

A resource of 9 sessions
for a slow reading of

Fratelli Tutti

Session Nine:
Religions at the
service of Fraternity
in our World



A Summary of Chapter 8 of *Fratelli Tutti*

“As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity (272).”

Pope Francis shares his belief and hope that the religions of the world can be at the “service of fraternity.” He writes, “we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize

This document is the last 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 5** of *Fratelli Tutti* (pages 4–9)
- **DISCUSSION MATERIALS** (pages 2-3) - a selection of some key paragraphs and discussion questions
- **ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**, ‘Leaven for the Lump’ (pages 9-10) Additional texts complementary to the reading of *Fratelli Tutti*, to further engage with its themes.



one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters (274).” People of faith are called to work together to build bridges and seek the common good.

Because religious tradition provides the transcendental values that are the bedrock of social morality, the Church “does not restrict her mission to the private sphere,” nor “remain on the sidelines” in the building of a better world, but rather seeks to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society (276).” Francis reiterates that, while the Church proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, it “esteems the way in which God works in other religions” and “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions,” affirming especially that which contributes to the common good (277).

Pope Francis believes that “a journey of peace is possible between religions” and that violence is a “distortion” of our fundamental religious convictions (281-282). Based on his encounter with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, he makes an appeal for peace, justice, and fraternity among people of faith. To conclude he names several others whose work inspired the encyclical, including Gandhi, and Martin Luther King.

Extracts for discussion

If you have read the whole chapter, what made most impression on you?

271. Different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between their followers does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. In the words of the Bishops of India, “the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love”.

THE ULTIMATE FOUNDATION

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

273. “If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group or nation would inevitably set them in opposition to one another. If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others... The root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights that no one may violate – no individual, group, class, nation or state. Not even the majority of the social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority”.

274. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize one another as traveling companions, truly brothers and sisters. We are convinced that “when, in the name of an ideology, there is an attempt to remove God from a society, that society ends up adoring idols, and very soon men and women lose their way, their dignity is trampled and their rights violated.”

- *Have you had an encounter with someone of another faith that made you feel we are “brothers and sisters all?”*
- *What helps or hinders religion being a force for good?*

Christian identity

277. The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women”. ... Others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, “for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all”.

- *Has this been your understanding of the Church’s view of other religions?*
- *What might we esteem, for example, in Judaism Islam? Is there a difference between those religions and others such as Buddhism or Hinduism?*

278. For many Christians, the 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.

279. ...One fundamental human right must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions. That freedom proclaims that we can “build harmony and understanding between different cultures and religions. It also testifies to the fact that, since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing that, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters”.

- *What does religious freedom mean to you?*
- *Are there limits to the freedom? If so, why?*

RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

283. Sincere and humble worship of God “bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and loving commitment to the welfare of all”. Truly, “whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love” (1 Jn 4:8).

284. At times fundamentalist violence is unleashed in some groups, of whatever religion, by the rashness of their leaders. Yet, “the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions that we represent... As religious leaders, we are called to be true ‘people of dialogue’, to co-operate in building peace as authentic mediators - a mediator is one who retains nothing for himself, but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed, knowing that the only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be 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”.

286. In these pages of reflection on universal fraternity, I felt inspired particularly by Saint Francis of Assisi, but also by others of our brothers and sisters who are not Catholics: Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and many more. Yet I would like to conclude by mentioning another person of deep faith who, drawing upon his intense experience of God, made a journey of transformation towards feeling a brother to all. I am speaking of Blessed Charles de Foucauld.

287. Blessed Charles directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being, and asked a friend to “pray to God that I truly be the brother of all”. He wanted to be, in the end, “the universal brother”. Yet only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all. May God inspire that dream in each one of us. Amen.

- *Where has violence marred the life of the Church?*
- *Why might people listen to faith leaders? Why might they not?*
- *Are there limits to how faith leaders may use their authority and power in the political arena?*

A Prayer to the Creator

Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.

Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger,
poverty, violence and war.

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

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer

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

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

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

- *For what else might we pray?*

CHAPTER EIGHT

RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY IN OUR WORLD

271. The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between the followers of different religions does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. In the words of the Bishops of India, “the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love”. [259]

THE ULTIMATE FOUNDATION

272. As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity. We are certain that “only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another”. [260] For “reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity”. [261]

273. In this regard, I wish to cite the following memorable statement: “If there is no transcendent truth, in obedience to which man achieves his full identity, then there is no sure principle for guaranteeing just relations between people. Their self-interest as a class, group or nation would in-

evitably set them in opposition to one another. If one does not acknowledge transcendent truth, then the force of power takes over, and each person tends to make full use of the means at his disposal in order to impose his own interests or his own opinion, with no regard for the rights of others... The root of modern totalitarianism is to be found in the denial of the transcendent dignity of the human person who, as the visible image of the invisible God, is therefore by his very nature the subject of rights that no one may violate – no individual, group, class, nation or state. Not even the majority of the social body may violate these rights, by going against the minority”. [262]

