal gain or recompense (*FT 139*). Only a social and political culture that is imbued with a spirit of gratuitous acceptance will have a future (*FT 141*).

There must be a healthy tension between the global and the local. We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground (*FT 142*). It is impossible to be “local” in a healthy way without being sincerely open to the universal, without feeling challenged by what is happening in other places, without openness to enrichment by other cultures. Every healthy culture is open and welcoming (*FT 146*). The world grows and is filled with new beauty, thanks to the successive syntheses produced between cultures that are open and free (*FT 148*). Human beings are limited beings but are themselves limitless (*FT 150*).

CHAPTER 5

A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

A better kind of politics seeks the common and universal good; it is politics for and with the people. In other words, it is the people's politics, practicing social charity and pursuing human dignity. It can be carried out by men and women who, with political love, integrate the economy into a popular social, cultural, and political project.

The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations requires a better kind of politics, a politics that truly serves the common good (*FT 154*). Such a politics is different from the populism that arises when leaders politically exploit a people's culture under an ideological banner for their own personal advantage or to continue their grip on power (*FT 159*). The truly "popular" thing is to provide everyone with the opportunity to nurture the seeds that God has planted in them (*FT 162*).

Helping the poor means allowing them to lead dignified lives through work. There is no poverty worse than that which takes away work and the dignity of work (*FT 162*).

Charity is expressed in personal encounters, including those with a distant or forgotten brother or sister. There is a need for a greater spirit of fraternity, but also a more efficient worldwide organization to help resolve the problems plaguing the abandoned people who are suffering and dying in poor countries (*FT 165*).

Education and upbringing, concern for others, a well-integrated view of life, and spiritual growth: all these are essential for quality human relationships (*FT 167*). We need a politics that puts human dignity back at the centre, and on that pillar we can build the alternative social structures we need (*FT 168*).

We must promote popular movements that invigorate governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny. We must move beyond the idea of social policies as being for the poor but never with the poor (*FT 169*).

There is a need for reform of the United Nations Organization, as well as of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can

acquire real teeth. Justice is an essential condition for achieving the ideal of universal fraternity (*FT 173*).

Politics must not be subject to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy (*FT 177*). True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good (*FT 178*).

Pope Francis calls us to a social and political order whose soul is social charity. He urges us to rehabilitate politics as one of the loftiest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good (*FT 180*). Such political charity is born of a social awareness that seeks the good of all people (*FT 182*). “Social love” makes it possible to advance towards a civilization of love, to which all of us can feel called. It is a force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today’s world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organizations and legal systems (*FT 183*).

Charity needs the light of truth, the light of reason, and the light of faith (*FT 185*).

Politicians are called to tend to the needs of individuals and peoples (*FT 188*). Politicians are doers and builders with ambitious goals; they should possess a broad, realistic and pragmatic gaze that looks beyond their own borders (*FT 188*). They are called to make the sacrifices that foster encounter and to seek convergence on at least some issues (*FT 190*).

Politics must also make room for a tender love of others, a love that draws near and becomes real. Tenderness is a movement that proceeds from the heart; it is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women (*FT 194*).

Politicians should ask themselves: “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?” (*FT 197*).

CHAPTER 6

DIALOGUE AND FRIENDSHIP IN SOCIETY

Dialogue is respectful, strives for consensus, and seeks the truth. Dialogue opens the way to a culture of encounter so that encounter becomes a passion, a desire, and a way of life. Those who dialogue recognize, befriend, and respect other persons.

Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and finding common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word “dialogue” (*FT 198*).

A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture (*FT 199*).

Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns (*FT 203*).

If society is to have a future, it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth. A society is noble and decent not least for its support of the pursuit of truth and its adherence to the most basic of truths (*FT 207*). Relativism always brings the risk that some alleged truth or other will be imposed by the powerful or the clever (*FT 209*).

In a pluralistic society, dialogue is the best way to realize what should always be affirmed and respected apart from any ephemeral consensus. There are certain enduring values that make for a robust and solid social ethics (*FT 211*).

The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations. This requires that they be treated differently (*FT 213*).

Life is the art of encounter. Pope Francis has repeatedly invited us to build a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions. This means working to create a many-faceted polyhedron which represents a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid

disagreements and reservations. This also means finding ways to include those on the peripheries of life (*FT 215*).

The word “culture” points to something deeply embedded within a people, its most cherished convictions and its way of life. To speak of a “culture of encounter” means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life. The subject of this culture is the people (*FT 216*).

The joy of acknowledging others implies the ability to recognize other people’s right to be themselves and to be different. A realistic and inclusive social covenant must also be a “cultural covenant”, one that respects and acknowledges the different worldviews, cultures and lifestyles that coexist in society (*FT 219*). A cultural covenant eschews a monolithic understanding of the identity of a particular place; it entails respect for diversity by offering opportunities for advancement and social integration to all (*FT 220*). Such a covenant also demands the realization that some things may have to be renounced for the common good (*FT 221*).

CHAPTER 7

PATHS OF RENEWED ENCOUNTER

There is a need to cure wounds and restore peace. We need boldness (*FT 225*) and truth. Those who were fierce enemies have to speak from the stark and clear truth (*FT 226*). Only by basing themselves on the historical truth of events will they be able to make a broad and persevering effort to understand one another and to strive for a new synthesis for the good of all (*FT 226*).

