

FRATELLI TUTTI

Encyclical of Pope Francis on Fraternity and Friendship in Society

Pope Francis continues to 'excel', as he proposed in the 'Joy of the Gospel', his first great programmatic text. Yes, 'excel' is to take the initiative, to be the first to take certain steps, to move forward towards a Church and a world where fraternity is no longer a word from the dictionary but corresponds to concrete and happy lives.

"We are all sisters and brothers", is very clear to Pope Francis, as was very clear in the life and words of Christ two thousand years ago. For more than two millennia, the world has been taking steps towards the achievement of this greater goal. We often focus more on what separates us than on what unites us. And with these arrogant postures, the world has built more walls than bridges.

With this document, Pope Francis tries to take a step towards a future of universal brotherhood. If we are truly brothers and sisters, then race, colour, country, ideas, religion, football club, personal tastes, academic titles, bank account, employment, favourite songs etc. will not be the most important things in life, because, in essence, we are all sisters and brothers to one another, without borders.

It is an inspiring text for these times of global pandemic. Published in Assisi and on St Francis' Day, it is a sign for the whole world, as Francis is a symbol of peace and universal brotherhood. Regardless of the rivers of ink it will cause to flow, I want to make my position clear: I am completely in favour. The only journey that makes sense is the one that takes us to the hearts of others, beginning with those who think and pray differently from us. God created us brothers and sisters, and Christ asked us to love one another and to go out to meet everyone, as he did in the lands of Galilee and Samaria.

The words and gestures of the Pope in Assisi were so dense, so intense, so profound, so provocative.... To the Bishops the Pope explains: "The title is the message of Jesus encouraging us to recognize everyone as brothers and sisters and thus to live in the common house which the Father has entrusted to us." This Encyclical Letter, on fraternity and friendship in society, has as its title the expression that St Francis of Assisi used to address everyone in order to propose to them 'a way of life marked with the flavour of the Gospel (FT 1)'. St. Francis proposed "the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives"(FT1).

Francis is an example because he sowed peace wherever he went and walked with the poor, abandoned, sick and discarded. In short, he was always by the side of the least important. He had a heart without frontiers, he did not wage wars of ideas, because he thought that the right way was to live and share the love of God, awakening in people the dream of a fraternal society.

St. Francis made a courageous and unthinkable bet for the people of his time: “he freed himself of the desire to wield power over others. He became one of the poor and sought to live in harmony with all” (FT4).

The eruption of COVID 19 gives this encyclical its reason to be, since, despite so much technological connectivity, countries show an inability to act together.

The first chapter reflects on the shadows of a closed world. The second, with the title 'a stranger on the road', proposes a reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan. The third chapter invites us to imagine and generate a more open world. Then comes the proposal of a heart open to the whole world and the request for better policies to move away from populism and liberalism. Finally, the Pope speaks about dialogue and friendship in society, opening up paths for bringing people together based on truth, peace and forgiveness. In conclusion, chapter eight puts religions at the service of brotherhood, removing them from all kinds of violence.

HEALING THE WORLD. CHAP. I

(Dark clouds over a Closed World, 9-55)

'Dark Clouds over a Closed World' is the first chapter of the encyclical '*Fratelli Tutti*'. Universal brotherhood is being held back by some trends in today's world which hinder its development.

Many human conquests are going backwards:

“Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise” (FT 11). Many rulers forget something essential: “Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day” (FT 11).

The world is being constructed under the command of foreign interests and economic powers that invest without hindrance or control, imposing a single economic and cultural model: “This culture unifies the world, but divides persons and nations, for as society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours, but does not make us brothers” (FT12).

Discouragement and distrust are being sown, especially in the new generations . We do not take good care of the world or of ourselves. We support the throw-away culture, considering that “some parts of our human family, it appears, can be readily sacrificed for the sake of others considered worthy of a carefree existence” (FT 18).

Racism remains in force, although more disguised, new forms of poverty are born, mafias take advantage of people's fear and insecurity, women have fewer rights than men, human rights are not equal for all: “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” (FT 22).

