

## CHAPTER FIVE “A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS”

“The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations,” Pope Francis says, “calls for a better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good” (154). This section goes on to expose the limitations of both populism and liberalism when they fail to protect the vulnerable. In terms of international relations, multilateral, rather than bilateral, agreements between states are recommended in order to better promote the common good and protect weaker states (174). However, *subsidiarity* (the principle of handling political issues at the most local level possible) is also emphasized as a way to guard against the shortcomings of the state and avoid the negative effects of globalization.



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## CHAPTER SIX “DIALOGUE AND FRIENDSHIP IN SOCIETY”

“If we want to encounter and help one another, we have to dialogue” (198). This is not the first time Pope Francis has shared this message, and here he distinguishes the contemporary frenetic exchanges on social media (which Francis calls “parallel monologues”) from authentic dialogue, which “involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns” (203). It is only through respectful, rational dialogue that

includes multiple perspectives that society can arrive at a consensus around the truths necessary for its continued existence. At the heart of these truths is the inherent dignity of the human person.

## CHAPTER SEVEN “PATHS OF RENEWED ENCOUNTER”

The wounds inflicted by prior conflicts remain as barriers to meaningful encounter and dialogue in many places. Pope Francis, here, is focused on healing these wounds, and he points out that facing the past and seeking truth and justice are prerequisites to reconciliation and forgiveness (227). He also stresses the benefits of negotiation over violent demonstrations in finding solutions and building lasting peace (231–232). The best place to begin a process of building social friendship in a particular society is with those who are most vulnerable and impoverished, because “inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible” (235).

## CHAPTER EIGHT “RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY IN OUR WORLD”

The final chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* begins by stressing the impossibility of real fraternity without an openness to the Father of all. We are brothers and sisters to one another because we are all children of the Father. Related to this, Francis points out that without a belief in transcendent truth we lack a foundation for universal principles governing the relationships between human beings, leaving us vulnerable to the forces of power (273). For this reason, religions have an important role to play when they seek God with sincerity.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis offers all people a framework for reflecting on how better to care for one another as sisters and brothers. Let us prayerfully go forward with hope as we work together to build a world community that promotes the common good, respecting the dignity of all persons.

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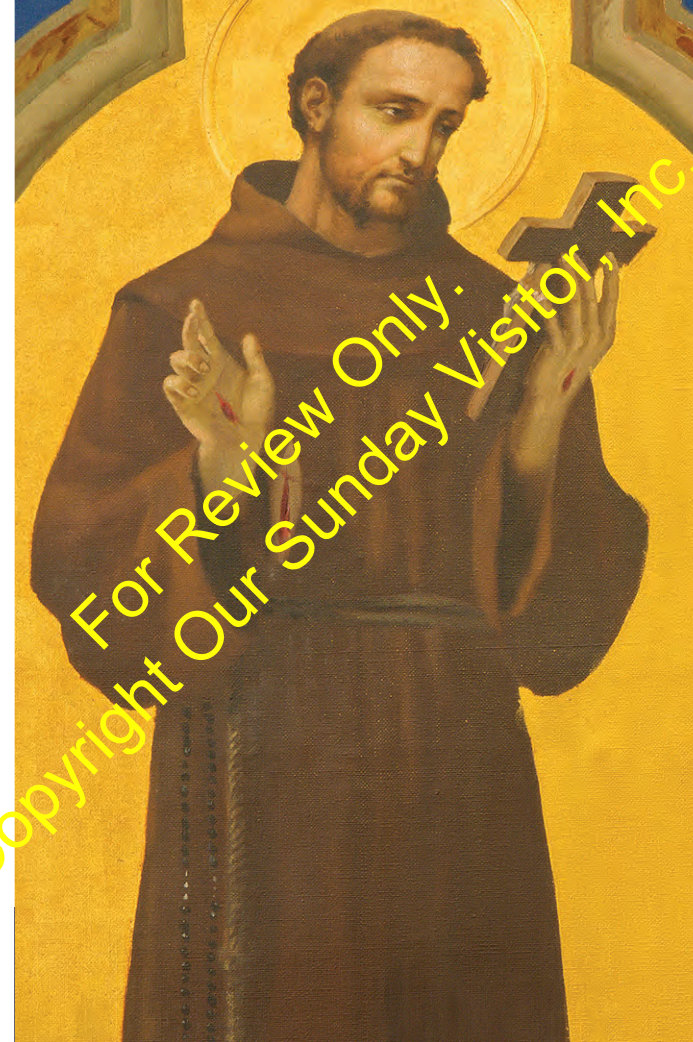
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# FRATELLI TUTTI



## ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

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“It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity.”  
(*Fratelli Tutti*, 8)

Pope Francis, having taken his pontifical name from one of the patron saints of peace, Saint Francis of Assisi, has spoken often on fraternal love, world peace, and social justice, particularly in his frequent travels around the world. With the above line (pulled from the introduction), he summarizes the primary goal of his new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, which focuses on fraternity and social friendship.

