

A resource of 9 sessions  
for a slow reading of

# Fratelli Tutti

Session Two:  
Dark Clouds over  
a Closed World



## A Summary of Chapter 1 of *Fratelli Tutti*

*A worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together (32)."*

Pope Francis gives a thorough description of the darkness he sees in the world today.

First, political systems are regressing and the profit-based economic model "does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings."

Second, there is a culture of indifference. By employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion, and relentless criticism, one group can dominate and exclude another, creating a permanent state of DISAGREEMENT, confrontation and even violence. The loneliness, fear and insecurity experienced by those who feel excluded are easy targets for "mafias" (i.e. gangs). Also, human rights are not universally respected, especially for women.

This culture of indifference especially affects the unborn, disabled, and elderly. Though connected globally, we do not see our brothers and sisters as our neighbours. This is most apparent in the absence of dignity for migrants at our borders and for many people impacted by the pandemic.

Pope Francis wants to strengthen the idea of social friendship and social peace in the face of an all-pervasive social violence, which he sees running through the economy, politics, and even through social media.



**This document** is the 2<sup>nd</sup> in a series of 9 that offers material for a slow reading of the chapters of *Fratelli Tutti*

It provides

- **A SUMMARY** (page 1) and the **COMPLETE TEXT OF CHAPTER I** of *Fratelli Tutti* (pages 4-13)
- **DISCUSSION MATERIALS** (pages 2 and 3)- a selection of some key paragraphs and discussion questions
- **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**, 'Leaven for the Lump' (page 1 and 14) – suggestions and links to song, art, poetry, for example – offering complements to the reading of *Fratelli Tutti*, to further engage with its themes.

## Leaven for the Lump

- **News reports**
  - *The fall of the Berlin Wall.*  
<https://bit.ly/34WtoyC>
  - *Democratic Elections in South Africa*  
<https://bit.ly/2Fr4zSR>
  - *Build a wall*  
<https://bit.ly/2FpDdwf>
  - *Migrants in the Med*  
<https://bit.ly/33ZTzW9>
- **Articles on Eugenics**
  - *Brief overview article*  
<https://go.nature.com/2GTjXba>
  - *New Statesman article on eugenics in Britain.*  
<https://bit.ly/34YkMYg>
- **Social Media**
  - *The Social Dilemma* - Documentary available on Netflix. Trailer: <https://bit.ly/3dnig1w>
- **Racism**
  - *BBC Question Time discussion*  
<https://bit.ly/3k18On6>
  - *BlacKkKlansman* - 2018 film by Spike Lee

# Extracts for discussion

## Shattered Dreams

10. For decades, it seemed that the world had learned a lesson from its many wars and disasters, and was slowly moving towards various forms of integration. For example, there was the dream of a united Europe, capable of acknowledging its shared roots and rejoicing in its rich diversity... The founders of the European Union, envisioned a future based on the capacity to work together in bridging divisions and in fostering peace and fellowship between all the peoples of this continent”...

11. Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. In some countries, a concept of popular and national unity influenced by various ideologies is creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense under the guise of defending national interests... We are being reminded that each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher... Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day...

12. ...Local conflicts and disregard for the common good are exploited by the global economy in order to impose a single 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”. We are more alone than ever in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual interests and weakens the humanitarian dimension of life... As a rule, the advance of this kind of globalism strengthens the identity of the more powerful, who can protect themselves, but it tends to diminish the identity of the weaker and poorer regions, making them more vulnerable and dependent. In this way, political life becomes increasingly fragile in the face of transnational economic powers that operate with the principle of “divide and conquer”...

- *Do you agree with Pope Francis that lessons learnt are now being forgotten? Can you give examples to add to those he gives? Or examples that challenge his analysis?*
- *Where do you see the powerful oppressing those who are weaker?*
- *Do you see signs of hope also?*

## A “throwaway” world

18. 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...”

19. A decline in the birthrate, which leads to the aging of the population, together with the relegation of the elderly to a sad and lonely existence, is a subtle way of stating that it is all about us, that our individual concerns are the only thing that matters. In this way, “what is thrown away are not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves”. We have seen what happened with the elderly in certain places in our world as a result of the coronavirus. They did not have to die that way... We fail to realize that, by isolating the elderly and leaving them in the care of others without the closeness and concern of family members, we disfigure and impoverish the family itself. We also end up depriving young people of a necessary connection to their roots and a wisdom that the young cannot achieve on their own.

20. ...In addition, a readiness to discard others finds expression in vicious attitudes that we thought long past, such as racism, which retreats underground only to keep reemerging. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think...

- *What examples can you give of some people being treated as of less worth, as people, than others?*
- *What reasons might people give for treating people differently in this way?*
- *What might be some of the consequences of this discrimination?*
- *What might help things be different?*

## Globalization And Progress?

30. In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat. This illusion ... leads to "a sort of cynicism. ...Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes".

31. ...Technology is constantly advancing, yet "how wonderful it would be if the growth of scientific and technological innovation could come with more equality and social inclusion. How wonderful would it be, even as we discover faraway planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters who orbit around us".