Moreover, “millions of people today – children, women and men of all ages – are deprived of freedom and forced to live in conditions akin to slavery” (FT24). We must fight against all

forms of human trafficking, by which people are treated as a means and not an end. The world is violent; today we are living a 'third world war' fought piecemeal" (FT).

Instead of bridges, governments and people build "walls in the heart, walls on the land, in order to prevent this encounter with other cultures, with other people. And those who raise walls will end up as slaves within the very walls they have built... without horizons" (FT 27).

The Pope quotes the Document on Human Fraternity, written with the Grand Imam Al-Tayyeb: "we wish to emphasize that, together with these historical advances, great and valued as they are, there exists a moral deterioration that influences international action and a weakening of spiritual values and responsibility" (FT 29).

We have lost our sense of belonging to a common humanity; we have discovered distant planets without discovering the urgent needs of those who live next door; we are victims of the globalisation of indifference. For this reason, the Pope cries out: "Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes" (FT 30).

COVID 19 reminded us that we are all in the same boat facing the same storm and no one is saved alone, but only together. The pandemic forces us to "rethink our life styles, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence" (FT 33). We all need each other.

We try to bring others to our country while we do not help the poorest countries, and we give cover to unscrupulous human traffickers. But "there is also a need to reaffirm the right not to emigrate, that is, to remain in one's homeland" (FT 38). It is urgent to combat "the fear that deprives us of the desire and the ability to encounter the other" (FT 41).

We live in the digital age, but hearts are not all interconnected. There is a lot of violence and fanaticism spreading through the media today. We need more wisdom and less manipulation and false news. And furthermore: "We must not lose the ability to listen. St Francis of Assisi listened to the voice of God, the poor, the sick, nature. And he transformed all this into a way of life" (FT 48).

The Pope, in this first chapter, speaks more of shadows, but there are many paths of hope, for 'God continues to spread seeds of good in humanity' (FT 54).

The Pope's challenge is a call to trust: "Let us walk in hope" (FT 55)!

Neighbour or partner? Chap.II

(A stranger on the road, 56-86)

A lot of ink has been spilled on Pope Francis' latest encyclical, 'Fratelli tutti', but this only shows its importance and the debate it has provoked and still provokes. I'm going to put a few more thoughts on this bonfire...

The Pope provides a very timely reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan, a biblical text which has provoked reactions from many academics, politicians, economists and writers,

including non-believers. Pope Francis makes a distinction between being a partner ('partners in pursuit of particular interests' (FT 102) and being a neighbour: "free of every label and position, he was able to interrupt his journey, change his plans, and unexpectedly come to the aid of an injured person who needed his help" (FT 101). Now, this is the choice we are constantly invited to make.

The chapter which speaks of the Good Samaritan is entitled '**A Stranger on the Road**'. The Pope reminds us: "Love does not care if a brother or sister in need comes from one place or another. For love shatters the chains that keep us isolated and separate; in their place, it builds bridges. Love enables us to create one great family, where all of us can feel at home... Love exudes compassion and dignity" (FT 62).

Working his way through this emblematic parable of Jesus, Pope Francis recalls that several people passed by the person beaten up by bandits...they went away and did not stop. The Levite and the priest, men of the law and of the temple, did not stop. But there was one person who stopped, giving time to the wounded man, preventing his imminent death (cf. FT63). And the Pope dares to ask us: "With whom do you identify"? The conclusion seems obvious: "We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, and ignoring situations until they affect us directly" (FT 64).

Following the Good Samaritan is an exercise in responsible citizenship, giving life to the common good: by his actions, the Good Samaritan showed 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 must look out for others more than for ourselves, overcoming the selfishness and individualism that characterise these times: "We cannot be indifferent to suffering; we cannot allow anyone to go through life as an outcast" (FT 68).

Today there are many wounded people about. Many feel excluded, abandoned and wounded by the wayside. We are constantly invited to choose whether we want to be good Samaritans or indifferent travellers passing by.

To put it simply, the Pope explains that there are two types of people: "those who care for someone who is hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off" (FT 70).

The story of the Good Samaritan is always repeating itself. Jesus "trusts in the best of the human spirit; with this parable, he encourages us to persevere in love, to restore dignity to the suffering and to build a society worthy of the name (FT 71).

