

# FRATELLI TUTTI



## ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP



## STUDY GUIDE

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## Introduction

Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti*, was released in October 2020. An invitation to renewed social friendship and universal fraternity, this encyclical was published as the global community was seven months into the COVID-19 pandemic. A call to come together in solidarity, *Fratelli Tutti* provides a starting point for renewing our commitment to caring for our neighbor and a global society built on justice and the common good.

This study guide contains material for faith groups, families, and individuals to journey through *Fratelli Tutti* in six sessions. Each session includes an opening and closing prayer, summaries of each chapter of the encyclical, discussion questions for small groups or individuals, and ways to put *Fratelli Tutti* into action. These sessions can be held as either 60 or 75-minute gatherings, as indicated with the suggestions below, and can be conducted in person or remotely via video conferencing services.

## Materials

At least a week in advance, participants should have access to the following materials:

- A full copy of Pope Francis' encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. You can order copies of the encyclical from [the USCCB Store](#), or get the text of the [encyclical online](#).
- The "Social Encyclical Primer" handout, included with this facilitator's guide

If meeting as a group and in person, bring to the session (or make available electronically):

- A few extra copies of the encyclical
- Copies of the "Social Encyclical Primer" handout

## Reflection and/or Discussion Guidelines

If using this guide as an individual, continue to the session templates on the following pages.

If using this guide in a group setting, provide guidelines for the discussion. Remind participants that the purpose of the discussion is to explore our faith and how we are to live it out in the world, not to debate with one another. Some groups find it helpful to use the "mutual invitation" method to move the sharing along. Each participant shares his or her reflections on a question, and then invites another person who has not shared to do so. Be sure that everyone has an opportunity to respond to each question. To help create a positive space for faith sharing, ask the participants to observe these simple guidelines:

- Listen carefully. Use "I" statements. (Take responsibility for what you express. Do not speak for "them.")
- Help all to participate. (Do not dominate the conversation.)
- Stay on the topic and stay focused on Pope Francis' message.
- Be respectful and charitable at all times.

## **Background**

In the third encyclical of his pontificate, Pope Francis invites the Church to live out the call to universal fraternity and social friendship. *Fratelli Tutti* offers "a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel" (no. 1) and shares a vision for humanity that Pope Francis has emphasized throughout his papacy. An "encyclical" is a letter that is a teaching document by the Holy Father. A "social encyclical" applies the consistent, traditional moral teachings of the Church to the social and economic challenges of the current day. Use the "Social Encyclical Primer" handout to provide additional background information on social encyclicals, including a list of previous social encyclicals and the themes they addressed.

## Session 1: A Call to Social Friendship in a Time of Isolation

Before the session please read (or if meeting as a group, invite the participants to read) the Introduction and Chapter 1 "Dark Clouds Over a Closed World" of Fratelli Tutti (paragraphs 1 to 55 or pp. 1 to 25 in the printed book).

### Introductions (2 minutes)

If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves and to share why they came. Keep the introductions brief.

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

#### Hope Amidst Dark Clouds

Inspired by Fratelli Tutti, nos. 30, 54-55

May your light break through dark clouds, O Lord!

May your hope grow in our hearts  
--even when the skies feel ominous.

Fear, isolation, individualism, conflict: these are the winds that blow  
gusts of racism and inequality in our "throw-away world."

But we are saved together; not alone.  
So teach us, Lord, to hope.

Show us the goodness you continue to sow. Show us the boldness of love  
to reject fear and embrace our neighbor.

Make fertile the ground where seeds fall.  
Bring gentle rain and warm rays of sunlight.

May we know your love shines bright.  
Through dark clouds, may your hope shine again.

Amen.

### Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 - 20 minutes)

Begin by reading the following summaries aloud. If meeting in a group setting, ask participants to share with the large group their reactions to the Introduction and Chapter 1 of Fratelli Tutti. If you are using the guide as an individual, reflect on the questions quietly and prayerfully. What passages stuck out to you? Do you agree with Pope Francis' assessment of our global situation? Where have you seen "dark clouds" in your communities? What does a call to "social friendship" mean to you?

## Introduction

Pope Francis presents this encyclical as an invitation to discipleship built on love that fosters social friendship and universal fraternity. Inspired by Saint Francis of Assisi, Pope Francis suggests that this call to build solidarity and work for justice must be rooted in our interconnectedness that recognizes that “God has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and has called them to live together as brothers and sisters” (no. 5).

Universal fraternity and social friendship have been ongoing priorities throughout Pope Francis’s pontificate, and he offers this new document at a time when the temptation to ignore and cast out those who are seen as “other” is strongly at work throughout our society. Pope Francis offers an alternative vision that we may come together as one global community. While the drafting of this document began prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the devastation and disparities made clear in the days and months following the outbreak give this message an urgency that demands a united response: “It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity” (no. 8).

## Chapter 1: “Dark Clouds Over A Closed World”

Pope Francis begins *Fratelli Tutti* with an assessment of the state of our global society that has prevented us from cultivating universal fraternity with our brothers and sisters. Our current global system promotes profit over people and allows the common good to be sacrificed for the interests of the powerful (no. 12). At the root of this unjust power structure is an indifference towards the dignity and worth of the human person—what Pope Francis terms “a throwaway world”—that prioritizes our individual needs over those of the whole community, especially those who are poor and vulnerable.

The persistence of unjust economic systems that favor the wealth of a few has increased inequality and now “new forms of poverty are emerging” that entrap millions within our communities (no. 21). The persistence of racism, war, and armed conflict have all fostered cultures of exclusion and division among us that have made it clear that “in today’s world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia” (no. 30). In a special way, Pope Francis lifts up the plight of migrants throughout the world, whose experiences serve as a stark reminder of the extreme devaluing of the human person at work in our society (no. 39). This culture of exclusion has strengthened the polarization and extreme ideologies we know to be part of both our Church and global community, which allows our fears and doubts to overshadow our call to love.

Natural disasters and global calamities like COVID-19 have exacerbated these social ills and reminded us not only of the direness of this situation but of our interconnectedness, “Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together” (no. 32). These moments of immense suffering invite a reawakening of our call to social friendship and solidarity: “If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this

way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected" (no. 35).

