

# LIVING FRATERNITY

## Theme: Envisaging and Engendering an Open World ...

In this month of February 2022, we offer Chapter 3 of the *Fratelli Tutti* Study Guide prepared by Fr. Pat McCloskey, OFM. In the Third Chapter, Our Holy Father calls us to recognize the dignity of each and every person and the inherent desire that each of us has for loving relationships in our lives. The author for this chapter is Sr. Mary Esther Stewart, OFS, M. Ed. Secular Franciscan living in northern Arizona.

**Recall:** Our monthly meeting should favour *an encounter with Christ*. A spirit of prayer heralds a good encounter, and a good preparation promotes communal experience.

## FEBRUARY 2022 MONTHLY MEETING

### Opening of the meeting if it happens

The members can offer suggestions for a song. After the chosen song, the prayer according to the Ritual or one chosen by the fraternity starts the meeting.

### Introduction

This guide serves as an overview to the chapter featured but cannot in the space available do justice to the richness of each chapter. The person animating the meeting should make sure that each member has a copy of Chapter 3 of the encyclical letter. If possible the copy should be distributed before the meeting so that the fraternity members can do a first reading of its contents, thus avoiding reading during the meeting.

### Summary of Chapter 3

Our Holy Father calls us to recognize the dignity of each and every person and the inherent desire that each of us has for loving relationships in our lives (88,89). Love means a growing concern for everyone's personal, communal, national, and international good (93-96). We need to locate those who are in need, abandoned, ignored, disabled, elderly or of a different race: the "hidden exiles on the margins" (98), peacefully recognizing and celebrating the differences we find in them.

The Good Samaritan (Chapter 2) was himself living on the margin, not fitting into the larger society there (99-101). Too often we organize ourselves into social groups that exclude and limit our contacts to those who serve our purposes. To build a fraternal society open to all, we must exercise a universal love ready to dialogue about the values of mutual enrichment.

Individualism too often serves as a deception in that we cling to our own idea of the common good without being open to the view of the other (102-106). Unless dignity and integral development are built on love and respect for the rights of all peoples, humanity will not survive (107).

The pope stresses the need for a universal fraternity that focuses on the common good without neglecting individual rights and needs that must be ordered to the greater good of society. Otherwise, conflict and violence will follow.

Solidarity means building a common future through social systems that encourage thinking and acting, for the good of the whole, looking beyond the self or one's group (114-117). Pope Francis reminds us that the world belongs to all of us, not simply privileged people. Created goods are for the common use; all of us are responsible for their care. Business interests must be directed ultimately to reducing and eliminating poverty (118-123).

Because a country's goods cannot be denied to citizens of other countries, we need to build up international relationships based on shared human rights and dignity, reflecting a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation for the purpose of developing a shared responsibility for the whole human family (124-127).

### **Quotes from Chapter 3**

- To claim economic freedom while real conditions bar many people from actual access to it, and while possibilities for employment continue to shrink, is to practice doublespeak (83).
- Words like freedom, democracy or fraternity prove meaningless, for only when our economic and social system no longer produces even a single victim, a single person cast aside, will we be able to celebrate the feast of universal fraternity (110).
- Every society needs to ensure that values are passed on; otherwise, what is handed down are selfishness, violence, corruption in its various forms, indifference and, ultimately, a life closed to transcendence and entrenched in individual interests (113).

### **Questions for Discussion or Reflection**

After the person animating the period of discussion or reflection reads the question, take the necessary time so that the members can express their thoughts.

1. What, in your opinion, are the greatest deterrents to envisaging and engendering an open world?
2. How does your thinking compare with that of Pope Francis?
3. How can political entities (e.g. states, countries) maintain their identity while attempting to establish attitudes and practices that would bring about an open world?

## **Biblical Reflection:**

Read the texts of Sunday or of the day, or the preceding or following day of the meeting.

- Take a moment of reflection; then underline words or inspiring phrases ...
- Share your thoughts on the gospel: a) How can it be integrated in our life

## **Linking points from the Study Guide to the Rule and the General Constitutions**

While preparing this document, we found Article 15 of our Rule, Chapter II – the Way of Life and Apostolic Activity and the articles 22.1 and 22.2 of the General Constitutions that have links to this study.

### **Rule**

#### **Article 15**

Let them individually and collectively be in the forefront in promoting justice by the testimony of their human lives and their courageous initiatives. Especially in the field of public life, they should make definite choices in harmony with their faith.

### **General Constitutions**

#### **Article 22.1**

Secular Franciscans should “be in the forefront ... in the field of public life.” They should collaborate as much as possible for the passing of just laws and regulations.

#### **Article 22.2**

Fraternities should commit themselves through courageous initiatives, consistent with their Franciscan vocation and with the directives of the Church, in the field of human development and justice. They should take clear positions whenever human dignity is attacked by any form of oppression or indifference. They should offer their fraternal service to the victims of injustice.

### **Reflection:**

Can you see the link to the chapter in the Rule and the General Constitutions? Name a few ...

### **Life-Objective:**

In this month of February 2022, let us continue praying for the doctors, nursing personnel and all the people who remain in service. May their devotion inspire thankfulness in us and may we not hesitate in expressing it to them.

Let us pray particularly for our members and our families who have suffered during the pandemic. May God give them health and strength.

### **Events and Information from the Church and the Order**

Remind the members of regional and local activities.

**End of the meeting:** (song or prayer chosen by the fraternity)

### **At Home**

For your reflection, read Articles 88, 103, 106 and 107 extracted from the encyclical letter.

**88.** In the depths of every heart, love creates bonds and expands existence, for it draws people out of themselves and towards others. Since we were made for love, in each one of us “a law of ex-status” seems to operate: “the lover ‘goes outside’ the self to find a fuller existence in another”. For this reason, “man always has to take up the challenge of moving beyond himself”.

**103.** Fraternity is born not only of a climate of respect for individual liberties, or even of a certain administratively guaranteed equality. Fraternity necessarily calls for something greater, which in turn enhances freedom and equality. What happens when fraternity is not consciously cultivated, when there is a lack of political will to promote it through education in fraternity, through dialogue and through the recognition of the values of reciprocity and mutual enrichment? Liberty becomes nothing more than a condition for living as we will, completely free to choose to whom or what we will belong, or simply to possess or exploit. This shallow understanding has little to do with the richness of a liberty directed above all to love.

**106.** Social friendship and universal fraternity necessarily call for an acknowledgement of the worth of every human person, always and everywhere. If each individual is of such great worth, it must be stated clearly and firmly that “the mere fact that some people are born in places with fewer resources or less development does not justify the fact that they are living with less dignity”. This is a basic principle of social life that tends to be ignored in a variety of ways by those who sense that it does not fit into their worldview or serve their purposes.

**107.** Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations. This does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being. Unless this basic principle is upheld, there will be no future either for fraternity or for the survival of humanity.