274. From our faith experience and from the wisdom accumulated over centuries, but also from lessons learned from our many weaknesses and failures, we, the believers of the different religions, know that our witness to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters. We are convinced that “when, in the name of an ideology, there is an attempt to remove God from a society, that society ends up adoring idols, and very soon men and women lose their way, their dignity is trampled and their rights violated. You know well how much suffering is caused by the denial of freedom of conscience and of religious freedom, and how that wound leaves a humanity which is impoverished, because it lacks hope and ideals to guide it”. [263]

275. It should be acknowledged that “among the most important causes of the crises of the modern world are a desensitized human conscience, a distancing from religious values and the prevailing individualism accompanied by materialistic philosophies that deify the human person and introduce worldly and material values in place of supreme and transcendental principles”. [264] 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. For “religious classics can prove meaningful in every age; they have an enduring power [to open new horizons, to stimulate thought, to expand the mind and the heart]”. Yet often they are



viewed with disdain as a result of “the myopia of a certain rationalism”.[265]

276. For these reasons, the Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not restrict her mission to the private sphere. On the contrary, “she cannot and must not remain on the sidelines” in the building of a better world, or fail to “reawaken the spiritual energy” that can contribute to the betterment of society.[266] It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself,[267] which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development. The Church “has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities”. She works for “the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity”.[268] She does not claim to compete with earthly powers, but to offer herself as “a family among families, this is the Church, open to bearing witness in today’s world, open to faith hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother”.[269] And in imitation of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, “we want to be a Church that serves, that leaves home and goes forth from its places of worship, goes forth from its sacristies, in order to accompany life, to sustain hope, to be the sign of unity... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation”.[270]

Christian identity

277. The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and “rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women”.[271] 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”.[272] Others drink from other sources. For us the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From it, there arises, “for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other,



to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all”.[273]

278. Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be “catholic”. She can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love. Indeed, “all things human are our concern... wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of man, we are honoured to be permitted to take our place among them”.[274] 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.

279. We Christians ask that, in those countries where we are a minority, we be guaranteed freedom, even as we ourselves promote that freedom for non-Christians in places where they are a minority. One fundamental human right must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions. That freedom proclaims that we can



RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

281. A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. "God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised".[278]

282. It follows that "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. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... For the deeper, stronger and richer our own identity is, the more we will be capable of enriching others with our own proper contribution".[279] We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbour, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion.

283. Sincere and humble worship of God "bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and loving commitment to the welfare of all".[280] Truly, "whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love" (1 Jn 4:8). For this reason, "terrorism is deplorable and threatens the security of people – be they in the East or the West, the North or the South – and disseminates panic, terror and pessimism, but this is not due to religion, even when terrorists instrumentalize it. It is due, rather, to an accumulation of incorrect interpretations of religious texts and to policies linked to hunger, poverty, injustice, oppression and pride. That is why it is so necessary to stop supporting 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".[281] Religious convictions about the sacred meaning of human life permit us "to recognize the fundamental values of our common humanity, values in the name of which we can and must cooperate, build and dialogue, pardon and grow; this will allow different voices to unite in creating a melody of sublime nobility and beauty, instead of fanatical cries of hatred".[282]

"build harmony and understanding between different cultures and religions. It also testifies to the fact that, since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing that, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters".[275]

280. At the same time, we ask God to strengthen unity within the Church, a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit. For "in the one Spirit we were all baptised into one body" (1 Cor 12:13), in which each member has his or her distinctive contribution to make. As Saint Augustine said, "the ear sees through the eye, and the eye hears through the ear".[276] It is also urgent to continue to bear witness to the journey of encounter between the different Christian confessions. We cannot forget Christ's desire "that they may all be one" (cf. Jn 17:21). Hearing his call, we recognize with sorrow that the process of globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity among Christians. This notwithstanding, "even as we make this journey towards full communion, we already have the duty to offer common witness to the love of God for all people by working together in the service of humanity".[277]

284. At times fundamentalist violence is unleashed in some groups, of whatever religion, by the rashness of their leaders. Yet, “the commandment of peace is inscribed in the depths of the religious traditions that we represent... As religious leaders, we are called to be true ‘people of dialogue’, to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators. Intermediaries seek to give everyone a discount, ultimately in order to gain something for themselves. The mediator, on the other hand, is one who retains nothing for himself, but rather spends himself generously until he is consumed, knowing that the only gain is peace. Each one of us is called to be 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”. [283]