Despite the "dark clouds" looming over our world, as Christians, we are called to believe in hope. This hope is rooted in our knowledge of God's grace at work in the world and challenges us to the unceasing work for justice. Pope Francis offers the remainder of *Fratelli Tutti* as a testament to that hope: "Hope is bold; it can look beyond personal convenience, the petty securities, and compensations which limit our horizon, and it can open us up to grand ideals that make life more beautiful and worthwhile" (no. 55).

### **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (15 -25 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

1. *Fratelli Tutti* takes its inspiration from St. Francis of Assisi who, as Pope Francis reminds us, "did not wage a war of words aimed at imposing doctrines; he simply spread the love of God" (no. 4). What does this call to spread God's love look like in today's society and our community? How does the example of St. Francis change the way we understand the work for justice and peace in our communities?
2. A renewed social friendship must be rooted in an authentic encounter that resists the temptation to "build a culture of walls, to raise walls, walls in the heart, walls on the land" (no. 27). How have you built walls that have prevented an authentic encounter with the "other"? What can we do to create communities of welcome that encourage encounters with our neighbors?
3. Pope Francis highlights the lack of shared historical memory that has fostered our present situation of individualism and inequality, writing, "Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day" (no. 11). What examples of injustice do you see repeating themselves in our society today? How can we foster a solidarity that continually seeks justice in our communities?
4. Pope Francis makes special note of the rising extremist perspectives and polarization at work in both our Church and global community. In particular, our reliance on digital forms of encounter has given "free reign to ideologies" (no. 45) that allow fear to overtake our call to love and "to disguise and expand the very individualism that finds expression in xenophobia and in contempt for the vulnerable" (no. 43). How do you see this polarization at work in our communities? How can we respond to polarization in a way that prioritizes dialogue and justice?

## Break (5 minutes)

Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below.

## Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith in Action (15 -20 minutes)

If using this guide as an individual, continue to the Going Deeper section below. If meeting as a group, bring everyone back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.

### Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved

- Learn more about [the growing inequality and web of poverty](#) at work in the United States. Then, find out how many [people are experiencing poverty](#) in your community.
- The persistence of systemic racism is a “dark cloud” at work in our society. Learn more about [racism in our communities](#) and how [Catholics can act for racial justice](#).
- Learn more about how the Church in the U.S. is [advocating with and on behalf of migrants](#) and discover how you can get involved by [joining the Justice for Immigrants campaign](#).

### Story of Hope:

#### The Time Has Come to Eliminate Inequalities: Community Organizations Respond in the Time of COVID-19

*“The spread of COVID19 had taken a dramatic turn in the U.S. during the week of March 9th. By the end of the week, we had closed our office and shifted all meetings to be conducted online. Widespread media reporting of the rapid spread of the coronavirus ignited fear, uncertainty, and panic across our communities & country. Even more concerning were the early signs of a devastating economic collapse that millions of families and vulnerable people were experiencing as a result.*

*At times, it has been easy to feel overwhelmed and entirely engulfed by the weight and uncertainty of it all. It is during these moments and times of despair that the revelation of God emerges through communities of spirit, solidarity, and hope. The vital work of the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) in supporting community-based organizations that strive to organize collective power in pursuit of justice has never been more critical. While we must all do what we can to help stem the rapid spread of the coronavirus by maintaining social distancing measures and taking necessary precautions, our responsibility as Catholics to work for justice and mercy must continue.”*

**[Read the full story on We Are Salt and Light.](#)**



## **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

*Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:*

### **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.

## Session 2: A Call to be Neighbors in the World

Before the session, please read (or if meeting as a group, invite participants to read) Chapter 2, "A Stranger On The Road" of Fratelli Tutti (paragraphs 56 to 86 or pp.26 to 38 in the printed book).

### Introductions (2 minutes)

If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves and to share one thing that they were left thinking about after session 1. Keep the introductions brief.

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

#### Help Us to Love Like the Good Samaritan

Prayer inspired by Fratelli Tutti, nos. 64, 67, 70

Lord Jesus,

You teach us in your parable that there are two kinds of people--  
--those who bend down to help and those who look the other way.  
Which kind of people will we be?

We say, "Yes, Lord, I will love you and love my neighbor."

But then we ask:

The migrant... is she my neighbor?  
Those in poverty...are they my neighbors?  
Victims of war across the world... are they neighbors?  
One who faces racism... is he my neighbor?  
Those disabled or elderly... are they my neighbors?

You remind us: *Yes. All of us neighbors.*

Show us how to love, Lord.

May we open our eyes.  
May we emerge from our comfortable isolation.  
May we build a world of compassion and dignity.

Lord Jesus, who was neighbor to all,

Help us to persevere in love.  
Help us to restore dignity to the suffering.  
Help us to build a society based not on exclusion, but on community.

Amen.

## **Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 -20 minutes)**

*If meeting in a group setting, begin by inviting a few participants to share brief summaries from session one. If using the guide as an individual, reflect on your major takeaways from session one. Then, prayerfully read aloud the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37), also found in paragraph 56 of Fratelli Tutti, and the following the summary of Chapter 2. Invite participants to share their reactions to Chapter 2 of Fratelli Tutti. If you are using the guide as an individual, reflect on the questions quietly and prayerfully. What passages stuck out to you? Who do you identify within the parable of the Good Samaritan? How is this parable being lived out today?*

### **Chapter 2: A Stranger on the Road**

Following the invitation to “advance along the paths of hope” (no. 55), Pope Francis offers reflections on the parable of the Good Samaritan as a starting point for our call to universal fraternity. The parable of the Good Samaritan tells the story of a man left injured on the side of the road, whose pleas for help are ignored by several people who pass by. Only a Samaritan stopped and attended to the needs of the injured man, even offering his own financial resources to support a neighbor in need. Pope Francis asks us to see ourselves in this story. How would we respond to seeing a neighbor in need on the side of the road? Pope Francis observes that in our current society it is all too easy to be indifferent to the suffering of our brothers and sisters (no. 64). Our desire to ignore those whose situations make us uncomfortable has resulted in a society in which we are unable to recognize as our brothers or sisters: persons in poverty, migrant families, and refugees fleeing violence and persecution.