This particular encyclical quotes widely from the pope’s previous messages, organizing several years of teaching on these issues. It is divided into eight chapters that present the current challenges and obstacles to fraternity in the human community and lay out a hopeful vision for the future. What follows in this pamphlet is a brief outline of major themes.

INTRODUCTION

Pope Francis leads off by sharing how Saint Francis inspired both the title and content of the encyclical, particularly in the way in which he taught a “fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate, and love each person, regardless of physical proximity,



An encyclical is a letter to the entire Church in which the pope communicates teaching on a particular topic or topics, and it is considered the most formal type of papal documents, which also includes apostolic letters, apostolic exhortations, and other teaching. *Fratelli Tutti* is the third encyclical of Pope Francis’ pontificate (the other two are *Lumen Fidei* and *Laudato Si*’).



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regardless of where he or she was born or lives” (1). He cites the saint’s cordial visit with Sultan Malik-al-Kamil in Egypt as an example of the way in which Christians today might spread the love of God in the larger world

community. The pope states that he was inspired and encouraged by his own dialogue with Orthodox Patriarch Bartholomew and Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, adding that the present encyclical “takes up and develops” some of the themes they have agreed are important (5). In this spirit, he extends the encyclical “as an invitation to dialogue among all people of good will” (6).

CHAPTER ONE  
“DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD”

In the first chapter, Pope Francis lists a number of “trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity” (9). One challenge is the recent resurgence of both local and international conflicts, which is often fueled by growing nationalism, after an earlier period of greater peace and progress. Pope Francis laments the loss of the historical perspective that, at least temporarily, helped us learn lessons from the conflicts of the past. Another negative trend is the failure to build societies that include everyone and respect human dignity, resulting in a “throwaway” world in which even human beings are seen as expendable commodities. Additional challenges include increased globalization “without a shared road map,” leaving many individuals and peoples behind, the inhumane treatment of migrants, and obstacles to genuine communication and relationship posed by certain trends in digital media and the loss of authentic encounter. In the midst of these and other troubling trends, Pope Francis contends, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed our fragility and our need to work together as a one human family.

CHAPTER TWO  
“A STRANGER ON THE ROAD”

Here, Pope Francis turns his attention to Jesus’ parable of the Good Samaritan and the lessons it teaches us about how we should love our neighbor. He also cites the stories of Job, of Cain and Abel, and other key Scripture passages on fraternal love from both the Old and New Testaments. Coming back to the Gospel story, he draws a connection between those who pass by the Good Samaritan and modern society’s tendency to look away from or pass over those who are in need or suffering. “All of us have a responsibility for the wounded,” Pope Francis writes, “those of our own people and all the peoples of the earth” (79).



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CHAPTER THREE  
“ENVISAGING AND ENGENDERING  
AN OPEN WORLD”

This chapter begins with an admonition that we must give of ourselves in order to be fully human. And this gift of self, Pope Francis explains, should extend not just

to those in our immediate family or group, but to the larger world. Moral virtues are only rightly directed, he contends, to the extent that they foster openness toward, and union with, others (91). True charity means seeking the good of the other. This is true not only for individuals, but for societies, which should include and integrate everyone — particularly people at the peripheries. All people have equal dignity and are entitled to certain basic rights and freedoms regardless of where they are born. Safeguarding this dignity will require a “new network of international relations” in which nations work together to meet the basic needs of all (126).

CHAPTER FOUR  
“A HEART OPEN TO THE WHOLE WORLD”

Following the more general principles discussed in previous chapters, the fourth chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* turns to the concrete steps required for realizing a fraternity that includes everyone. The pope addresses the issue of migration, with the first priority being to reduce the necessity of migration by working together to ensure that all people have the conditions necessary for dignity and human development in their own countries. Where migration is necessary, countries should provide clear and practical steps to welcome refugees and migrants, and integrate them into society (130). The need for global collaboration is discussed, both for addressing the causes of migration and safeguarding the dignity of migrants. Pope Francis points out that migrants bring the gifts of different perspectives and cultures that can enrich society if they are welcomed and encouraged, and they should be allowed to maintain their cultural identity even as they “develop in new ways” (134). He cautions against a utilitarian perspective that values people only for what they can contribute, and instead encourages a “fraternal gratuitousness” that welcomes the stranger even if there is no obvious tangible benefit to doing so (139). We also need to value both the local and the global, valuing and protecting one’s home and culture while still working together as a world community with the understanding that we are one human family.