- *Where does the idea of belonging to a single human family come from? Is it realistic? Is it true?*
- *Is there one human race or many races? Might some races be more developed, more valuable, than others?*
- *Which is the bigger illusion - thinking we are all powerful or that we are all in the same boat?*

## Information without wisdom

47. True wisdom demands an encounter with reality. Today, however, everything can be created, disguised and altered. A direct encounter even with the fringes of reality can thus prove intolerable. ... (Yet p)ersons or situations we find unpleasant or disagreeable are simply deleted in today's virtual networks; a virtual circle is then created, isolating us from the real world in which we are living.

48. The ability to sit down and listen to others, typical of interpersonal encounters, is paradigmatic of the welcoming attitude shown by those who transcend narcissism and accept others, caring for them and welcoming them into their lives. Yet "today's world is largely a deaf world... At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying. ...We must not lose our ability to listen". Saint Francis "heard the voice of God, he heard the voice of the poor, he heard the voice of the infirm and he heard the voice of nature. He made of them a way of life. My desire is that the seed that Saint Francis planted may grow in the hearts of many".

50. Together, we can seek the truth in dialogue, in relaxed conversation or in passionate debate. To do so calls for perseverance; it entails moments of silence and suffering, yet it can patiently embrace the broader experience of individuals and peoples. ...Wisdom is not born of quick searches on the internet nor is it a mass of unverified data. That is not the way to mature in the encounter with truth. ...The process of building fraternity, be it local or universal, can only be undertaken by spirits that are free and open to authentic encounters.

- *To whom do you listen?*
- *Who listens to you?*
- *What helps listening? And what hinders it?*
- *Where might you hear the voice of God?*
- *Where might you hear the voice of the poor?*



# CHAPTER ONE:

## Dark Clouds Over A Closed World

9. Without claiming to carry out an exhaustive analysis or to study every aspect of our present-day experience, I intend simply to consider certain trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity.

### Shattered Dreams

10. For decades, it seemed that the world had learned a lesson from its many wars and disasters, and was slowly moving towards various forms of integration. For example, there was the dream of a united Europe, capable of acknowledging its shared roots and rejoicing in its rich diversity. We think of “the firm conviction of the founders of the European Union, who envisioned a future based on the capacity to work together in bridging divisions and in fostering peace and fellowship between all the peoples of this continent”. [7] There was also a growing desire for integration in Latin America, and several steps were taken in this direction. In some countries and regions, attempts at reconciliation and rapprochement proved fruitful, while others showed great promise.

11. Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. In some countries, a concept of popular and national unity influenced by various ideologies is creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense under the guise of defending national interests. Once more we are being reminded that “each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day. It is not possible to settle for what was achieved in the past and complacently enjoy it, as if we could somehow disregard the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations that cry out for our attention”. [8]

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. Local conflicts and disregard for the common good are exploited by the global economy in order to impose a single 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”. [9] We are more alone than ever in an increasingly massified world that promotes individual interests and weakens the communitarian dimension of life. Indeed, there are markets where individuals become mere consumers or bystanders. As a rule, the advance of this kind of globalism strengthens the identity of the more powerful, who can protect themselves, but it tends to diminish the identity of the weaker and poorer regions, making them more vulnerable and dependent. In this way, political life becomes increasingly fragile in the face of transnational economic powers that operate with the principle of “divide and conquer”.

### *The end of historical consciousness*

13. As a result, there is a growing loss of the sense of history, which leads to even further breakup. A kind of “deconstructionism”, whereby human freedom claims to create everything starting from zero, is making headway in today’s culture. The one thing it leaves in its wake is the drive to limitless consumption and expressions of empty individualism. Concern about this led me to offer the young some advice. “If someone tells young people to ignore their history, to reject the experiences of their elders, to look down on the past and to look forward to a future that he himself holds



out, doesn't it then become easy to draw them along so that they only do what he tells them? He needs the young to be shallow, uprooted and distrustful, so that they can trust only in his promises and act according to his plans. That is how various ideologies operate: they destroy (or deconstruct) all differences so that they can reign unopposed. To do so, however, they need young people who have no use for history, who spurn the spiritual and human riches inherited from past generations, and are ignorant of everything that came before them".[10]



14. These are the new forms of cultural colonization. Let us not forget that "peoples that abandon their tradition and, either from a craze to mimic others or to foment violence, or from unpardonable negligence or apathy, allow others to rob their very soul, end up losing not only their spiritual identity but also their moral consistency and, in the end, their intellectual, economic and political independence".[11] One effective way to weaken historical consciousness, critical thinking, the struggle for justice and the processes of integration is to empty great words 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.

### **Lacking A Plan For Everyone**

15. The best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values. Today, in many countries, hyperbole, extremism and polarization have become political tools. Employing a strategy of ridicule, suspicion and relentless criticism, in a variety of ways one denies the right of others to exist or to have an opinion. Their share of the truth and their values are rejected and, as a result, the life of society is impoverished and subjected to the hubris of the powerful. Political life no longer has to do with healthy debates about long-term plans to improve people's lives and to advance the common good, but only with slick marketing techniques primarily aimed at discrediting others. In this craven exchange of charges and counter-charges, debate degenerates into a permanent state of disagreement and confrontation.