This parable reminds us of the dangerous consequences of forgetting our call to love our neighbors. To address this breakdown in our society, we are called to follow the example of the Good Samaritan and re-commit to the common good: “The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion and act instead as neighbors, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good” (no. 67). This invitation to embody the love of the Good Samaritan is not merely a call to a new social ethic. It is also an invitation to remember our purpose. We are “created for a fulfillment that can only be found in love. We cannot be indifferent to suffering . . . Instead, we should feel indignant, challenged to emerge from our comfortable isolation, and to be changed by our contact with human suffering” (no. 68).

This parable is a challenge to each of us to prioritize the needs of the other and begin to “restore the dignity to the suffering and to build a society” that honors the human person and the common good of all (no. 71). This is the profound meaning of the call to love our neighbors as ourselves: to recognize the dignity and worth of each human person and move from indifference to seeing the other as a brother or sister deserving of our time and in whom we can find fulfillment as children of God (nos. 78-79). Pope Francis closes this reflection on the Good Samaritan by calling to mind the words Jesus speaks in Matthew 25:35, which compels us to see “Christ himself in each of our abandoned or excluded brothers and sisters” (no. 84-85). No one is outside the body of Christ. If we are to rebuild a global society rooted in universal fraternity and social friendship, we must be willing to model the example of the Good Samaritan and work

to uphold the dignity of each human person. Practically, this means that we must work to create a society that promotes the flourishing of all our brothers and sisters. This includes, but is not limited to, learning to think beyond borders to welcome the stranger (nos. 80-83) and working to eradicate racism from our individual mindsets and our policies (no. 86).

### **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (15 - 25 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

1. Pope Francis reminds us that the teaching Jesus shares is not new. The call to love God and neighbor is present throughout the Old Testament, as well as the New Testament. The parable of the Good Samaritan invites us to extend the command to love one another to all people, including those we may view as a “foreigner” (nos. 61-62). Who are the “foreigners” in your community? How can you love those who may be seen as “the other”? Have you ever felt the sting of being excluded?
2. “Belief in God and the worship of God are not enough to ensure that we are actually living in a way pleasing to God. A believer may be untrue to everything that his faith demands of him, and yet think he is close to God and better than others” (no. 74). In reflecting on the Good Samaritan, we are confronted with the indifference of both the Priest and the Levite, two people who are both “devoted to the worship of God.” This detail is not something that we can ignore. Pope Francis tells us they serve as a warning that faithful worship of God is not complete without putting that faith into action: How have you taken intentional efforts to put your faith into action? How can you or your faith community support this call to love our neighbors?
3. In his call to emulate the Good Samaritan, Pope Francis calls us to active participation in our communities. We must take up a “co-responsibility” in creating communities built upon solidarity and social friendship: “Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people’s troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment” (no. 77). We all have a role to play in transforming our communities. What gifts, talents, or circles of influence do you have that can help you make a difference? How can you enter into the suffering of our most marginalized brothers and sisters, especially those who we are not physically close to?
4. In the final words of the parable, Jesus invites us each to “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:37). As Pope Francis observes, “he challenges us to put aside all differences and, in the face of suffering, to draw near to others with no questions asked” (no. 81). What prevents you from encountering and upholding the dignity of “the other” in your

community? What differences or previously held beliefs do you need to put aside to truly become a neighbor to our brothers and sisters?

### **Break (5 minutes)**

*Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below."*

### **Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith in Action (15 - 20 minutes)**

*Bring the group back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this second section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.*

#### **Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved**

- In what ways are you living out this call to love your neighbor as yourself? Use this [examination of conscience in light of Catholic Social Teaching](#) to consider how well your choices and actions reflect love of neighbor.
- Act like a neighbor to those in your community by taking steps to encounter those you do not already know. Often used by many faith communities and community groups, [this guide can help you to reach out to](#) and learn more about those in your community.
- Find out what your neighbors need. Call the community organizations or agencies in your area and ask how you can support or get involved in their work. Start by seeing if there is a [group supported by the Catholic Campaign for Human Development](#) in your area.

#### **Story of Hope:**

##### **Parish learns how to listen in the neighborhood**

*"We conducted a listening campaign in the neighborhood surrounding our parish to learn about concerns and engage the community. After our parish, St. Vincent de Paul, in Germantown, PA, experienced a merger of 3 parishes, we knew we needed a way to get to know one another and unite our community of faith. A group we are involved with called Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild (POWER), which receives funding from the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, helped us conduct a listening campaign that taught us to listen to each other. We also found that getting engaged in a living wage campaign with other congregations in POWER took us out into the neighborhood to listen to their concerns and inform them about an upcoming legislative bill. Our role in door-knocking and phone-banking with often-discouraged local voters helped get out the vote and pass that living wage bill, with 76% voter approval! Our parish's work to listen and engage has helped us to live out the Gospel and make "the Word become flesh" in our neighborhood and community."*

**[Read more on We Are Salt and Light.](#)**

## **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

*Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:*

### **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.

## Session 3: Solidarity as Social Friendship

*Before the session, please read (or if meeting as a group, invite participants to read) Chapter 3, "Envisaging and Engendering An Open World," and Chapter 4, "A Heart Open to The Whole World," of Fratelli Tutti ([paragraphs 87 to 153](#) or pp. 39 to 68 in [the printed book](#)).*

### Introductions (2 minutes)

*If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves and to share one thing that they were left thinking about after session two. Keep the introductions brief.*

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

**Create in me a Love ever more open**

Create in me a love ever more open, Lord,  
that I may move beyond myself,  
that I may transcend man-made borders  
that I may go to the periphery,  
that I may seek the hidden exile,  
that I may offer generous hospitality, and  
that I may rid racism from my heart.

In this way, may I help create conditions  
where every person can thrive,  
where community replaces isolation,  
where racism is stamped out,  
where justice is restored,  
where work, land and housing are available for all, and  
where the human family can live in harmony.

Guide us on the journey to the true path of peace, Lord.  
Help us live out your vision of a world where no one is excluded  
and the earth's goods are shared and cared for by all.

Amen.

### Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 -20 minutes)

*If meeting as a group, ask a few volunteers to read aloud the following summaries of Chapters 3 and 4. Invite participants to share their reactions to Chapters 3 and 4 of Fratelli Tutti. If using the session as an individual, prayerfully read the following summaries and reflect on your initial reactions. What passages or phrases stuck out to you? What did you find most challenging about Pope Francis' call to social friendship? What does it mean to live with a heart open to the whole world?*

### **Chapter 3 - Envisaging and Engendering an Open World**

The example of the Good Samaritan reveals to us that our deepest fulfillment is found in the gift of ourselves to our neighbors (no. 87). As Pope Francis points out, each act of love towards a neighbor is an outward movement of God's grace in the world that unites and moves us to foster a true sense of social friendship, which values each human person (no. 93). This outpouring of love enables a more universal understanding of community that embraces each "brother or sister in need" so that none are ignored. When we fail to recognize each person as a brother or sister, even those "born in the same country" can become "an existential foreigner" (no. 97) or a "hidden exile" (no. 98). We must acknowledge how these attitudes are influenced by racism, "a virus that quickly mutates . . . and lurks in waiting" (no. 97). Other "hidden exiles" are those with disabilities; their "active participation in the civil and ecclesial community" must be fostered (no. 98). True social friendship demands the full acknowledgment of the dignity and worth of every human person, no matter their ability, worth, ethnicity, race, or gender.

Our commitment to the dignity of every person and to the common good must guide our relationships, civil institutions, and economic systems so that all people have the opportunity to "develop integrally" (no. 108). A genuinely "human and fraternal" society will work to ensure that every member can thrive at each moment in life (no. 110). This is what it means to "foster integral human development" that promotes the common good and allows us to "advance together towards an authentic and integral growth" (no. 113).

Pope Francis explains that solidarity is at the heart of what it means to cultivate social friendship: "[Solidarity] means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land, and housing, the denial of social and labor rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money...Solidarity, understood in its most profound meaning, is a way of making history' (quoting [Address to the Meeting of Popular Movements](#))" (no. 116). Solidarity challenges us to place the common good over our individual desires. Pope Francis notes that, in Catholic teaching, "the right to private property" is not absolute; it is secondary to the "principle of the universal destination of created goods" (no. 120). The global community must place the ability of every human person to thrive over goals of wealth and conquest, "for a real and lasting peace will only be possible 'on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility in the whole human family' (quoting [Address on Nuclear Weapons](#), 6)" (no. 127). This has implications for policies that affect the global poor (e.g., debt relief [no. 126] and access to work opportunities [no. 123]), women (no. 121), migrants (no. 124), and the natural environment (no. 122).

### **Chapter 4 - A Heart Open to The Whole World**

The moral and social implications of this call to solidarity are profound and demand new responses to our global and local problems. These are clearly seen in the current crisis facing migrants throughout the world. While we must advocate for policies that reduce the need for migration, we are "obliged to respect the right of all individuals to find a place that meets their basic needs and those of their families" (no. 129). We must "welcome, protect, promote and integrate" migrating persons who arrive at our borders (no. 129). Globally, we must commit to



working together to cultivate a universal fraternity that acknowledges that “we are all either saved together or no one is saved” (no. 137).

Pope Francis asks us “to think not simply as a country but also as part of the larger human family” (no. 141). We ought to bring the best of our own cultures with us as we embrace the global community and cultivate a universal fraternity with our brothers and sisters (no. 142). This allows us to open our hearts to those outside our neighborhoods and countries and be moved by what is happening on a global scale (no. 146). The importance of our interconnectedness must remain central in thinking about how we cultivate solidarity among our brothers and sisters across the world: “an appropriate and authentic openness to the world presupposes the capacity to be open to one’s neighbor within a family of nations” (no. 151). Living with a heart open to the world challenges us to a universal fraternity that continually works for the common good.

### **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (15 - 25 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

- 1) Pope Francis invites us to foster a heart open to the whole world that allows us to see that our well-being is tied up to that of our neighbors near and far, that “to attain fulfillment in life we need others” (no. 150). These two chapters begin and end the same: with a reminder that at the heart of the Christian life is the call to be in relationship with the other. When have you had an encounter with a neighbor that sustained and fulfilled you? What holds you back from living with a love that fosters universal fraternity?
- 2) Pope Francis invites us to return to the story of the Good Samaritan and reflect on the role social standing played in each character’s decision about whether or not to help the injured man. The Samaritan was “free of every label and position . . . [and] was able to interrupt his journey, change his plans, and unexpectedly” act as a neighbor to someone in need (no. 101). In what ways do social and cultural norms impact how you view or think about others? How can you begin to shift your perspective and act in ways that embrace the “hidden exiles” in your community: victims of racism, those with disabilities, the poor, and the migrant?
- 3) Integral human development tells us that survival is not enough, that each human person’s inherent dignity demands that we each have what we need to thrive, no matter our circumstances or talents. How does our society promote the flourishing of our brothers and sisters? How could you live more simply as an act of solidarity with our brothers and sisters? What policies need to change in order for all in your community to have what they need to thrive?

- 4) Central to the cultivation of global solidarity is the need to care for our common home. Pope Francis speaks of a “universal consciousness” that creates a mutual concern for the well-being of the earth and those most impacted by injustices occurring within it (no. 117). The global climate crisis is one of many social ills that demands all of us be in solidarity with our most vulnerable brothers and sisters. What do you see as the most pressing injustice at work in your community? What about in our global society? What actions can you take to begin to cultivate solidarity and alleviate the suffering of those most impacted by those injustices?

### **Break (5 minutes)**

*Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below.*

### **Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith Action (15 - 20 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue to the Going Deeper section below. If meeting as a group, bring everyone back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.*

#### **Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved**

- Stand in solidarity with those most vulnerable in your community. For more than 50 years, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) has been helping communities to build resilience and address poverty’s root cause. Read more about how [CCHD-supported local organizations are transforming communities](#).
- Our Church teaches us to create a society that welcomes and accompanies migrating persons who arrive at our borders. Use [this guide created by the USCCB Migration and Refugee Services](#) to reflect more deeply on this call and how you might foster a heart open to all within our communities.
- Respond to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor. Cultivate solidarity that honors our interconnectedness by learning more about the efforts of Catholic Relief Services to help vulnerable communities mitigate the effects of climate change by [joining the effort to lead the way](#) to a more just world.

