

# LIVING FRATERNITY

## Theme: A Stranger on the Road ...

In this month of January 2022, we offer Chapter 2 of the *Fratelli Tutti* Study Guide prepared by Fr. Pat McCloskey, OFM. The Second chapter leads us out of the dark landscape in Chapter 1 to the light. The author for this chapter is Fr. William Hugo, OFM Cap, Formation and Vocation Director for the Midwest Capuchins.

**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.

## JANUARY 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 2 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 2

After painting the dark landscape of our global situation in chapter one, Pope Francis leads us to light through the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25- 37). This parable teaches that the grief and anguish of one of us is that of all of us. The story echoes in our hearts because aspects of each of its characters are part of our own lives.

It answers classic scriptural questions: “Am I my brother’s keeper?” (Cain in Gen 4:9) and “Who is my neighbor?” (the lawyer in Lk 10:29). Indifference to injustice or the suffering of others has no justification. Why? Because we all come from the same creator who loves all creatures. Because we too were once in dire straits (cf. the Jewish people once having been slaves in Egypt).

We are used to thinking of our neighbors as those who are most like and closest to us. However, the Scriptures increasingly expand our understanding of “neighbour.” Love does not care where someone is from. Instead, it builds bridges. We are citizens of the world, not only our nation. God sees no boundaries; only we do. Pope Francis often speaks of those on the “peripheries.” Here he also calls them those “abandoned on the wayside.” There are only two kinds of people: those who

care for the hurting and those who pass by. These difficult choices are the real test of being a follower of Jesus.

Suffering people are not the cause of division in the world; they are its symptom. It is easy to blame the victims or remain detached from what is going on around us. Yet, each day offers a new opportunity to take on the attitude of Christ. The question is not who our neighbour is but whether we will become a neighbor to all.

## Quotes from Chapter 2

- [Human] compassion is for [one's] neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings (59 and Sir 18:13).
- Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen (61 and 1 Jn 4:20).
- The sight of a person who is suffering disturbs us. It makes us uneasy, since we have no time to waste on other people's problems. These are symptoms of an unhealthy society (65).

## Questions for Discussion or Reflection

### **Note to animator:**

Before answering the following questions, choose a good reader for the first question to allow members to think about and prepare their answers.

Be sure to allow enough time for each question to ensure that everyone can share their thoughts.

1. Read the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). Imagine yourself to be each of its characters: victim, robber, lawyer, priest, Levite, Samaritan, and innkeeper.
  - Explore each character's goals, values, and spiritual imagination.
  - How are you like each character?
2. Who are your neighbours as manifested by your actions?
  - Is your circle of neighbors expanding or contracting? Why?
3. How might an expanding notion of being neighbour affect you on some of the hot-button issues of our day: homelessness, immigration, interracial relations, health insurance, unemployment, global warming, etc.
  - How would you want to be treated if you were someone affected by this list?
4. Who are the modern thieves who victimize those abandoned on the wayside?
  - How do we confront the robbers and console the victims?

## **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 14 of our Rule , Chapter 11 – the Way of Life and Apostolic Activity and the articles 19.1 and 19.2 of the General Constitutions that have links to this study.

### **Rule**

#### **Article 14**

Secular Franciscans, together with all people of good will, are called to build a more fraternal and evangelical world so that the kingdom of God may be brought about more effectively. Mindful that anyone “who follows Christ, the perfect man, becomes more of a man himself”, let them exercise their responsibilities competently in Christian spirit of service .

### **General Constitutions**

#### **Article 19.1**

.Secular Franciscans should always act as a leaven in the environment in which they live through the witness of their fraternal love and clear Christian motivations.

#### **Article 19.2**

In the spirit of minority, they should choose relationships which give preference to the poor and to those on the fringe of society, whether these be individuals or categories of persons or an entire people; they should collaborate in overcoming the marginalisation of others and those forms of poverty that are the fruit of inefficiency and 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 January 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**

To help your reflection, read Article 59 and an excerpt from Article 61.

59. In earlier Jewish traditions, the imperative to love and care for others appears to have been limited to relationships between members of the same nation. The ancient commandment to “love your neighbour as yourself” (Lev 19:18) was usually understood as referring to one’s fellow citizens, yet the boundaries gradually expanded, especially in the Judaism that developed outside of the land of Israel. We encounter the command not to do to others what you would not want them to do to you (cf. Tob 4:15).

In the first century before Christ, Rabbi Hillel stated: “This is the entire Torah. Everything else is commentary”. The desire to imitate God’s own way of acting gradually replaced the tendency to think only of those nearest us: “The compassion of man is for his neighbour, but the compassion of the Lord is for all living beings” (Sir 18:13).

61. In the oldest texts of the Bible, we find a reason why our hearts should expand to embrace the foreigner. It derives from the enduring memory of the Jewish people that they themselves had once lived as foreigners in Egypt:

«You shall not wrong or oppress a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt »  
(Ex 22:21).

«You shall not oppress a stranger; you know the heart of a stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt» (Ex 23:9).

The call to fraternal love echoes throughout the New Testament:

«For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself» (Gal 5:14).

«Those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen» (1: John 4:20).