16. Amid the fray of conflicting interests, where victory consists in eliminating one's opponents, how is it possible to raise our sights to recognize our neighbours or to help those who have fallen along the way? A plan that would set great goals for the development of our entire human family

nowadays sounds like madness. We are growing ever more distant from one another, while the slow and demanding march towards an increasingly united and just world is suffering a new and dramatic setback.

17. To care for the world in which we live means to care for ourselves. Yet we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home. Such care does not interest those economic powers that demand quick profits. Often the voices raised in defence of the environment are silenced or ridiculed, using apparently reasonable arguments that are merely a screen for special interests. In this shallow, short-sighted culture that we have created, bereft of a shared vision, "it is foreseeable that, once certain resources have been depleted, the scene will be set for new wars, albeit under the guise of noble claims".[12]

### **A "throwaway" world**

18. 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. We have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food, which is deplorable in the extreme".[13]

19. A decline in the birthrate, which leads to the aging of the population, together with the relegation of the elderly to a sad and lonely existence, is a subtle way of stating that it is all about us, that our individual concerns are the only thing that matters. In this way, "what is thrown away are not only food and dispensable objects, but often human beings themselves".[14] We have seen what happened with the elderly in certain places in our



world as a result of the coronavirus. They did not have to die that way. Yet something similar had long been occurring during heat waves and in other situations: older people found themselves cruelly abandoned. We fail to realize that, by isolating the elderly and leaving them in the care of others without the closeness and concern of family members, we disfigure and impoverish the family itself. We also end up depriving young people of a necessary connection to their roots and a wisdom that the young cannot achieve on their own.

20. This way of discarding others can take a variety of forms, such as an obsession with reducing labour costs with no concern for its grave consequences, since the unemployment that it directly generates leads to the expansion of poverty.[15] In addition, a readiness to discard others finds expression in vicious attitudes that we thought long past, such as racism, which retreats underground only to keep reemerging. Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.

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] The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria from the past that do not correspond to present-day realities. In other times, for example, lack of access to electric energy was not considered a sign of poverty, nor was it a source of hardship. Poverty must always be understood and gauged in the context of the actual opportunities available in each concrete historical period.

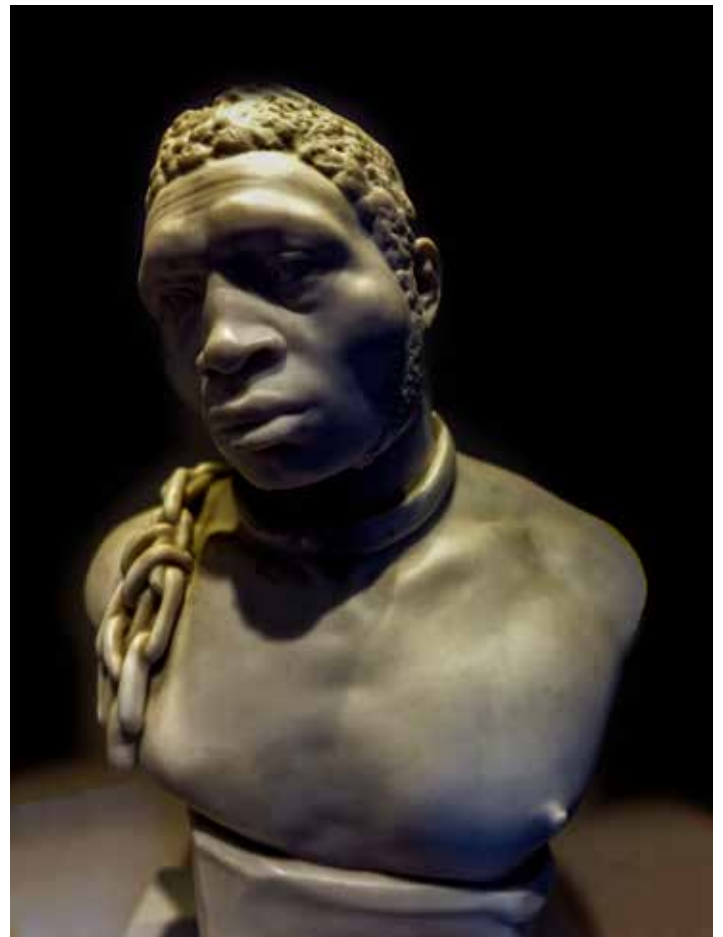
### *Insufficiently universal human rights*

22. It frequently becomes clear that, in practice, human rights are not equal for all. Respect for those rights “is the preliminary condition for a country’s social and economic development. When the dignity of the human person is respected, and his or her rights recognized and guaranteed, creativity and interdependence thrive, and the creativity of the human personality is released through actions that further the common good”.[18] Yet, “by closely observing our contemporary societies, we see numerous contradictions that lead us to wonder whether the equal dignity of all human beings, solemnly proclaimed seventy years ago, is truly recognized, respected, protected and promoted in every situation. In today’s world, many forms of injustice persist, fed by reductive anthropological visions and by 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] What does this tell us about the equality of rights grounded in innate human dignity?