#### **Story of Hope:**

##### **A Continuing Education**

*“Ten-year-old Majd (Mah-jeed) Nasser Hassan lives with his family in Bashiqa, a town east of Mosul in Iraq. Like many fifth-grade boys, Majd loves football (soccer) and Mickey Mouse. He enjoys studying. Excels in math. His little brother Sam, 9, is his best friend. When Majd grows up, he wants to be a surgeon so that he can help people.*

*But five years ago, Majd's life was upended when his family was forced by ISIS to leave their home. Fearing encroaching conflict, the family fled, leaving everything behind. The upheaval affected everyone, but especially the boys, who were anxious and scared. But along with his close-knit family, the stabilizing force in Majd's young life became a Catholic Relief Services-sponsored school. More than 3 million Iraqis were displaced due to violence in Northern and Central Iraq in 2014. Since then, CRS education programs have served more than 25,000 students in first through sixth grade. Recognizing that conflict and displacement disrupt a child's development, CRS originally established seven child-friendly spaces where children could receive psychosocial support and re-establish a sense of normalcy. These spaces help children work through and overcome trauma, ensuring their physical, emotional and cognitive development aren't impaired. The child-friendly spaces eventually evolved into schools recognized by the Iraqi Department of Education. As of September 2019, CRS formally serves 37 active schools in Iraq."*

**[Read the full story from Catholic Relief Services.](#)**

## **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:

### **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.

## Session 4: A Politics of Charity in Pursuit of Social Love

*Before the session, please read (or if meeting as a group, invite participants to read) Chapter 5, "A Better Kind of Politics" and Chapter 6, "Dialogue And Friendship In Society" of Fratelli Tutti (paragraphs 154 to 224 or pp. 69 to 101 in [the printed book](#)).*

### Introductions (2 minutes)

*If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves, and to share one thing that they were left thinking about after session three. Keep the introductions brief.*

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Loving God, give us hearts that listen for your word.

Let us imitate the Good Samaritan, who does not turn away from suffering.

Help us listen.

May we listen to those who struggle daily for dignity.

Let us hear your voice in the stories of those on the margins.

Help us always see what binds us together as sisters and brothers.

Help us to heal.

May we be willing to stand in the place of others.

Let us be open to difference that we may arrive at understanding.

Help us to seek reconciliation that our world may reflect justice.

Help us respond.

May our faith move us to action in the public square.

Let us work with others of good will, finding solutions together.

Help us exercise political charity, seeking the common good and dignity for all.

Lord, give us the courage to trust in your hand guiding us.

Give us the courage to respond like the Good Samaritan, setting aside divisions to attend to the needs of the other. May we know and see your love present in our communities, made real in the ways we love one another.

Amen.

### Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 -20 minutes)

*If meeting as a group, ask a few volunteers to read aloud the following summaries of Chapters 5 and 6. Invite participants to share their reactions to Chapters 5 and 6 of Fratelli Tutti. If going through the session as an individual, prayerfully read the following summaries and reflect on your initial reactions. What passages or phrases stuck out to you? Has your understanding of politics changed? What did you find most challenging about Pope Francis' call to honest and respectful dialogue?*

## Chapter 5 - A Better Kind of Politics

Pope Francis' call to universal fraternity demands a political and social order built on charity and a shared pursuit of the common good. As opposed to populism that exploits the vulnerable and liberalism that serves the interests of the powerful (no. 155), charity utilizes all elements of society to prioritize the pursuit of the common good and help for those left behind (no. 165). Pope Francis explains that our focus on economic success has blinded us to the importance of making choices so each person has enough to thrive: "the fragility of world-systems in the face of the pandemic has demonstrated that not everything can be resolved by market freedom." (no. 168). What we need are new models that focus on promoting human dignity and solidarity. The voices of grassroots leaders, who Pope Francis refers to as participants in "popular movements," must be front and center, so that each person on the margins can help "shape his or her own future" (no. 187). We must seek "an integral human development that goes beyond 'the idea of social policies being a policy *for* the poor, but never *with* the poor and never *of* the poor, much less part of a project that reunites peoples' (quoting [Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements](#))" (no. 169). This approach must also apply to the international community, "where subsidiarity and solidarity work together in a complementary way" (no. 175).

To achieve this, Pope Francis emphasizes the call to political participation. We must practice political love that seeks "'new ways of approaching the problems of today's world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organizations and legal systems from within' (quoting [Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church](#), no. 207)" (no. 183). Social charity is more than just good intentions (no. 185) and demands a commitment to solidarity with our sisters and brothers: "It is an act of charity to assist someone suffering, but it is also an act of charity, even if we do not know that person, to work to change the social conditions that caused his or her suffering" (no. 186). Politics – and all those who engage in the public square – must embody the best of this social charity and must always hold love for our brothers and sisters at the center of its work (no. 194). Foundational to Catholic Social Teaching is that the life and dignity of the human person and our call to solidarity with our neighbors are more important than economic gain.

## Chapter 6 - Dialogue and Friendship in Society

A politics built on charity must be accompanied by encounter and dialogue that has "the ability to respect the other's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns" (no. 203). This focus on honest and respectful dialogue must remain at the center of all our forms of communication, especially those occurring digitally, so that they may guide us to promotion and pursuit of the common good (no. 205). This genuine dialogue does not come at the sacrifice of justice and truth: "We need to learn how to unmask the various ways that the truth is manipulated, distorted and concealed in public and private discourse" (no. 208). Genuine dialogue allows us to discover those shared values we know to be true and fosters a consensus among and within societies that becomes the basis for a shared social ethic (no. 211).

Pope Francis calls for a new culture – a "culture of encounter" rooted in bridge building and community (no. 216). Creating a social covenant for the common good requires the "ability to recognize other people's right to be themselves and to be different" (no. 218) and the

involvement of people at all levels of society: "Encounter cannot take place only between the holders of economic, political or academic power. Genuine social encounter calls for a dialogue that engages the culture shared by the majority of the population" (no. 219). This social covenant demands authentic acknowledgment of our neighbor and the ability to "stand in the place of others" (no. 221). A politics of charity, built on love, challenges us to see how our ability to thrive is dependent on the flourishing of our brothers and sisters.

