

EXPLORING FRATELLI TUTTI

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The Baltimore-Washington Maryknoll Affiliate chapter recently offered presentations on Pope Francis' most recent encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Over 40 people registered for the two sessions held on January 23, and February 6, 2021. The sessions used the three-part See-Judge-Act method as outlined in a study guide produced by the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns.

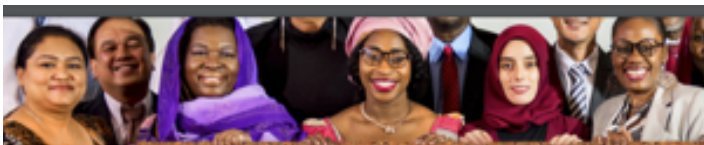
Susan Gunn, the director of the Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns, led the first session, focusing on chapters 1-4. The second discussion, addressing chapters 5-8, was led by Marie Dennis, a senior advisor to the secretary-general of Pax Christi International. Both presenters offered questions to consider in small groups, such as:

- What trends listed by Pope Francis resonate with you? How are we like a person in the story of the Good Samaritan? What new paths of hope have been revealed to you during the pandemic?
- What wisdom could Pope Francis offer to U.S. politicians? How do we understand nonviolence? Do you think the Catholic Church will recommit to the centrality of the Gospel Nonviolence?

One group noted that Pope Francis was writing the encyclical just as COVID was becoming a pandemic. The people discussed how they each were like a character in the Good Samaritan story, which Pope Francis used to illustrate his points. They identified with several of the trends Pope Francis mentioned: homelessness, migration, inter-racial issues, health, unemployment, global warming, etc. They agreed we all need collaboration to survive. One couple was planning to host a conference on *Fratelli Tutti*. Another committed to prayer in a small group.

Several individuals commented that two sessions were not enough to cover all of the rich information in the document. All are all encouraged to read the *Fratelli Tutti* thoughtfully and decide how we can incorporate the teachings as we interact with others.

Affiliate chapters could use a study guide in their meetings and further explore Pope Francis's insightful encyclical.



EASY MEETING: ON FRATELLI TUTTI

Format: Virtual (Zoom meeting)

This meeting is based on the six-page Maryknoll Office for Global Concerns' (MOGC) guide, "Pope Francis' *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*." There are many other guides available on the internet; for example, the US conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) has the two-page guide, "A QUICK KEY TO *Fratelli Tutti*." (See the **Downloads** box on page 7.)

Before the meeting. Each person should have a copy of the MOGC guide available, especially if they can't easily switch between a ZOOM screen and an on-line pdf. Alternatively, the Zoom meeting host could screen-share pertinent parts of the guide. Use as many of the chapter introductions and reflection questions in the guide as your meeting time allows. Depending on the interest in your chapter, the MOGC guide could be used to explore *Fratelli Tutti* over several meetings.

Opening Prayer: Begin with the prayer from page 6 of the MOGC guide, "A Prayer to the Creator."

Read. Allow time for the participants to read silently the introduction and the text following Chapter 1, on page 2.

[In your sharing, using the **Mutual Invitation** approach—the facilitator starts the sharing, then invites the next person to speak, who then invites the next person, until all have spoken—helps to build community among participants.]

Share. Ask participants to share any initial thoughts about their exploration of the encyclical. (Has anyone read the whole encyclical?)

Reflection question: How has the pandemic impacted you? Have you experienced a revived sense of **community**? How have you connected with the broader Affiliate or Maryknoll community?

In **Chapter 2**, Pope Francis says, “Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders (69).” Our Maryknoll Affiliate **Spirituality** helps us be more than bystanders.

Reflection question: Have you ever experienced such an “encounter of mercy”?

In **Chapter 4**, Pope Francis says, “The true worth of the different countries of our world is measured by their ability to think not simply as a country but also as part of the larger human family (141).” The **Global Vision** of Maryknoll Affiliates stretches us beyond borders.

Reflection question: How do you feel called to cultivate a “heart open to the whole world”?

Discuss if your chapter wants to further explore Fratelli Tutti and if you want to take specific **Actions**.

Closing prayer: One person reads “A Prayer for Living “Fratelli Tutti,” by Cameron Bellm, on this page.



Downloads

Fratelli Tutti, about 100 pages: http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/it/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

Guides:

- MOGC – https://maryknollogc.org/sites/default/files/fratelli_tutti_study_guide_final5.pdf
- Franciscans – https://secularfranciscansusa.org/wp-content/uploads/fratelli_tutti_study_guide_final5.pdf.
- USCCB - <https://www.usccb.org/resources/02-%20Quick%20Key%20to%20FRATELLI%20TUTTI%20-%20EN.pdf>

A PRAYER FOR LIVING “FRATELLI TUTTI”

Cameron Bellm*

When our lofty words of love have been emptied of their meaning,

When our borders and computer screens have erected impenetrable walls,

When our minds are so quick to conflate “other” with “enemy,”

How will we find our common humanity?

It’s never too late to make an earnest and tender start.

May we remove from our pockets the stones we intended to throw

And cement them together to build a home that welcomes all.

May we repent of our indifference and move into genuine encounter.

Instead of drawing battle lines,

May we draw our chairs up to a communal table, Where we can feast in the knowledge of our shared dignity.

May God grant us the holy vision

To see in every human being a sacred mystery, And may we love each mystery not abstractly, but concretely.

Just as Thomas touched the wounds of Jesus, May we be unafraid to touch the wounds of our suffering neighbor.

May we lay down our arms and offer our outstretched hands,

Until there is no “them,” but only “us,”

Until we are, at last, sisters and brothers, all.

Amen.



*Cameron Bellm is a Seattle-based writer, speaker, and contemplative in action. First published by Jesuit Conference of Canada and the US at jesuits.org.