23. 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]

24. We should also recognize that “even though the international community has adopted numerous agreements aimed at ending slavery in all its forms, and has launched various strategies to combat this phenomenon, millions of people today – children, women and men of all ages – are deprived of freedom and forced to live in conditions akin to slavery... Today, as in the past, slavery is rooted in a notion of the human person that allows him or her to be treated as an object... Whether by coercion, or deception, or by physical or psychological duress, human persons created in the image and likeness of God are deprived of their freedom, sold and reduced to being the property of others. They are treated as means to an end... [Criminal networks] are skilled in using



modern means of communication as a way of luring young men and women in various parts of the world”.[21] A perversion that exceeds all limits when it subjugates women and then forces them to abort. An abomination that goes to the length of kidnapping persons for the sake of selling their organs. Trafficking in persons and other contemporary forms of enslavement are a worldwide problem that needs to be taken seriously by humanity as a whole: “since criminal organizations employ global networks to achieve their goals, efforts to eliminate this phenomenon also demand a common and, indeed, a global effort on the part of various sectors of society”.[22]

### **Conflict and fear**

25. War, terrorist attacks, racial or religious persecution, and many other affronts to human dignity are judged differently, depending on how convenient it proves for certain, primarily economic, interests. What is true as long as it is convenient for someone in power stops being true once it becomes inconvenient. These situations of violence, sad to say, “have become so common as to constitute a real ‘third world war’ fought piecemeal”.[23]

26. This should not be surprising, if we realize that we no longer have common horizons that unite us; indeed, the first victim of every war is “the human family’s innate vocation to fraternity”. As a result, “every threatening situation breeds mistrust and leads people to withdraw into their own safety zone”.[24] Our world is trapped in a strange contradiction: we believe that we can “ensure stability and peace through a false sense of security sustained by a mentality of fear and mistrust”.[25]

27. Paradoxically, we have certain ancestral fears that technological development has not succeeded in eliminating; indeed, those fears have been able to hide and spread behind new technologies. Today too, outside the ancient town walls lies the abyss, the territory of the unknown, the wilderness. Whatever comes from there cannot be trusted, for it is unknown, unfamiliar, not part of the village. It is the territory of the “barbarian”, from whom we must defend ourselves at all costs. As a result, new



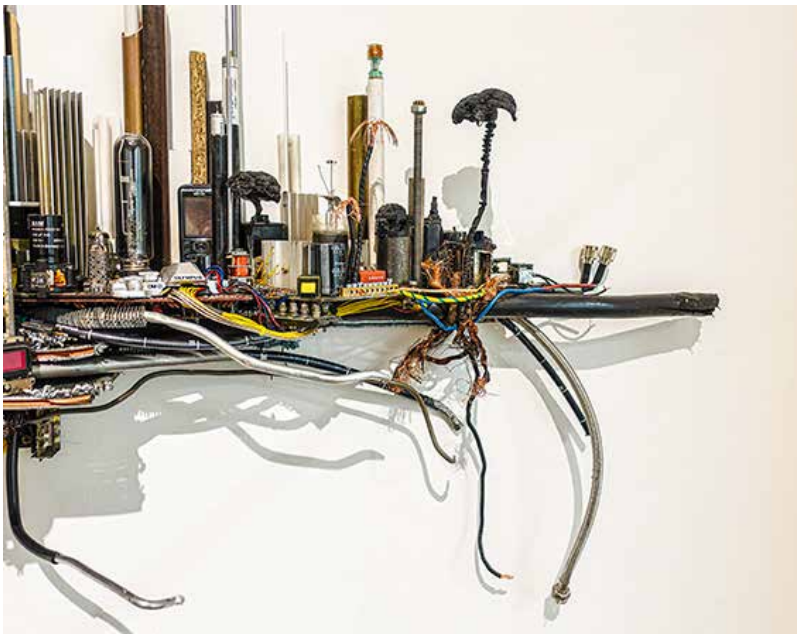
walls are erected for self-preservation, the outside world ceases to exist and leaves only “my” world, to the point that others, no longer considered human beings possessed of an inalienable dignity, become only “them”. Once more, we encounter “the temptation to build a culture of walls, to raise walls, 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. They are left without horizons, for they lack this interchange with others”.[26]

28. The loneliness, fear and insecurity experienced by those who feel abandoned by the system creates a fertile terrain for various “mafias”. These flourish because they claim to be defenders of the forgotten, often by providing various forms of assistance even as they pursue their criminal interests. There also exists a typically “mafioso” pedagogy that, by appealing to a false communitarian mystique, creates bonds of dependency and fealty from which it is very difficult to break free.