### **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (15 - 25 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

- 1) Each of us is challenged to work "for a social and political order whose soul is social charity" (no. 180). We are called to faith-informed political participation on an ongoing, year-round basis. What policies do you see as needed to promote the common good of your neighbors? How can you work in your community to influence these policies?
- 2) Pope Francis invites each of us, whatever our role (e.g., young person, parent, parishioner, worker, business owner, etc.) to consider what we have done or are doing to put love into action by promoting the common good. As we reflect on this call to social charity, let us ask ourselves: "What good [have] I achieve[d] in the position that was entrusted to me?" (no. 197).
- 3) A society built on social charity demands a commitment to encounter, especially with those who may be different from us. Central to this is the need to "create processes of encounter... that build a people that can accept differences" (no. 217). What do you see as necessary for an honest and respectful encounter with someone with whom you disagree? How can you approach these encounters in ways that leave you open to dialoguing with different ideas and perspectives that differ from your own?
- 4) Pope Francis says that cultivating "kindness" is necessary in order to move beyond mere civility to true social love for our neighbors (no. 224). What does it mean to move beyond civility to social love? How can you concretely cultivate this sense of kindness in your daily life?

### **Break (5 minutes)**

*Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below.*

## Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith in Action (15 - 20 minutes)

*If using this guide as an individual, continue to the Going Deeper section below. If meeting as a group, bring everyone back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.*

### Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved

- Take action rooted in social charity and promote the common good. Sign up to participate in [the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' action alerts](#) on behalf of our brothers and sisters who are poor and vulnerable.
- Be a faithful citizen. Learn more about [the call to participate in the public square](#) and discover how you can get involved.
- [Participate in and encourage civil dialogue](#). Honor the human dignity of all our brothers and sisters by approaching each encounter with compassion and civility.

### Story of Hope:

#### Speaking from the Heart

*"As the former president of the lay apostolic organization Asociación Jóvenes Para Cristo/Young Adults for Christ (AJPC), Carmen Ramos is fearless when speaking about her faith, God's mercy and love, and the call to put our faith into action. So, when she had the opportunity to travel to Washington, DC to take part in the National Catholic Council for Hispanic Ministry's Advocacy Day, she jumped at the chance. She would be part of a delegation from California meeting with members of Congress and their staff to address the challenges facing migrants and refugees and the need to support them—an issue close to her own heart.*

*Carmen arrived in Washington eager to share the letters that members of AJPC at the national level had written to their members of Congress, but she hadn't expected to have an individual speaking role during the day. She was asked to give her own personal testimony the night before the meetings, and she began to feel nervous. Aware of the importance of her task, she offered prayers to the Virgin Mary asking for the right words to express herself. She realized she needn't have hesitated because God would use her as a channel, as she put it, to speak for, "the needs of each of my brothers and sisters and those whom I come to advocate for." Their needs, she explains, "made me speak from the heart."*

*Being an advocate can sometimes feel uncomfortable or unfamiliar. It may seem easier to share our intentions in private prayer rather than in a public manner. But the more we learn about issues affecting our brothers and sisters around the world, the more we must lift our own voices. By meeting with—or simply writing letters to—congresspeople, joining prayer walks and sharing social media posts, we can work for changes that benefit the common good."*

**[Read the full story from Catholic Relief Services.](#)**

## **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

*Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:*

### **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.



## Session 5: An Ethic of Peace & Nonviolence

Before the session, please read (or if meeting as a group, invite participants to read) Chapter 7, "Paths of Renewed Encounter," of Fratelli Tutti ([paragraphs 225 to 270](#) or pp. 102 to 122 in [the printed book](#)).

### Introductions (2 minutes)

If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves, and to share one thing that they were left thinking about after session four. Keep the introductions brief.

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

#### Help Us Build Communities in God's Vision of Justice

Holy Spirit,

We praise and thank you!

You anoint us to

bring glad tidings to the poor  
proclaim liberty to captives  
recover sight for the blind  
free the oppressed  
and build communities in keeping  
with God's vision of justice.

Show us how to be

light of the world  
salt of the earth  
seeds that sprout love  
and leaven that infuses humanity  
with the desire to promote  
human dignity and solidarity.

Help us to listen so that

those in poverty can lead our efforts to  
proclaim a more hopeful vision  
liberate captives from injustice  
heal the blindness of the powerful  
free us all from self-centeredness  
and build community to overcome poverty.

Amen.

## Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 -20 minutes)

*If meeting as a group, ask a few volunteers to read aloud the following summary of Chapter 7. Invite participants to share their reactions to Chapter 7 of Fratelli Tutti. If going through the session as an individual, prayerfully read the following summary and reflect on your initial reactions. What passages or phrases stuck out to you? Has your understanding of forgiveness changed? What did you find most challenging about Pope Francis' call to work for peace and justice?*

### Chapter 7 - Paths of Renewed Encounter

In this penultimate chapter, Pope Francis proposes an ethic of peace and nonviolence as a way to begin to create a community of global solidarity and a more universal fraternity. This invitation to renewed social friendship does not mean returning to the old way of doing things: "pain and conflict transform us" and the first step towards creating a more just society is working for a peace that allows us to both remember the past while also looking forward with hope and in pursuit of justice (no. 226). As we seek to build a social unity that lifts up all our brothers and sisters, we must recognize that each person has something to contribute and that each of us is more than the worst thing we've ever done (no. 228). This requires working to overcome our divisions and recognizing that the task to build the common good necessitates an acknowledgment that we all belong to each other (no. 230). The pursuit of peace and fraternity is an on-going task focused on the call to cultivate a "culture of encounter" (no. 232) and to work together to overcome inequality and lack of integral human development, which "make peace impossible" (no. 235).

A renewed commitment to encounter and social friendship requires a deeper understanding of forgiveness. Forgiveness does not mean failing to hold people accountable for injustice; rather, "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 that diminishes his own humanity and that of others" (no. 241). The challenge of justice requires the unceasing work to overcome anger and violence that deprives all of us of our dignity, and instead find the peace Christ calls us to cultivate among all our brothers and sisters. The task for peace is one that must be sought within a moment of conflict and must foster an opportunity for reconciliation within the community (no. 244). In doing so, we allow all who have been victims of injustice to place their needs at the center and determine the best path forward. This is how we foster the opportunity for true reconciliation and forgiveness that honors the memories of past suffering and injustice: "We need to 'keep alive the flame of collective conscience, bearing witness to succeeding generations to the horror of what happened,' because that witness 'awakens and preserves the memory of the victims, so that the conscience of humanity may rise up in the face of every desire for dominance and destruction' (quoting [Message for the 2020 World Day of Peace](#))" (no. 249). Forgiveness cannot be rushed nor demanded, and it does not mean forgetting the past. Instead, forgiveness – led by those who have been harmed – is the prophetic act of "break[ing] the vicious cycle; ...[and] halt[ing] the advance of the forces of destruction" (no. 251).

