

# LIVING FRATERNITY

## Theme: Paths of Renewed Encounter ...

In this month of June 2022, we offer Chapter 7 of the *Fratelli Tutti* Study Guide prepared by Fr. Pat McCloskey, OFM. In the Seventh chapter, Pope Francis asks us to accept the past so not to cloud the future. The author for this chapter is Sr. Margaret Magee, OSF, a Franciscan Sister of Allegany, NY, the Congregational Associate Minister.

**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.

## JUNE 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 7 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 7

Pope Francis asks us to cultivate a penitential memory, one that can accept the past in order not to cloud the future with our own regrets, problems and plans. Only by basing themselves on the historical truth of events will they be able to make a broad and persevering effort to understand one another and to strive for a new synthesis for the good of all.”

### Artists and Architects of Peace

Working to create a path and a way of living in peace is a life-long process requiring each person’s gifts, talents, and creativity. Every human being has a place in this world. Every person must be recognized for the innate and indelible imprint of God’s creative purpose. Embracing this truth, we are called to bring our unique perspectives and gifts to the process of peacemaking. However, each person in bringing a gift is called to see and offer it in service to others and for the common good of all.

Individually and together we must commit and work to eradicate the oppression and selfish greed that dehumanizes others for personal or national gain. “There is no end to the building of a country’s social peace, rather, it requires us to place at the centre of all political, social and economic activity the human person, who enjoys the highest dignity, and respect for the common good” (232).

Currently, we are facing the divisive words, attitudes, and violence of racism, many social injustices and economic disparities. Will this convergence wake us up from myths of peace and equality that we have created?

In Catholic Social teaching, the preferential option for the poor and the vulnerable encourages us to imitate and embody Christ’s love for the poor by working to create a culture where the needs of the poor are always considered first. *Fratelli Tutti* affirms that the poor and the vulnerable are our sisters and brothers. They are not a nameless multitude.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are central teachings of Jesus. “True reconciliation must preserve the dignity of all, especially those who have been oppressed. True love for an oppressor means seeking ways to make him cease his oppression; it means stripping him of a power that he does not know how to use, and diminishes his own humanity and that of others” (241).

### **War and the Death Penalty**

Wars have been justified by world leaders to stabilize a region or support humanitarian causes. War and its devastation off end human life and the environment. “Every war leaves our world worse than it was before.”

“Today, we state clearly that the ‘death penalty is inadmissible’ and the Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide.” No one, no government and no judicial power has the right to take a life or “eliminate others.” If we truly are pro-life, if each human being holds that innate and indelible imprint of God, all life, even the lives of the most hardened and unrepentant criminals must be respected. We must work to reform our justice systems.

### **Quotes from Chapter 7**

- Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone (230).
- Those who work for tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible (235).
- If I do not deny that dignity to the worst of criminals, I will not deny it to anyone (269).

## Questions for Discussion or Reflection

1. Francis of Assisi respected all people while speaking truth to everyone.  
How do you do that?
2. Perhaps the greatest challenge for some people in reading *Fratelli Tutti* will be Pope Francis' call for the end to the death penalty.  
Do you agree with Pope Francis' stance on the death penalty?
3. What would you say to someone who continues to support it?

## 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 19 of our Rule, Chapter 11 – the Way of Life and Apostolic Activity and article 23.1 of the General Constitutions that have links to this study.

### Rule

#### Article 19

Mindful that they are bearers of peace which must be built up unceasingly, they should seek out ways of unity and fraternal harmony through dialogue, trusting in the presence of the divine seed in everyone and in the transforming power of love and pardon.

### General Constitutions

#### Article 23.1

Peace is the work of justice and the fruit of reconciliation and of fraternal love. Secular Franciscans are called to be bearers of peace in their families and in society:

- they should see to the proposal and spreading of peaceful ideas and attitudes;
- \* they should develop their own initiatives and should collaborate, individually and as a fraternity, with initiatives of the Pope, the local Churches, and the Franciscan Family;
- \* they should collaborate with those movements and institutions which promote peace while respecting its authentic foundations.

### **Life-Objective:**

In this month of June, let us time to live a moment with more fervour and gratitude for what the Lord has done for us ...

Let us pray particularly for our brothers and sisters suffering in Ukraine.

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

Remind the members of regional and local activities. Please say a special payer for our brothers and sisters who will be attending our National Elective Chapter in July.

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

### **At Home**

To help your reflection, read the following articles:

**230.** Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone. Indeed, “society benefits when each person and social group feels truly at home. In a family, parents, grandparents and children all feel at home; no one is excluded. If someone has a problem, even a serious one, even if he brought it upon himself, the rest of the family comes to his assistance; they support him. His problems are theirs... In families, everyone contributes to the common purpose; everyone works for the common good, not denying each person’s individuality but encouraging and supporting it. They may quarrel, but there is something that does not change: the family bond. Family disputes are always resolved afterwards. The joys and sorrows of each of its members are felt by all. That is what it means to be a family! If only we could view our political opponents or neighbours in the same way that we view our children or our spouse, mother or father! How good would this be! Do we love our society or is it still something remote, something anonymous that does not involve us, something to which we are not committed?”

**235.** Those who work for tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible. Indeed, “without equal opportunities, different forms of aggression and conflict will find a fertile terrain for growth and eventually explode. When a society – whether local, national or global – is willing to leave a part of itself on the fringes, no political programmes or resources spent on law enforcement or surveillance systems can indefinitely guarantee tranquility”.If we have to begin anew, it must always be from the least of our brothers and sisters.

**269.** Let us keep in mind that “not even a murderer loses his personal dignity, and God himself pledges to guarantee this”. The firm rejection of the death penalty shows to what extent it is possible to recognize the inalienable dignity of every human being and to accept that he or she has a place in this universe. If I do not deny that dignity to the worst of criminals, I will not deny it to anyone. I will give everyone the possibility of sharing this planet with me, despite all our differences.