### **Globalization And Progress Without A Shared Roadmap**

29. With the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, we do not ignore the positive advances made in the areas of science, technology, medicine, industry and welfare, above all in developed countries. Nonetheless, “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. This contributes to a general feeling of frustration,





isolation and desperation". We see "outbreaks of tension and a buildup of arms and ammunition in a global context dominated by uncertainty, disillusionment, fear of the future, and controlled by narrow economic interests". We can also point to "major political crises, situations of injustice and the lack of an equitable distribution of natural resources... In the face of such crises that result in the deaths of millions of children – emaciated from poverty and hunger – there is an unacceptable silence on the international level".[27] This panorama, for all its undeniable advances, does not appear to lead to a more humane future.

30. In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat. This illusion, unmindful of the great fraternal values, leads to "a sort of cynicism. For that is the temptation we face if we go down the road of disenchantment and disappointment... Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes".[28]

31. In this world that races ahead, yet lacks a shared roadmap, we increasingly sense that "the gap between concern for one's personal well-being and the prosperity of the larger human family seems to be stretching to the point of complete division between individuals and human community... It is one thing to feel forced to live together, but something entirely different to value

the richness and beauty of those seeds of common life that need to be sought out and cultivated".[29] Technology is constantly advancing, yet "how wonderful it would be if the growth of scientific and technological innovation could come with more equality and social inclusion. How wonderful would it be, even as we discover faraway planets, to rediscover the needs of the brothers and sisters who orbit around us".[30]

## **Pandemics And Other Calamities In History**

32. True, a worldwide tragedy like the Covid-19 pandemic momentarily revived the sense that we are a global community, all in the same boat, where one person's problems are the problems of all. Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. As I said in those days, "the storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities... Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another".[31]

33. The world was relentlessly moving towards an economy that, thanks to technological progress, sought to reduce "human costs"; there were those who would have had us believe that freedom of the market was sufficient to keep everything secure. Yet the brutal and unforeseen blow of this uncontrolled pandemic forced us to recover our concern for human beings, for everyone, rather than for the benefit of a few. Today we can recognize that "we fed ourselves on dreams of splendour and grandeur, and ended up consuming distraction, insularity and solitude. We gorged ourselves on networking, and lost the taste of fraternity. We looked for quick and safe results, only to find ourselves overwhelmed by impatience and anxiety. Prisoners of a virtual reality, we lost the taste and flavour of the truly real".[32] The pain, uncertainty and fear, and the realization of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organization of our societies and, above all, the meaning of our existence.

34. If everything is connected, it is hard to imagine that this global disaster is unrelated to our way of approaching reality, our claim to be abso-



lute masters of our own lives and of all that exists. I do not want to speak of divine retribution, nor would it be sufficient to say that the harm we do to nature is itself the punishment for our offences. The world is itself crying out in rebellion. We are reminded of the well-known verse of the poet Virgil that evokes the “tears of things”, the misfortunes of life and history.[33]

35. All too quickly, however, we forget the lessons of history, “the teacher of life”.[34] Once this health crisis passes, our worst response would be to plunge even more deeply into feverish consumerism and new forms of egotistic self-preservation. God willing, after all this, we will think no longer in terms of “them” and “those”, but only “us”. If only this may prove not to be just another tragedy of history from which we learned nothing. If only we might keep in mind all those elderly persons who died for lack of respirators, partly as a result of the dismantling, year after year, of healthcare systems. If only this immense sorrow may not prove useless, but enable us to take a step forward towards a new style of life. If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected.

36. Unless we recover the shared passion to create a community of belonging and solidarity worthy of our time, our energy and our resources, the global illusion that misled us will collapse and leave many in the grip of anguish and emptiness. Nor should we naively refuse to recognize that “obsession with a consumerist lifestyle, above all when few people are capable of maintaining it, can only lead to violence and mutual destruction”.[35] The notion of “every man for himself” will rapidly degenerate into a free-for-all that would prove worse than any pandemic.

### **An Absence Of Human Dignity On The Borders**

37. Certain populist political regimes, as well as certain liberal economic approaches, maintain that an influx of migrants is to be prevented at all costs. Arguments are also made for the propriety of limiting aid to poor countries, so that they can hit rock bottom and find themselves forced to take austerity

measures. One fails to realize that behind such statements, abstract and hard to support, great numbers of lives are at stake. Many migrants have fled from war, persecution and natural catastrophes. Others, rightly, “are seeking opportunities for themselves and their families. They dream of a better future and they want to create the conditions for achieving it”.[36]

38. Sadly, some “are attracted by Western culture, sometimes with unrealistic expectations that expose them to grave disappointments. Unscrupulous traffickers, frequently linked to drug cartels or arms cartels, exploit the weakness of migrants, who too often experience violence, trafficking, psychological and physical abuse and untold sufferings on their journey”.[37] Those who emigrate “experience separation from their place of origin, and often a cultural and religious uprooting as well. Fragmentation is also felt by the communities they leave behind, which lose their most vigorous and enterprising elements, and by families, especially when one or both of the parents migrates, leaving the children in the country of origin”.[38] For this reason, “there is also a need to reaffirm the right not to emigrate, that is, to remain in one’s homeland”.[39]

39. Then too, “in some host countries, migration causes fear and alarm, often fomented and exploited for political purposes. This can lead to a xenophobic mentality, as people close in on themselves, and it needs to be addressed decisively”.[40] Migrants are not seen as entitled like others to participate in the life of society, and it is forgotten that they possess the same intrinsic dignity as any person. Hence they ought to be “agents in their own redemption”.[41] No one will ever openly deny



that they are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless of origin, race or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love.