Pope Francis tells us that this ethic of peace and justice must hold the values of encounter, social friendship, and love at the center. We seek justice because it empowers those who have been harmed and promotes the common good, not out of anger or vengeance (no. 252). This understanding of justice calls into question all forms of conflict and violence. War is an example of a broken solution to conflict that has resulted in the “destruction in the fabric of national and global society” (no. 255). Today it has become “very difficult . . . to speak of the possibility of a “just war” (no. 258). The death penalty is another symptom of a society that has lost awareness of its interconnectedness and disregards the dignity of the human person. The Church teaches that the death penalty is inadmissible and is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide (see [Address on the Twenty-fifth Anniversary of the Promulgation of the Catechism of the Catholic Church](#)) (no. 263). Pope Francis extends this call further, to improve the quality of prison conditions, which is another example of how we deny our brothers and sisters authentic encounter and social friendship (no. 268). Pope Francis closes with a final reminder that, as Christians, we must work for a society that promotes justice and peace in unity with our brothers and sisters.

### **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (15 - 25 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

- 1) Cultivating solidarity with our sisters and brothers requires a dedication to working for a peace that begins to heal “open wounds” (no. 225). One example of an “open wound” in our society is the persistence of racism in many of our communities. Where have you seen racism at work in our society? How can you work for a justice that begins to heal the wound of racism in your community?
- 2) Forgiveness and reconciliation are major components of what Pope Francis presents as a path forward to a society built on justice and peace. How have you experienced forgiveness and reconciliation in your life? What can you do to encourage that same experience with your neighbors in your local, national, and global community?
- 3) Pope Francis explains the importance of memory in the process of reconciliation and justice. Remembering moments of immense suffering challenges us to work for peace and to create systems in which such injustice and violence can never happen again. These memories can be injustices we have witnessed, instances of exclusion we have experienced, or harm we have caused. What is one memory or experience that has moved you to work for justice? What memory do you feel is beginning to be forgotten by our society?
- 4) This chapter ends with a call to embody the words of Isaiah and “beat [our] swords into plowshares” (2:4). Christians have a long history of leading the effort to cultivate peace

and nonviolence throughout society. How are you called to contribute to the work to build a peaceful community and society?

### **Break (5 minutes)**

*Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below.*

### **Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith in Action (15 - 20 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue to the Going Deeper section below. If meeting as a group, bring everyone back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.*

#### **Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved**

- Pope Francis challenges us to never forget moments of extreme violence and suffering. In particular, he mentions the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, as well as the Shoah or The Holocaust. Utilize [the USCCB's resources](#) to learn more and explore the Catholic response to nuclear weapons as well as [this resource to learn more about the Holocaust](#) and anti-Semitism and how Catholics are called to respond.
- Respond to the Church's call to work for the end of the death penalty. Learn more about the death penalty in the United States and [get involved in the work to end the death penalty and promote a more restorative criminal justice system](#).
- Learn more about the Church's work for peace and justice throughout the world. Read about how [the Community of Sant'Egidio](#), a contemporary church movement, is helping to negotiate peace settlements between nations and campaigning globally against the death penalty, and find out how you can get involved.
- Encounter those who have experienced racism. [Read and reflect on stories from Catholics in the Diocese of Green Bay](#) about their experiences of racism.

#### **Story of Hope:**

##### **Sant' Egidio helps children become socially and globally aware**

*"Our Community of Sant' Egidio in Boston runs a children's afterschool program which organizes educational activities aimed at overcoming social barriers and pursuing peace.*

*Where we live, the challenges of immigrant families can be many, and the environment the children grow up in can often be blind to their needs. To respond to this, we created a School of Peace, a free, after-school program that serves mainly Hispanic children in grades K-8. Our community gives them the academic and personal support they need, and the educational activities we organize with the children encourage in them a more socially conscious and globally aware thinking, and a greater awareness of peace. Worldwide, the Community of Sant' Egidio*

*runs many Schools of Peace. The schools help families in their efforts to raise their children and propose an educational model open to people of all kinds, promoting solidarity with the less fortunate and enabling children to overcome social barriers and discrimination.”*

**[Read more on We Are Salt and Light.](#)**

## **Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

*Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:*

### **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.

## Session 6: Christians of and for the World

Before the session please read (or if meeting as a group, invite participants to read) Chapter 8, "Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World," of Fratelli Tutti (paragraphs 271 to 287 or pp. 123 to 134 in the printed book).

### Introductions (2 minutes)

If meeting as a group, invite everyone to briefly introduce themselves, and to share one thing that they were left thinking about after session five. Keep the introductions brief.

### Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

#### Your Gaze is Upon Us

Father,  
You see all things:  
family, friends, neighbors suffering,  
heavy tolls,  
in our communities black and brown.

Your eyes are upon us:  
loving us,  
knowing our hurt,  
showing us how to be strong.

Father,  
Turn our gaze to you:  
so we can see your presence,  
respond to you in our neighbor,  
work to heal disparities.

Help us create a world:  
where all can flourish,  
racial inequality is healed,  
and our gaze becomes your own.

Amen.

## **Large Group Discussion/Chapter Summaries (15 -20 minutes)**

*If meeting as a group, ask a few volunteers to read aloud the following summary of Chapter 8. Invite participants to share their reactions having completed Fratelli Tutti. If going through the session as an individual, prayerfully read the following summary and reflect on your initial reactions having finished Fratelli Tutti. What passages or phrases have remained you? How are you inspired to work for justice and peace? What do you find most challenging about Pope Francis' call for a discipleship that builds social friendship and universal fraternity?*

### **Chapter 8 - Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World**

Pope Francis closes this encyclical letter with a final invitation to seek social friendship with other religious traditions so we can work together to build fraternity and defend justice (no. 271). Our shared commitment to “witness to God” through word and action helps us to live with a “sincere heart” and “recognize one another as traveling companions, truly brothers and sisters” (no. 274). The value of our religious beliefs in the pursuit of peace and social unity cannot be minimized. Religious traditions provide the foundational principles for a social morality rooted in justice and mercy. Thus the Church cannot limit her influence to the private sphere and has a responsibility to participate in the public square to work for the common good (no. 276). In particular, being “catholic” means we are “called to take root in every place” and bring the wisdom of our tradition to the continual work for justice and integral human development (no. 278).