There are many ways to pass by on the other side, from selfishness to indifference. But the text says something that bothers us: the people who passed by were religious. This proves that "believing in God and adoring him is no guarantee of living as God pleases" (FT 74).

Those who pass by become allies of those who attacked the man on the road. We often feel like the wounded person, thrown by the wayside in our lives. Our attitude must be one of responsible Christians: "Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies. Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be

Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment" (FT 77).

Doing good implies not expecting thanks, because, as the Pope says, "All of us have a responsibility for the wounded, those of our own people and all the peoples of the earth. Let us care for the needs of every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked the Good Samaritan" (FT 79).

Finally, we must look at Jesus' request: "go and do the same". We have no alternatives, for Christians recognize Jesus himself in every abandoned or excluded brother' (FT 85).

And there remains an important pastoral orientation: "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).

Opening worlds to the world. Ch. III

(Envisaging and engendering an open world, 87 – 127)

Pope Francis, in 'Fratelli Tutti', maintains that it is not possible "to experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love" (FT 87). The world must open up more, improving the rates of hospitality. He also says that "the spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love, which in the end remains 'the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life's worth or lack thereof'" (FT 92).

It is urgent to go out towards the peripheries, some of which are very close to us, even in our own families. We must pay attention to worrying signs of racism, "a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting (FT 97). We need to give special attention to "hidden exiles", such as disabled people and certain elderly people who do not count in competitive, successful and profit-making societies.

Globalisation cannot shape all people equally, as it "destroys the wealth and uniqueness of each person and each people" (FT 100). The future of humanity has many colours, capitalising on the wealth of diversity. We must overcome a world of partners to build a world of brothers who are close to each other, inspired by the parable of the Good Samaritan, who, "free of every label and position, was able to interrupt his journey, change his plans, and unexpectedly come to the aid of an injured person who needed his help" (FT 101).

'Equality and freedom' are important values, but without 'fraternity' they add little or nothing interesting to humanity: "Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of *the worth of every human person*, always and everywhere (FT 106).

Genuine and integral growth is a necessary condition for promoting the moral good. Solidarity begins in "families, which are the first place where the values of love and fraternity, togetherness and sharing, concern and care for others are lived out and handed on. They are also the privileged milieu for transmitting the faith" (FT 114). The art of caring must always be

present, as the highest expression of solidarity: 'service is, to a great extent, caring for fragility' (FT 115).

It is necessary to fight against "the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights" (FT 116). And, of course, we must commit ourselves to an integral ecology that obliges us to 'care for the common home' (FT 117).

Pope Francis also deals with the issue of property in depth. The Church's Social Doctrine says that the right to private property is always subject to the universal destination of goods (cf. FT 123) and societies must "ensure that every person lives with dignity and has adequate opportunities for his or her integral development" (TF 118).

Development must be sustainable and sustained. It must "ensure personal and social, economic and political human rights, including the rights of nations and peoples" (FT 122).

International Relations must change the way it understands exchange between countries: "If every human being possesses an inalienable dignity, if all people are my brothers and sisters, and if the world truly belongs to everyone, then it matters little whether my neighbour was born in my country or elsewhere" (FT 125). The richest and most developed countries are asked not to crush the poorest, but to help them live with standards of dignity, ensuring "the fundamental right of peoples to subsistence and growth" (FT 126).

Pope Francis concludes this third chapter with hope for a better future: "We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all. This is the true path of peace, not the senseless and myopic strategy of sowing fear and mistrust in the face of outside threats. For a real and lasting peace will only be possible on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the whole human family" (FT 127).

And this latest document of Pope Francis goes a lot further. From "an open heart to the whole world" we will come to reflect on "best politics". We must overcome false convictions which present the migrant as a usurper who has nothing to offer, the poor as dangerous or useless while the powerful are generous benefactors (cf. TF 141). We will come back to this ...