Truth is an inseparable companion of justice and mercy. All three together are essential to building peace (*FT 227*). The path to peace does not mean making society blandly uniform; rather, it means getting people to work together, side-by-side, in pursuing goals that benefit everyone. The problems that a society is experiencing need to be clearly identified, so that different ways of understanding and resolving them can be found. We should never define others by what they may have said or done in the past; we should value them for the promise that they embody, a promise that always brings with it a spark of new hope (*FT 228*).

True reconciliation is achieved proactively (*FT 229*). Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone (*FT 230*).

There is no end to the building of a country's social peace; rather, it is an open-ended endeavour, a never-ending task that demands the commitment of everyone (*FT 232*). Those who work for a tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible. If we have to begin anew, it must always be from the least of our brothers and sisters (*FT 235*).

There are those who prefer not to talk of reconciliation, for they think that conflict, violence and breakdown are part of the normal functioning of a society (*FT 236*). But forgiveness and reconciliation are central themes in Christianity and, in various ways, in other religions as well (*FT 237*). Jesus never promoted violence or intolerance. He openly condemned the use of force to gain power over others (*FT 238*). Calling for forgiveness does not mean renouncing our own rights when confronting corrupt officials, criminals, or others who would debase our dignity (*FT 241*). It is no easy task to

overcome the bitter legacy of injustices, hostility and mistrust left by conflict. It can be done only by overcoming evil with good (*FT 243*).

Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved *in* conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation (*FT 244*). Those who have endured much unjust and cruel suffering should not be asked to offer a sort of “social forgiveness” (*FT 246*). Forgetting is never the answer (*FT 246*), for we can never move forward without remembering the past (*FT 249*). Those who truly forgive do not forget, but they choose not to yield to the same destructive force that caused them so much suffering. This does not mean impunity; justice is properly sought solely out of love of justice itself and out of respect for the victims, as a means of preventing new crimes and protecting the common good (*FT 252*).

War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples (*FT 257*). We can no longer think of war as a solution; it is very difficult to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. Never again war! (*FT 258*).

The goal of ultimately eliminating all nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative (*FT 262*). The death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from the standpoint of penal justice. It is simply inadmissible. The Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide (*263*). A life sentence is a secret death penalty (*FT 268*).

CHAPTER 8

RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY IN OUR WORLD

Because of their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, the different religions contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue among religions seeks to establish friendship, peace, and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love (FT 271).

We all share an ultimate foundation: openness to the Father of all. Only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality of all human beings and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity (FT 272).

As visible images of the invisible God, human persons possess a transcendent dignity; they are therefore by their very nature the subjects of rights that no one may violate (FT 273). Our witnessing to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters (FT 274).

The Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not remain on the sidelines in the building of a better world, nor does it fail to reawaken the spiritual energy that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development (FT 276).

Christian identity

The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. Yet we Christians are very much aware that if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, and the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. For us, the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus

Christ. From that source there arises, for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, and to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all (*FT 277*).

Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be “catholic”. The Church can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love. Indeed, all things human are our concern. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of men and women, we are honoured to be permitted to take our place among them. For many Christians, this journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary. Having received this universal motherhood at the foot of the cross, she cares not only for Jesus but also for “the rest of her children”. In the power of the risen Lord, she wants to give birth to a new world, a world where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, and where justice and peace are resplendent (*FT 278*).

We Christians ask that we be guaranteed freedom in those countries where we are a minority, even as we ourselves promote that freedom for non-Christians in places where they are a minority. Since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing because, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters (*FT 279*).

We ask God to strengthen unity within the Church, a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit. Hearing his call, we recognize with sorrow that the process of globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity among Christians (*FT 280*).

A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God’s way of seeing things, because “God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart” (*FT 281*).

We believers are challenged to return to our sources in order to concentrate on what is essential—worship of God and love for our neighbour—lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion (*FT 282*).

Sincere and humble worship of God bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, in respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and in loving commitment to the welfare of all. Religious convictions about the sacred meaning of human life permit us to recognize the fundamental values of our common humanity, values in the name of which we can and must cooperate, build and dialogue, pardon and grow; this will allow different voices to unite in creating a melody of sublime nobility and beauty, instead of fanatical cries of hatred (*FT 283*).

As religious leaders, we are called to be true “people of dialogue,” to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Each one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding onto it, by opening paths of dialogue and not constructing new walls (*FT 284*).

AN APPEAL

God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people. For this reason, I would like to reiterate here the appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together:

In the name of God, who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;

In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity;

In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need, whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and those of means;

In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war;

In the name of human fraternity, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;

In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the futures of men and women;

In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings, creating them free and setting them apart by this gift;

In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith;

In the name of all persons of goodwill present in every part of the world;

In the name of God and of everything stated thus far, we declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard (FT 285).

Charles de Foucauld directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being, and he asked a friend to “pray to God that I truly be the brother of all”. He wanted to be, in the end, “the universal brother”. Yet only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all. May God inspire that dream in each one of us. Amen (FT 287).