40. “Migrations, more than ever before, will play a pivotal role in the future of our world”.[42] At present, however, migration is affected by the “loss of that sense of responsibility for our brothers and sisters on which every civil society is based”.[43] Europe, for example, seriously risks taking this path. Nonetheless, “aided by its great cultural and religious heritage, it has the means to defend the centrality of the human person and to find the right balance between its twofold moral responsibility to protect the rights of its citizens and to assure assistance and acceptance to migrants”.[44]

41. I realize that some people are hesitant and fearful with regard to migrants. I consider this part of our natural instinct of self-defence. Yet it is also true that an individual and a people are only fruitful and productive if they are able to develop a creative openness to others. I ask everyone to move beyond those primal reactions because “there is a problem when doubts and fears condition our way of thinking and acting to the point of making us intolerant, closed and perhaps even – without realizing it – racist. In this way, fear deprives us of the desire and the ability to encounter the other”.[45]

## **The Illusion Of Communication**

42. Oddly enough, while closed and intolerant attitudes towards others are on the rise, distances are otherwise shrinking or disappearing to the point that the right to privacy scarcely exists. Everything has become a kind of spectacle to be examined and inspected, and people’s lives are now under constant surveillance. Digital communication wants to bring everything out into the open; people’s lives are combed over, laid bare and bandied about, often anonymously. Respect for others disintegrates, and even as we dismiss, ignore or keep others distant, we can shamelessly peer into every detail of their lives.

42. Digital campaigns of hatred and destruction, for their part, are not – as some would have us believe – a positive form of mutual support, but sim-



ply an association of individuals united against a perceived common enemy. “Digital media can also expose people to the risk of addiction, isolation and a gradual loss of contact with concrete reality, blocking the development of authentic interpersonal relationships”.[46] They lack the physical gestures, facial expressions, moments of silence, body language and even the smells, the trembling of hands, the blushes and perspiration that speak to us and are a part of human communication. Digital relationships, which do not demand the slow and gradual cultivation of friendships, stable interaction or the building of a consensus that matures over time, have the appearance of sociability. Yet they do not really build community; instead, they tend to disguise and expand the very individualism that finds expression in xenophobia and in contempt for the vulnerable. Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity.

## **Shameless aggression**

44. Even as individuals maintain their comfortable consumerist isolation, they can choose a form of constant and febrile bonding that encourages remarkable hostility, insults, abuse, defamation and verbal violence destructive of others, and this with a lack of restraint that could not exist in physical contact without tearing us all apart. Social aggression has found unparalleled room for expansion through computers and mobile devices.

45. This has now given free rein to ideologies. Things that until a few years ago could not be said by anyone without risking the loss of universal respect can now be said with impunity, and in the crudest of terms, even by some political figures. Nor should we forget that “there are huge economic interests operating in the digital world, capable



of exercising forms of control as subtle as they are invasive, creating mechanisms for the manipulation of consciences and of the democratic process. The way many platforms work often ends up favouring encounter between persons who think alike, shielding them from debate. These closed circuits facilitate the spread of fake news and false information, fomenting prejudice and hate”.[47]

46. We should also recognize that destructive forms of fanaticism are at times found among religious believers, including Christians; they too “can be caught up in networks of verbal violence through the internet and the various forums of digital communication. Even in Catholic 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”.[48] How can this contribute to the fraternity that our common Father asks of us?

### *Information without wisdom*

47. True wisdom demands an encounter with reality. Today, however, everything can be created, disguised and altered. A direct encounter even with the fringes of reality can thus prove intolerable. A mechanism of selection then comes into play, whereby I can immediately separate likes from dislikes, what I consider attractive from what I deem distasteful. In the same way, we can choose the people with whom we wish to share our world. Persons or situations we find unpleasant or disagreeable are simply deleted in today’s virtual networks; a virtual circle is then created, isolating us from the real world in which we are living.

48. The ability to sit down and listen to others, typ-

ical of interpersonal encounters, is paradigmatic of the welcoming attitude shown by those who transcend narcissism and accept others, caring for them and welcoming them into their lives. Yet “today’s world is largely a deaf world... At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying. Halfway through, we interrupt him and want to contradict what he has not even finished saying. We must not lose our ability to listen”. Saint Francis “heard the voice of God, he heard the voice of the poor, he heard the voice of the infirm and he heard the voice of nature. He made of them a way of life. My desire is that the seed that Saint Francis planted may grow in the hearts of many”.[49]

49. As silence and careful listening disappear, replaced by a frenzy of texting, this basic structure of sage human communication is at risk. A new lifestyle is emerging, where we create only what we want and exclude all that we cannot control or know instantly and superficially. This process, by its intrinsic logic, blocks the kind of serene reflection that could lead us to a shared wisdom.

