

## Pope Francis

### New Encyclical Letter, “Fratelli Tutti” on Fraternity and Social Friendship

#### 2020 - Short Reflection



#### **Background:**

The new encyclical letter from Pope Francis entitled, “Fratelli Tutti” on fraternity and social friendship challenges us to a “renewal of respect” for the human family across the world. The letter was written during the global pandemic and briefly touches on this in the context of a shared solidarity to the common good of all people and cultures. Pope Francis also mentions that the pandemic has exposed some of our “false securities” and has called for a “rebirth” of universal values and virtues.

#### **Why is this letter important? Some questions to consider for reflection for educators:**

What can we learn from this letter?

What is the relevance of this letter for us today as educators in the Lasallian mission?

How can young people be inspired to live a life of solidarity and community with one another during this Pandemic?

Is there a morality to using social media?

Have we developed a strong foundation common shared values when engaging in online platforms?

Can human dignity and social media co-exist?

How can we use Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat with a shared common dignity?

How do words, pictures and comments help to uphold decent values?

## **Key Themes from the Letter**

Human solidarity and respect and love for all people

The promotion of a universal love penetrating all areas of our life – social, economic, political and within our spiritual and existential lives

Moving beyond individualism, apathy and narcissism to a common and compassionate humanity

The re-reading of the spiritual classic of the *Parable of the Good Samaritan* – holding universal wisdom for our day (especially with the Pandemic) – helping and healing strangers and those wounded

New paths and opportunities for “Hope” renewed in this pandemic

Promoting a renewed “moral goodness” in our world today – especially with globalisation and the rise in the use of technological devices, forums and dialogues

Cultivating a “universal consciousness” – the use of water etc – an example – considering people’s water usage one example

The value of forgiveness in our world – not forgetting, but forgiving – a spiritual action and a spiritual habit

Information requires deep listening and discernment – requires “wisdom”

Digital citizenship and responsible communication and sharing

## **Reflection:**

In a world of social media and rising individualism, how can we teach young people the importance of universal moral goodness and shared respect? These are extremely important today and there is a need to not only be educators of knowledge and learning, but also promoters of dignity, forgiveness and hope across all platforms and forums.

**Quote from letter:** *"{social media} ...limits can be overstepped, defamation and slander can become commonplace, and all ethical standards and respect for the good name of others can be abandoned"*

Finally, Pope Francis offers the strongest advice: be agents of hope and renew your commitment to bring positivity and joy to our world – despite the “dark clouds”:

**Quote from the letter:** *“Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, 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...”*

[http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html)

Reflection by Br Lewis Harwood, fsc

## Prayers at the end of the Encyclical

### *A Prayer to the Creator*

Lord, Father of our human family,  
you created all human beings equal in dignity:  
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit  
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,  
dialogue, justice and peace.  
Move us to create healthier societies  
and a more dignified world,  
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.

May our hearts be open  
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.  
May we recognize the goodness and beauty  
that you have sown in each of us,  
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,  
and shared dreams. Amen.

## ***An Ecumenical Christian Prayer***

O God, Trinity of love,  
from the profound communion of your divine life,  
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.  
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,  
in his family of Nazareth,  
and in the early Christian community.

Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,  
discovering Christ in each human being,  
recognizing him crucified  
in the sufferings of the abandoned  
and forgotten of our world,  
and risen in each brother or sister  
who makes a new start.

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,  
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,  
so that we may discover anew  
that all are important and all are necessary,  
different faces of the one humanity  
that God so loves. Amen.