An appeal

285. In my fraternal meeting, which I gladly recall, with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, “we resolutely [declared] that religions must never incite war, hateful attitudes, hostility and extremism, nor must they incite violence or the shedding of blood. These tragic realities are the consequence of a deviation from religious teachings. They result from a political manipulation of religions and from interpretations made by religious groups who, in the course of history, have taken advantage of the power of religious sentiment in the hearts of men and women... God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people”. [284] For this reason I would like to reiterate here the appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together:

“In the name of God, who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and digni-

ty, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;

“In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity;

“In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need, whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and those of means;

“In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

“In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war;

“In the name of human fraternity, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;

“In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the future of men and women;

“In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings, creating them free and setting them apart by this gift;



“In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith;

“In the name of all persons of goodwill present in every part of the world;

“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”.[285]

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287. Blessed Charles directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being,[286] and asked a friend to “pray to God that I truly be the brother of all”.[287] He wanted to be, in the end, “the universal brother”.[288] Yet only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all. May God inspire that dream in each one of us. Amen.

A Prayer to the Creator

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

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

An Ecumenical Christian Prayer

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

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

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

*Given in Assisi, at the tomb of Saint Francis,
on 3 October, Vigil of the Feast of the Saint, in
the year 2020, the eighth of my Pontificate.*

Pope Francis

Footnotes

- [259] CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF INDIA, *Response of the Church in India to the Present-day Challenges* (9 March 2016).
- [260] *Homily at Mass in Domus Sanctae Marthae* (17 May 2020).
- [261] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 19: AAS 101 (2009), 655.
- [262] SAINT JOHN PAUL II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 44: AAS 83 (1991), 849.
- [263] *Address to the Leaders of Other Religions and Other Christian Denominations*, Tirana, Albania (21 September 2014): *Insegnamenti* II, 2 (2014), 277.
- [264] *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5 February 2019, p. 6.
- [265] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 256: AAS 105 (2013), 1123.
- [266] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005), 28: AAS 98 (2006), 240.
- [267] "Man is a political animal", ARISTOTLE, *Politics*, 1253a 1-3.
- [268] BENEDICT XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 11: AAS 101 (2009), 648.
- [269] *Address to the Catholic Community*, Rakovski, Bulgaria (6 May 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 8 May 2019, p. 9.
- [270] *Homily, Santiago de Cuba* (22 September 2015): AAS 107 (2015), 1005.
- [271] SECOND VATICAN ECUMENICAL COUNCIL, Declaration on the Relation of the Church to Non-Christian Religions *Nostra Aetate*, 2.
- [272] *Ecumenical Prayer Service*, Riga, Latvia (24 September 2018): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 24-25 September 2018, p. 8.
- [273] *Lectio Divina*, Pontifical Lateran University, Rome (26 March 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 27 March 2019, p. 10.
- [274] SAINT PAUL VI, Encyclical Letter *Ecclesiam Suam* (6 August 1964): AAS 56 (1964), 650.
- [275] *Address to the Civil Authorities*, Bethlehem, Palestine (25 May 2014): *Insegnamenti* II, 1 (2014), 597.
- [276] *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 130, 6: PL 37, 1707.
- [277] *Common Declaration of Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew*, Jerusalem (25 May 2014), 5: *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26-27 May 2014, p. 6.
- [278] From the film *Pope Francis: A Man of His Word*, by Wim Wenders (2018).
- [279] Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Querida Amazonia* (2 February 2020), 106.
- [280] *Homily, Colombo, Sri Lanka* (14 January 2015): AAS 107 (2015), 139.
- [281] *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5 February 2019, p. 7.
- [282] *Address to Civil Authorities*, Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina (6 June 2015): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7 June 2015, p. 7.
- [283] *Address to the International Meeting for Peace organized by the Community of Sant'Egidio* (30 September 2013): *Insegnamenti* I, 1 (2013), 301-302.
- [284] *Document on Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together*, Abu Dhabi (4 February 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 4-5 February 2019, p. 6.
- [285] *Ibid.*
- [286] Cf. CHARLES DE FOUCAULD, *Méditation sur le Notre Père* (23 January 1897).
- [287] *Letter to Henry de Castries* (29 November 1901).
- [288] *Letter to Madame de Bondy* (7 January 1902). Saint Paul VI used these words in praising his commitment: Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967): AAS 59 (1967), 263.

Leaven for the Lump

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks welcoming Pope Benedict to Interfaith Gathering Twickenham, 2010

We welcome you, leader of a great faith, to this gathering of many faiths, in a land where once battles were fought in the name of faith, and where now we share friendship across faiths.