Politics with love. Chap.IV

(A heart open to the whole world, 128-153)

'A heart open to the whole world' is the theme of the Chapter IV of 'Fratelli Tutti'. In setting limits to the borders that the world has erected, the Pope is clear: "Our response to the arrival of migrating persons can be summarized by four words: welcome, protect, promote and integrate" (FT 129). We must offer migrants the possibility of new development (cf. FT 134) because, "if they are helped to integrate, they are a blessing, a source of enrichment and a new gift that encourages a society to grow" (FT135).

There must also be a fruitful exchange between countries, because mutual help for all benefits and increases the conviction that “we are all saved together or no one is saved” (FT 137), because everything is interconnected. In welcoming people, there is an urgent need to cultivate fraternal generosity by avoiding calculated and inhumane trade. Immigrants cannot be catalogued as usurpers who offer nothing. It is often thought that “the poor are dangerous or useless and the powerful are generous benefactors” (FT 141). The more welcoming and open a society is, the more healthy cultures based on universal values can be generated. And Pope Francis makes it clear that “Today, no state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated” (FT 153).

Better politics, “placed at the service of the true common good”, are needed (FT 154). The choices made in favour of populist and liberal policies are having a negative effect on people's lives because, “in both cases, it becomes difficult to envisage an open world that makes room for everyone, including the most vulnerable, and shows respect for different cultures” (FT 155).

Work is the best thing that a government can offer to its citizens, because it ensures everyone a life of dignity and commitment to the building up of a society.

The market does not solve all problems and financial speculation continues to wreak havoc. The Pope recalls: “The fragility of world systems in the face of the pandemic has demonstrated that not everything can be resolved by market freedom ... We must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need” (FT 168).

Francis warns us that “the twenty-first century is witnessing a weakening of the power of nation states, chiefly because the economic and financial sectors, being transnational, tend to prevail over the political” (FT 172). To avoid this risk, the UN must be reformed so that “the concept of the family of nations can be truly realised” (FT 173). Universal brotherhood and social peace require a good policy which is not subject “to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy” (FT 177).

The fight against corruption must be relentless. And there is only political greatness “when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good” (FT 178). Social charity is the soul of a healthy social and political order, in the pursuit of the common good: “charity is at the centre of all healthy and open social life” (FT 184). Politicians must help those who are poor, but also “change the social conditions which cause their suffering (...) by creating jobs, by exercising a sublime form of charity which ennobles their political action” (FT 187). They have to care for the weakest, for those who are victims of human rights violations.

“We are still far from a globalization of the most basic of human rights” (FT 189). The Pope condemns the criminal hunger, the tons of food that are being spoiled and the trafficking in people which is a 'shame for humanity that international politics should not tolerate' (FT 189).

Fundamentalist intolerance is also targeted by Pope Francis, since it damages relations between persons, groups and peoples and does not allow different voices to be heard. The Pope makes a request: “May we not be content with being enclosed in one fragment of reality” (FT 191). Hatred and fear are part of fundamentalism.

Politics is an art of loving, strengthening “the reserves of good that, in spite of everything, exist in human hearts” (FT 196). Politicians must allow themselves to be overcome by the tenderness caused by the poor and fragile of our world. We must not look at the tangible results, but at the fruitfulness of political intervention: “If I can help at least one person to have a better life, that already justifies the offering of my life” (FT 195).

Many questions remain, some of them painful: “What did I do for the progress of our people? How much social peace have I sown” (FT 197)? The Pope develops his reflection by proposing dialogue as a way to social friendship.

Voices of various colours. Chapters V-VI

(A better kind of politics, 154-197; dialogue and friendship in society, 198-224)

Dialogue implies “Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground” (FT 198). This is a difficult but decisive task, not least because disagreements and conflicts make much more news.

Dialogue is a bridge, it establishes a middle ground “between selfish indifference and violent protest” (FT 199). It is also necessary to avoid any form of manipulative power: “economic, political, media, religious or any other kind” (FT 201).

The points of view of others must always be respected if there is to be an authentic social dialogue. In social terms, much must be invested in public debate which is “a stimulus to reach the truth better or at least express it better” (FT 203).

The media help us to feel closer to others. And in this age of information technology and social networks, “the Internet can offer greater possibilities of encounter and solidarity among all” (FT 205). But there is the other side of the coin and “we cannot accept “a digital world designed to exploit our weaknesses and bring out the worst in people” (FT 205).

