

ENCYCLICAL LETTER

“FRATELLI TUTTI”

OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

1. **Pope Francis**, in his encyclical *“Fratelli Tutti,”* or “Brothers All,” affirms that all human beings, no matter what their religion, race, culture, language, gender, status, rich or poor, famous, celebrity or just an ordinary person, all... all have to be treated as brothers and sisters, without any exception or condition. It is important to place the human person, his or her dignity and the common good at the centre of all activity (230-232).

The document reflects on the many distortions of the contemporary era: the manipulation and deformation of concepts such as democracy, freedom, justice; the loss of the meaning of the social community and history; selfishness and indifference toward the common good; the prevalence of a market logic based on profit and the culture of waste; unemployment, racism, poverty... slavery, trafficking, women subjugated and then forced to abort, organ trafficking (10-24). ...a “culture of walls” that favours the proliferation of organized crime, fuelled by fear and loneliness (27-28).

MISUSE OF TERMINOLOGY

Great words are emptied of their meaning or to manipulate them. Nowadays, what do certain words like democracy, freedom, justice or unity really mean? They have been bent and shaped to serve as tools for domination, as meaningless tags that can be used to justify any action.

The entire encyclical can be understood by means of parable of the Good Samaritan

“The Pope emphasizes that, in an unhealthy society that turns its back on suffering and that is “illiterate” in caring for the frail and vulnerable (64-65), we are all called - just like the Good Samaritan - to become neighbours to others (81), overcoming prejudices, personal interests, historic and cultural barriers. **We all, in fact, are co-responsible in creating a society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who have fallen or are suffering**

(77). Love builds bridges exhorting Christians to recognize Christ in the face of every excluded person (85).

A fraternal society, strives, to defeat the “virus” of “radical individualism” (105) ...There are two ‘tools’ in particular to achieve this type of society: benevolence, or truly wanting good for the other (112), and solidarity which cares for fragility and is expressed in service to people fighting against poverty and inequality (115).

“**Other cultures** are not ‘enemies’ from which we need to protect ourselves, but differing reflections of the inexhaustible richness of human life. Seeing ourselves from the perspective of another, of one who is different, we can better recognize our own unique features and those of our culture: its richness, its possibilities and its limitations” (no. 147).

148. In fact, a healthy openness never threatens one’s own **identity**. ...For “our own cultural identity is strengthened and enriched as a result of dialogue with those unlike ourselves. Nor is our authentic identity preserved by an impoverished isolation” [129].

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.

ECONOMY

12. “Opening up to the world” is an expression that has been co-opted by the economic and financial sector and is now used exclusively of openness to foreign interests or to the freedom of economic powers to invest without obstacles or complications in all countries.

21. Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human development [16]. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that “new forms of poverty are emerging” [17].

a. profit-based economic model that does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings. While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or violated” [19]. I WONDER HOW OUR COUNTRY THAT CAN BE billionaires when about 30% live on a dollar and a half.

Cfr. 155. **Politics** must ensure the common good of all, concern for the vulnerable and refrain from serving the economic interests of the powerful.

159. **Politics**, “degenerate into an unhealthy “populism” when individuals are able to exploit politically a people’s culture, under whatever ideological banner, for their own personal advantage or continuing grip on power. Or when, at other times, they seek popularity by appealing to the basest and most selfish inclinations of certain sectors of the population. This becomes all the more serious when, whether in cruder or more subtle forms, it leads to the usurpation of institutions and laws.”

Pleading for “*A better kind of politics*”, which is placed at the service of the common good (180), the Pope States, “a better politics is also one that protects work, and seeks to ensure everyone the opportunity to develop their own abilities “(162).

Popular movements have taken on particular relevance: ... with that “torrent of moral energy”, they must be engaged in social, political and economic participation.

What is needed is a model of social, political and economic participation “that can **include popular ...movements** and invigorate local, national and international governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny”, while also ensuring that “these experiences of solidarity which grow up from below, from the subsoil of the planet - can come together, be more coordinated, keep on meeting one another”^[143], **169**.

118. As a community, we have an obligation to ensure that every person lives with dignity and has sufficient **opportunities for his or her integral development**.

For my part, I would observe that “the Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable, and has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property” [95]. The principle of the common use of created goods is the “first principle of the whole ethical and social order”;^[96] it is a natural and inherent right that takes priority over others ^[97]. The right to **private property** can only be considered a secondary natural right, derived from the principle of the universal destination of created goods.

Rights without borders

124. Nowadays, a firm belief in the common destination of the earth's goods requires that this principle also be applied to nations, their territories and their resources... each country also belongs to the foreigner, inasmuch as a territory's goods must not be denied to a needy person coming from elsewhere.

125. ... We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all.

Rights have no borders

The right to live with dignity cannot be denied to anyone. Since rights have no borders, no one can remain excluded, regardless of where they are born (121). ... every country also belongs to foreigners and the goods of the territory cannot be denied to those who are in need and come from another place.

MIGRATION

With their lives "at stake" (37), fleeing from war, persecution, natural catastrophes, unscrupulous trafficking, ripped from their communities of origin, migrants are to be welcomed, protected, supported and integrated. Unnecessary migration needs to be avoided, the Pontiff affirms, by creating concrete opportunities to live with dignity in the countries of origin. But at the same time, we need to respect the right to seek a better life elsewhere (38-40).

129. Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarized by four words: **welcome, protect, promote and integrate.**

166. Everything, then, depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles. Otherwise, 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.

189. We are still far from a globalization of the most basic of human rights. That is why **world politics needs to make the effective elimination of hunger one of its foremost and imperative goals. Hunger is criminal; food is an inalienable right" [188].**

The **MASS MEDIA** shatter respect for others and eliminate all discretion, creating isolated and self-referential virtual circles, in which freedom is an illusion and dialogue is not constructive (42-50).

201. It discredits and insults opponents from the outset rather than to open a respectful dialogue aimed at achieving agreement on a deeper level...

Discussion is often manipulated by powerful special interests that seek to tilt public opinion unfairly in their favour.

205. In today's globalized world, "the media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family which in turn can inspire solidarity and serious efforts to ensure a more dignified life for all... .. This is something truly good, a gift from God" [199].

210. LAW

Good and evil no longer exist in themselves; there is only a calculus of benefits and burdens. As a result of the displacement of moral reasoning, the law is no longer seen as reflecting a fundamental notion of justice but as mirroring notions currently in vogue. Some of the Court judgements reflect the policies of the current Government and current thinking. In technical terminology it is called global ethics or subjective morality.

A "throwaway" world

Some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence. Ultimately, "persons are no longer seen as a paramount value to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, 'not yet useful' - like the unborn, or 'no longer needed' - like the elderly. Abortion - medical termination of pregnancy.

Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think. RSS

Women

Similarly, the organization of societies worldwide is still far from reflecting clearly that women possess the same dignity and identical rights as men. We say one thing with words, but our decisions and reality tell another story. Indeed, "doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights" [20].

Forgiveness does not mean allowing him to continue oppressing his neighbour, but helping an oppressor to change. One who suffers an injustice must vigorously defend his rights in order to safeguard his dignity, a gift of God (241-242). Forgiveness does not mean impunity, but rather, justice and

remembrance, because to forgive does not mean to forget, but to renounce the destructive power of evil and the desire for revenge.

War is “the negation of all rights”, “a failure of politics and of humanity”, and “a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. Moreover, due to nuclear chemical and biological weapons that strike many innocent civilians, today we can no longer think, as in the past, of the possibility of a “just war”, but we must vehemently reaffirm: “Never again war... the total elimination of nuclear arms is “a moral and humanitarian imperative”.

The injustice of war

257. “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.”

We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. In view of this, it is very difficult nowadays to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. Never again war![\[242\]](#).

In this context, the ultimate goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative...

263. The Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide [\[248\]](#).

“Not even a murderer loses his personal dignity” “and God himself pledges to guarantee this”.

264. ...legitimate public authority can and must “inflict punishments according to the seriousness of the crimes” [\[250\]](#).

268. All Christians and people of good will are today called to work not only for the abolition of the death penalty, legal or illegal, in all its forms, but also to work for the improvement of prison conditions, out of respect for the human dignity of persons deprived of their freedom.

“ ...do not view punishment as vindictive, but rather as part of a process of healing and of social reintegration

There is emphasis on the necessity to respect “the sacredness of life” (283).

Guarantee religious freedom

“Religions are to be at the service of fraternity in our world” and again emphasizes that violence has no basis in religious convictions, but rather in their deformities. Thus, “deplorable” acts, such as acts of terrorism, are not due to religion but to erroneous interpretations of religious texts, as well as “policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression”.

It is therefore necessary to guarantee religious freedom, a fundamental human right for all believers (279).

RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY

271. I am very glad to note here that the Pope has mentioned CBCI STATEMENT... In the words of the Bishops of India, “the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love” [259]. Therefore the task of religions is to promote fraternity, peace and justice in society [259]. **CATHOLIC BISHOPS’ CONFERENCE OF INDIA, *Response of the Church in India to the Present-day Challenges* (9 March 2016).**

THE ULTIMATE FOUNDATION OF FRATERNITY

272. As believers, we are convinced that, without openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity. .. “reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity” [261].

274. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters.

276. ... the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not restrict her mission to the private sphere. On the contrary, “she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines” in the building of a better world, or fail to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society [266]. 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, [267] which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development. The Church “has a public

role over and above her charitable and educational activities”. She works for “the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity” [268].

The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother” [269]. We want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation” [270].

277. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it 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, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all” [273].

279. One fundamental human right must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions.

280. At the same time, we ask **God to strengthen unity within the Church, a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit. For “in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body” (1 Cor 12:13), in which each member has his or her distinctive contribution to make.**

We cannot forget Christ’s desire “that they may all be one” (cf. *Jn* 17:21). Hearing his call, we recognize with sorrow that the process of globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity among Christians. ...” [277].

RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

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, ... The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion.

284. As religious leaders, we are called to be true ‘people of dialogue’, to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators.

...reminding religious leaders of their role as “authentic mediators” who expend themselves in order to build peace, Francis quotes the “*Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*”, which he signed on 4 February 2019 in Abu Dhabi, along with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar, Ahmad Al-Tayyib: from that milestone of interreligious dialogue, the Pontiff returns to

the appeal that, in the name of human fraternity, **dialogue be adopted as the way, common cooperation as conduct, and mutual knowledge as method and standard (285).**

Blessed Charles de Foucauld, “the universal brother”

The Encyclical concludes by remembering Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, **Mahatma Gandhi** and above all Blessed Charles de Foucauld, END .