50. Together, we can seek the truth in dialogue, in relaxed conversation or in passionate debate. To do so calls for perseverance; it entails moments of silence and suffering, yet it can patiently embrace the broader experience of individuals and peoples. The flood of information at our fingertips does not make for greater wisdom. Wisdom is not born of quick searches on the internet nor is it a mass of unverified data. That is not the way to mature in the encounter with truth. Conversations revolve only around the latest data; they become merely horizontal and cumulative. We fail to keep our at-

tention focused, to penetrate to the heart of matters, and to recognize what is essential to give meaning to our lives. Freedom thus becomes an illusion that we are peddled, easily confused with the ability to navigate the internet. The process of building fraternity, be it local or universal, can only be undertaken by spirits that are free and open to authentic encounters.

### **Forms Of Subjection And Of Self-Contempt**

51. Certain economically prosperous countries tend to be proposed as cultural models for less developed coun-





tries; instead, each of those countries should be helped to grow in its own distinct way and to develop its capacity for innovation while respecting the values of its proper culture. A shallow and pathetic desire to imitate others leads to copying and consuming in place of creating, and fosters low national self-esteem. In the affluent sectors of many poor countries, and at times in those who have recently emerged from poverty, there is a resistance to native ways of thinking and acting, and a tendency to look down on one's own cultural identity, as if it were the sole cause of every ill.

52. Destroying self-esteem is an easy way to dominate others. Behind these trends that tend to level our world, there flourish powerful interests that take advantage of such low self-esteem, while attempting, through the media and networks, to create a new culture in the service of the elite. This plays into the opportunism of financial speculators and raiders, and the poor always end up the losers. Then too, ignoring the culture of their people has led to the inability of many political leaders to devise an effective development plan that could be freely accepted and sustained over time.

53. We forget that “there is no worse form of alienation than to feel uprooted, belonging to no one. A land will be fruitful, and its people bear fruit and give birth to the future, only to the extent that it can foster a sense of belonging among its members, create bonds of integration between generations and different communities, and avoid all that makes us insensitive to others and leads to further alienation”. [50]

## Hope

54. Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like in the following pages to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family. The recent pandemic enabled us to recognize and appreciate once more all those around us who, in the midst of fear, responded by putting their lives on the line. We began to realize that our lives are interwoven with and sustained by ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious... They understood that no one is saved alone. [51]

55. I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope “speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. 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... Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile”. [52] Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope.

Pope Francis



## FOOTNOTES

- [7] Address to the European Parliament, Strasbourg (25 November 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 996.
- [8] Meeting with Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps, Santiago, Chile (16 January 2018): AAS 110 (2018), 256.
- [9] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 19: AAS 101 (2009), 655.
- [10] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus vivit* (25 March 2019), 181.
- [11] CARDINAL RAÚL SILVA HENRÍQUEZ, Homily at the Te Deum, Santiago de Chile (18 September 1974).
- [12] Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 57: AAS 107 (2015), 869.
- [13] Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (11 January 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 120.
- [14] Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (13 January 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 83-84.
- [15] Cf. Address to the “*Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice*” Foundation (25 May 2013): Insegnamenti I, 1 (2013), 238.
- [16] Cf. SAINT PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 264.
- [17] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 22: AAS 101 (2009), 657.
- [18] Address to the Civil Authorities, Tirana, Albania (21 September 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 773.
- [19] Message to Participants in the International Conference “Human Rights in the Contemporary World: Achievements, Omissions, Negations” (10 December 2018): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 10-11 December 2018, p. 8.
- [20] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 212: AAS 105 (2013), 1108.
- [21] Message for the 2015 World Day of Peace (8 December 2014), 3-4: AAS 107 (2015), 69-71.
- [22] *Ibid.*, 5: AAS 107 (2015), 72.
- [23] Message for the 2016 World Day of Peace (8 December 2015), 2: AAS 108 (2016), 49.
- [24] Message for the 2020 World Day of Peace (8 December 2019), 1: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 13 December 2019, p. 8.
- [25] Address on Nuclear Weapons, Nagasaki, Japan (24 November 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25-26 November 2019, p. 6.
- [26] Dialogue with Students and Teachers of the San Carlo College in Milan (6 April 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8-9 April 2019, p. 6.
- [27] Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5 February 2019, p. 6.
- [28] Address to the World of Culture, Cagliari, Italy (22 September 2013): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23-24 September 2013, p. 7.
- [29] Humana Communitas. Letter to the President of the Pontifical Academy for Life on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of its Founding (6 January 2019), 2.6: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 January 2019, pp. 6-7.
- [30] Video Message to the TED Conference in Vancouver (26 April 2017): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 April 2017, p. 7.
- [31] Extraordinary Moment of Prayer in Time of Epidemic (27 March 2020): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 March 2020, p. 10.
- [32] Homily in Skopje, North Macedonia (7 May 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 May 2019, p. 12.
- [33] Cf. Aeneid 1, 462: “*Sunt lacrimae rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt*”.
- [34] “*Historia... magistra vitae*” (CICERO, De Oratore, 2, 6).
- [35] Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 204: AAS 107 (2015), 928.