Seeking consensus is a great goal: “Acknowledging the existence of certain enduring values, however demanding it may be to discern them, makes for a robust and solid social ethics” (FT 211).

Faith is an added value for believers. “As believers, we are convinced that human nature, as the source of ethical principles, was created by God, and that ultimately it is he who gives those principles their solid foundation” (FT 214)

Vinicius de Moraes is quoted as evoking the importance of creating a new culture: “Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter” (FT 215). The Pope returns to his repeated image of the polyhedron that “can represent a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations” (215).

Social peace is very laborious and requires practice. Peace is not achieved in the comfort of offices, but in the difficulties and risks of daily life: “What is important is to create *processes* of

encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences. Let us arm our children with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter” (FT217)!

No one can be excluded; the peripheries also have something to offer, because experience and history show that “sooner or later, ignoring the existence and rights of others will erupt in some form of violence, often when least expected” (FT 219).

We must always have this deep and tested conviction that “no authentic, profound and enduring change is possible unless it starts from the different cultures, particularly those of the poor” (FT 220).

There are counter-values which it is urgent to banish from social practices. One of these is consumerist individualism, responsible for many abuses. The world must cultivate kindness, for it is essential not to hurt others with words or gestures considered offensive. Rather, “It involves ‘speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement’ and not ‘words that demean, sadden, anger or show scorn’” (FT223).

In a society going at high speed, people do not seem to have time for simple but essential gestures. The Pope reminds us that “often nowadays we find neither the time nor the energy to stop and be kind to others, to say “excuse me”, “pardon me” and “thank you”. We must value expressions of kindness which create a good atmosphere and generate happiness. Pope Francis concludes: “Once kindness becomes a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the ways ideas are discussed and compared. Kindness facilitates the quest for consensus; it opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges” (FT224).

We must open up ways of meeting each other. We could quench a lot of thirst in this way!

Hearts that embrace. Chapter VII (Paths of renewed encounter)

Pope Francis is clear and direct: “In many parts of the world, there is a need for paths of peace to heal open wounds. There is also a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter” (FT 225).

There is a need to open 'paths of a new encounter'. There is a need to dare 'to start afresh from the truth', for only from this standpoint will people “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 227), without ever forgetting that “truth is an inseparable companion of justice and mercy” (FT 227).

Francis is convinced that reconciliation and the building of brotherhood require knowing what has happened: “Truth means telling families torn apart by pain what happened to their missing relatives (...) Truth means recognizing the pain of women who are victims of violence and abuse. Fraternity will only take place when the chains of violence are broken, for “violence leads to more violence, hatred to more hatred, death to more death” (FT 227). Vengeance does not solve anything and “forgiveness is precisely what enables us to pursue justice without falling into a spiral of revenge or the injustice of forgetting” (FT 252).

The paths may be difficult to travel, but it is clear that “true peace can be achieved only when we strive for justice through dialogue, pursuing reconciliation and mutual development” (FT 229).

Theories can help in the social construction of a country, but nothing will replace practical commitment: “Great changes are not produced behind desks or in offices (...) There is an ‘architecture’ of peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an ‘art’ of peace that involves us all” (FT 231).

There is no peace without justice, and this is an important indicator: “Those who work for tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible (FT 235). And one must never forget the least of our brothers and sisters, the discarded and the most fragile.

Other major themes are forgiveness (which 'does not imply forgetting' (FT 250)) and reconciliation, valued by Christianity and many religions. The Pope makes it clear that “Jesus Christ never promoted violence or intolerance”, for “the Gospel asks to forgive seventy times seven” (FT 238). There are legitimate struggles for the defence of rights and dignity, but “the important thing is not to fuel anger, which is unhealthy for our own soul and the soul of our people” (FT 242), even knowing that “it is not an easy task to overcome the bitter legacy of injustice, hostility and distrust left by the conflict” (FT 243).