That is a climate change worth celebrating. And we recognize the immense role the Vatican played and continues to play in bringing it about. It was *Nostra Aetate*, 45 years ago, that brought about the single greatest transformation in interfaith relations in recent history, and we recognize your visit here today as a new chapter in that story, and a vital one.

The secularization of Europe that began in the seventeenth century did not happen because people lost faith in God. Newton and Descartes, heroes of the Enlightenment, believed in God very much indeed. What led to secularization was that people lost faith in the ability of people of faith to live peaceably together. And we must never go down that road again. We remember the fine words of John Henry Cardinal Newman, "We should ever conduct ourselves towards our enemy as if he were one day to be our friend," as well as your own words, in *Caritas in Veritate*, that "the development of peoples depends ... on a recognition that the human race is a single family, working together in true communion, not simply a group of subjects who happen to live side by side."

We celebrate both our commonalities and differences, because if we had nothing in common we could not communicate, and if we had everything in common, we would have nothing to say. You have spoken of the Catholic Church as a creative minority. And perhaps that is what we should all aspire to be, creative minorities, inspiring one another, and bringing our different gifts to the common good.

Britain has been so enriched by its minorities, by every group represented here today and the intricate harmonies of our several voices. And one of our commonalities is that we surely all believe that faith has a major role in strengthening civil society.

In the face of a deeply individualistic culture, we offer community. Against consumerism, we talk about the things that have value but not a price. Against cynicism we dare to admire and respect. In the face of fragmenting families, we

Continued on page 10

Of Being Woven

The way is full of genuine sacrifice.
The thickets blocking the path are anything
that keeps you from that, any fear
that you may be broken to bits like a glass bottle.
This road demands courage and stamina,
yet it's full of footprints! Who are
these companions? They are rungs
in your ladder. Use them!
With company you quicken your ascent.

You may be happy enough going along,
but with others you'll get farther, and faster.

Someone who goes cheerfully by himself
to the customs house to pay his traveler's tax
will go even more lightheartedly
when friends are with him.

Every prophet sought out companions.
A wall standing alone is useless,
but put three or four walls together,
and they'll support a roof and keep
the grain dry and safe.

When ink joins with a pen, then the blank paper
can say something. Rushes and reeds must be woven
to be useful as a mat. If they weren't interlaced,
the wind would blow them away.

Like that, God paired up
creatures, and gave them friendship."

This is how the fowler and the bird were arguing
about hermitic living and Islam.

It's a prolonged debate.
Husam, shorten their controversy.
Make the *Mathnawi* more nimble and less lumbering.
Agile sounds are more appealing to the heart's ear.

Rumi (Muslim poet of the 13th Century)

Continued from page 9

believe in consecrating relationships.
We believe in marriage as a commitment,
parenthood as a responsibility,
and the poetry of everyday life when it
is etched, in homes and schools, with
the charisma of holiness and grace.

In our communities we value people
not for what they earn or what they buy
or how they vote but for what they are,
every one of them a fragment of the Divine
presence. We hold life holy. And
each of us is lifted by the knowledge that
we are part of something greater than all
of us, that created us in forgiveness and
love, and asks us to create in forgiveness
and love. Each of us in our own way is a
guardian of values that are in danger of
being lost, in our short-attention-span,
hyperactive, information-saturated,
wisdom-starved age. And though our
faiths are profoundly different, yet we
recognize in one another the presence
of faith itself, that habit of the heart
that listens to the music beneath the
noise, and knows that God is the point
at which soul touches soul and is enlarged
by the presence of otherness...

Acknowledgements

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Pages 2-9. Text of *Fratelli Tutti* and *Document...*
© 2019, 2020, *Libreria Editrice Vaticana*; **Pages 9-10** *Rabbi Sacks' speech* taken from <https://bit.ly/36cTjTq>; *Of Being Woven*, The Essential
Rumi, translated by Coleman Barks with John
Moyné (London, 1999, Penguin Books) 246; Extract
from Gospel of Matthew from
English Standard Version (c) 2001-9,
Crossway, a publishing ministry of
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Gospel of Luke

16:9-15

Jesus said to his disciples: 'I tell you this: use money, tainted as it is, to win you friends, and thus make sure that when it fails you, they will welcome you into the tents of eternity. The man who can be trusted in little things can be trusted in great; the man who is dishonest in little things will be dishonest in great. If then you cannot be trusted with money, that tainted thing, who will trust you with genuine riches? And if you cannot be trusted with what is not yours, who will give you what is your very own?'

'No servant can be the slave of two masters: he will either hate the first and love the second, or treat the first with respect and the second with scorn. You cannot be the slave both of God and of money.'

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and laughed at him. He said to them, 'You are the very ones who pass yourselves off as virtuous in people's sight, but God knows your hearts. For what is thought highly of by men is loathsome in the sight of God.'