- [36] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 91.
- [37] *Ibid.*, 92. [38] *Ibid.*, 93.
- [39] BENEDICT XVI, Message for the 2013 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (12 October 2012): AAS 104 (2012), 908.
- [40] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 92.
- [41] Message for the 2020 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (13 May 2020): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 May 2020, p. 8.
- [42] Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (11 January 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 124.
- [43] Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (13 January 2014): AAS 106 (2014), 84.
- [44] Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See (11 January 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 123.
- [45] Message for the 2019 World Day of Migrants and Refugees (27 May 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27-28 May 2019, p. 8.
- [46] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit* (25 March 2019), 88.
- [47] *Ibid.*, 89.
- [48] Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate* (19 March 2018), 115.
- [49] From the film Pope Francis: A Man of His Word, by Wim Wenders (2018).
- [50] Address to Authorities, Civil Society and the Diplomatic Corps, Tallinn, Estonia (25 September 2018): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 September 2018, p. 7.
- [51] Cf. Extraordinary Moment of Prayer in Time of Epidemic (27 March 2020): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 29 March 2020, p. 10; Message for the 2020 World Day of the Poor (13 June 2020), 6: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14 June 2020, p. 8.
- [52] Greeting to Young People at the Padre Félix Varela Cultural Centre, Havana, Cuba (20 September 2015): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 21-22 September 2015, p. 6.

## Acknowledgements

**Page 1. Summary** © 2020, Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns [www.maryknollogc.org](http://www.maryknollogc.org) ; *Photograph* of sculpture at St Martin in the Fields, London, © 2016, Allen Morris. *Photograph* © 2014, Allen Morris, Basilica of St Francis, Assisi.

**Pages 2-13** Text of *Fratelli Tutti* © 2019, 2020, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*.

**Page 4, 5** *Photographs* © 2018, Allen Morris. Toulouse.

**Pages 6, 7. Photographs.** © 2019, Allen Morris. Sculpture, Wilberforce Museum, Hull; © 2017, Allen Morris, Wall of Separation, Jerusalem.

**Page 8-9** *Photographs* © 2020, Allen Morris Sculpture Kristof Kintera, displayed IKON gallery Birmingham ©2007, Allen Morris. Sculpture, Day of the Dead, British Museum, London.

**Pages 10-11** *Photographs* © 2004, Allen Morris, Holocaust Museum, Berlin; © 2013, Allen Morris. Sculpture, Old Synagogue, Kazimierz, Cracow.

**Page 12. Photograph** © 2012, Allen Morris. Detail of altar reredos, St Mary's Priory church, Chepstow.

**Page 14. Poem**, Refugee Blues © W. H. Auden accessed at <https://bit.ly/2Id1XsJ> ; *Photographs* © 2017, Allen Morris, *Les Esclaves*, Michelangelo. The Louvre, Paris.

## Leaven for the Lump (continued from page 1)

Refugee Blues. A poem by W.H Auden

Say this city has ten million souls,  
Some are living in mansions, some are living in holes:  
Yet there's no place for us, my dear, yet there's no place for us.

Once we had a country and we thought it fair,  
Look in the atlas and you'll find it there:  
We cannot go there now, my dear, we cannot go there now.

In the village churchyard there grows an old yew,  
Every spring it blossoms anew;  
Old passports can't do that, my dear, old passports can't do that.

The consul banged the table and said:  
'If you've got no passport, you're officially dead';  
But we are still alive, my dear, but we are still alive.

Went to a committee; they offered me a chair;  
Asked me politely to return next year:  
But where shall we go today, my dear, but where shall we go today?

Came to a public meeting; the speaker got up and said:  
'If we let them in, they will steal our daily bread';  
He was talking of you and me, my dear, he was talking of you and me.

Thought I heard the thunder rumbling in the sky;  
It was Hitler over Europe, saying: 'They must die';  
We were in his mind, my dear, we were in his mind.

Saw a poodle in a jacket fastened with a pin,  
Saw a door opened and a cat let in:  
But they weren't German Jews, my dear,  
but they weren't German Jews.

Went down the harbour and stood upon the quay,  
Saw the fish swimming as if they were free:  
Only ten feet away, my dear, only ten feet away.

Walked through a wood, saw the birds in the trees;  
They had no politicians and sang at their ease:  
They weren't the human race, my dear, they weren't the human race.

Dreamed I saw a building with a thousand floors,  
A thousand windows and a thousand doors;  
Not one of them was ours, my dear, not one of them was ours.

Stood on a great plain in the falling snow;  
Ten thousand soldiers marched to and fro:  
Looking for you and me, my dear, looking for you and me.



## Musical items

- Ballad for Americans. *Sung by Paul Robeson; lyrics by John La Touche; music by Earl Robinson.* <https://bit.ly/2GTqR04>
- Strange Fruit. *Sung by Billie Holliday, written by Abel Meeropol.* <https://bit.ly/3jYkuai>
- 4th Movement of Beethoven's 9th Symphony, with the setting of Schiller's 'Ode to Joy'  
*Try* <https://bit.ly/34V1UJN> *or, for the full movement,* <https://bit.ly/3nOHM4Q>