History shows how difficult it is to heal violence, but “authentic reconciliation does not run away from conflict, but is achieved *in* conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation” (FT 244). Forgetfulness must never be proposed. “The Shoah must never be forgotten” (FT 247), nor “the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki” (FT 248), nor “persecution, the slave trade, ethnic massacres” (FT 248), so as not to commit atrocities of this magnitude again. But “to remember goodness is also a healthy thing” (FT 249).

Finally, Pope Francis gets to grips with two hot topics: war and the death penalty. “War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment” (FT 257). After the discovery of nuclear, chemical and biological weapons, the logic of a possible just war was destroyed, given its destructive power: “We can no longer think of war as a solution, because its risks will probably always be greater than its supposed benefits. ... Never again war” (FT 258)! The Pope has no doubt that “Every war leaves our world worse than it was before. War is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, a stinging defeat before the forces of evil. (...) Let us ask the victims themselves” (FT 261).

And here comes the great proposal: “With the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries” (FT 262).

The death penalty is also targeted: “Today we state clearly that ‘the death penalty is inadmissible’ and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide” (FT 263). Decent conditions in prisons and the abolition of life imprisonment, “a secret death penalty” (FT 268), must be fought for.

It is necessary to follow Isaiah who announced: "They shall beat their swords into ploughshares" (FT 270). Fraternity can only be established by hearts coming together.

The fraternity of believers. Chap. VIII

(Religions at the service of Fraternity in the world, 271-287)

Pope Francis has a long experience of ecumenical and inter-religious dialogue and has no doubt that "The different religions ... contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society" (FT 271). Our specific contribution as believers is that of believing in a 'single foundation': "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" (FT 272).

Our experience of enlightened and lived faith, accumulated over millennia, gives us the conviction that "making God present is a good for our societies" (FT 274). And history also tells us that we learn from countless weaknesses and falls.

We live in times marked by the exclusion of the religious dimension from the public forum. Pope Francis asks us to review this attitude because, according to him, "it is wrong when the only voices to be heard in public debate are those of the powerful and 'experts'. Room needs to be made for reflections born of religious traditions that are the repository of centuries of experience and wisdom" (FT 275).

Looking at the mission of the Church, the Pope reminds the world that, beyond the fields of social and humanitarian assistance and education, the Church "seeks the promotion of persons and universal brotherhood" (FT 276). And she must fulfill her mission by excluding no one, for she is "a house with open doors, because she is a Mother" (FT 276).

Dialogue with other religions is valued because there is much that is true and holy in them. But we have something specific to give to the world: "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, the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. If the music of the Gospel ceases to sound in our homes, our public squares, our workplaces, our political and financial life, then we will no longer hear the strains that challenge us to defend the dignity of every man and woman'" (FT 277). We recognise the wealth of others who drink from other sources.

Usually the pontifical documents end with a reference to Mary. Here it comes first: "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 (cf. *Jn* 19:26), she cares not only for Jesus but also for 'the rest of her children' (cf. *Rev* 12:17). In the power of the risen Lord, she wants to give birth to a new world, where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, where justice and peace are resplendent" (FT 278).

Francis returns to the hot and current theme of religious freedom and asks the political leaders of the whole world, where Christians are a minority, to be given freedom of worship and

mission. This same freedom is also to be favoured for believers of other religions in countries with a Christian majority. All this because “There exists one fundamental human right that must not be forgotten on the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions” (FT 279).

Unity within the Church is also a condition of fraternity: “a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Holy Spirit” (FT 280).

Religion never goes hand in hand with violence. But it opens common spaces of solidarity: “we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor” (FT 282). And it must be clear that “violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion” (FT 282). Hence the urgency of stopping “support for terrorist movements fuelled by financing, the provision of weapons and strategy, and by attempts to justify these movements, even using the media. All these must be regarded as international crimes that threaten security and world peace. Such terrorism must be condemned in all its forms and expressions” (FT 283).

God does not need anyone to defend him in his name, and every religious leader must be an authentic mediator, “an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue and not by constructing new walls” (FT 284).

Fratelli Tutti ends with a Prayer to the Creator and an ecumenical Christian Prayer. The Pope's final message is clear: “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).

The world needs references and the Pope asks us to look at the lives of Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Gandhi and Carlos de Foucauld. They are shining lights for our days.

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