Pope Francis acknowledges that, while we hold the teachings of Christ as foundational to our faith, other religions find inspiration to seek the common good in their own sacred traditions. Respect and tolerance of all religious traditions—Christian and non-Christian—are central to our shared task of fostering universal fraternity. Pope Francis writes: “One fundamental human right must not be forgotten in the journey towards fraternity and peace. It is religious freedom for believers of all religions” (no. 279). Mutual respect and religious freedom allow us to work in unity, beyond false divisions, towards a sustainable peace: “We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbor, 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” (no. 282). People of faith and goodwill are vital to the task Pope Francis has laid before us: to live out a discipleship that builds, with bold and unceasing hope, a global community where peace, justice, and social unity prevail. Drawing on his encounter with the Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, Pope Francis shares an appeal for “peace, justice, and fraternity” shared among people of faith and invites all people of goodwill to join in this pursuit of universal fraternity and social friendship (no. 285).

## **Small Group Discussion/Individual Reflection (10 - 15 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue on to the questions below. If using the guide in a group setting, break participants up into small groups of no more than four people and invite them to use the following discussion questions as a guide to reflect more deeply on these sections of Fratelli Tutti. Invite groups to record their top three highlights for sharing with the larger group.*

- 1) The encyclical closes by listing some of the people whose commitment to universal fraternity and social friendship has inspired Pope Francis: Saint Francis of Assisi, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi, and others. Who is your inspiration for this work of justice and peace? What about their life and work inspires you to create a society where all can thrive?
- 2) Pope Francis ends his encyclical by sharing the appeal he and Grand Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb made together calling all religious believers to join the commitment to work for justice and peace. Take a moment and reread the appeal in paragraph no. 285. Which commitment strikes you most closely? How will you put that commitment into action?

### **Break (5 minutes)**

*Use this time to allow participants to take a brief break before regathering as a large group. If using this guide as an individual, use this optional time to take a brief break before reflecting on the action steps below.*

### **Large Group Discussion/Putting Faith in Action (25 - 30 minutes)**

*If using this guide as an individual, continue to the Going Deeper section below. If meeting as a group, bring everyone back together and invite one representative from each small group to share three main takeaways from this section of Fratelli Tutti. Then, invite a large group discussion of the action steps listed below. Pick one or two, depending on time, to lift up in the large group discussion and invite participants to reflect on the remainder after the session.*

Having spent the last six weeks studying with and reflecting on the call to build social friendship and universal fraternity in *Fratelli Tutti*, we can now discern how we must put this call to justice and peace into action. Use [this resource to lead the group through a group discernment](#) to gain clarity on where the Spirit is calling your community and how you can put your faith into action.

### **Going Deeper: Learn More and Get Involved**

After reflecting on where you might be called to focus your work for justice, here are some places to start:

- Visit [We are Salt and Light](#) for resources to pray, reach out, learn, and act together to put faith in action to address poverty and other issues. Find 100+ resources, 100+ success stories, and a self-assessment tool with resource recommendations to strengthen areas for growth in your community.
- Learn more about how you can get involved in the work to [address the root causes of poverty](#) in your community with the Catholic Campaign for Human Development.
- Discover how you can act in solidarity and for justice with our brothers and sisters of other faiths. Learn more about the work of [the Catholic Association of Diocesan Ecumenical and Interreligious Officers \(CADEIO\)](#) and how you can get involved.



**Story of Hope:**

*To reach out to other faith traditions, we begin by cultivating an attitude of sincerity, humility, kindness, and respect. This prepares us for relationship-building and dialogue rooted in the ability to listen. As we seek to encounter our brothers and sisters of other faith traditions, the U.S. Catholic bishops' Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs offers resources to guide us, including ideas for how Christians can pray together and a program for ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. [Check out these helpful videos on a variety of ways to engage in ecumenical and interreligious dialogue.](#)*

**Closing Prayer (3 minutes)**

*Conclude the session with the following prayer from Fratelli Tutti:*

**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.

## Social Encyclical Primer

Pope Francis' encyclical letter ***Fratelli Tutti*** was released in October 2020. This encyclical, or teaching document, is the latest in a series of social encyclicals written by our popes over the last 125 years, as the Church sought to apply its moral principles and social teaching to emerging economic and social problems.

Jesus Christ is both divine and human. In his person, he embodies what it is to live a fully human life. He is the model of how we are called to live. His teaching has both personal and social implications. These social encyclicals shine the light of the Gospel of Christ and the Church's moral teaching on changing social circumstances, to provide guidance and support to Christians as we seek to live our faith in the world. In this way, the teaching is both very traditional and ever new.

Here are highlights from some of the encyclicals that are part of the Church's modern body of social teaching:

***Rerum Novarum*** (*On the Condition of Labor*) 1891, Pope Leo XIII – Essentially the beginning of modern Catholic social teaching, truly groundbreaking, and a foundational document for many subsequent encyclicals (see below). This encyclical addresses the plight of workers in the wake of the Industrial Revolution, touching on issues that include socialism, unbridled capitalism, a living wage, workers' rights, support for unions, and a rejection of class struggle. Pope Leo XIII first articulated the principles that underlie the preferential option for the poor.

***Quadragesimo Anno*** (*On the Reconstruction of the Social Order*) 1931, Pope Pius XI – Commemorating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ***Rerum Novarum***, this encyclical offers an update on the state of labor and industrialization, and strong critiques of communism, unrestrained capitalism, class conflict, and inequalities. Pope Pius XI denounces the concentration of wealth and economic power, and calls for the reconstruction of the social order based on subsidiarity.

***Mater et Magistra*** (*Christianity and Social Progress*) 1961, St. John XXIII – Issued 70 years after ***Rerum Novarum***, this encyclical looks to the Church as the "Mother and Teacher," calling the world to salvation and better social relationships. It looks at science and technology, noting their power to improve the human condition, but also to limit human freedoms, and calling on governments to safeguard human rights. St. John XXIII expressed concerns for the growing gap between rich and poor nations, for the plight of farmers and rural areas, and for the arms race. The encyclical calls on wealthier nations to help poorer ones.

***Pacem in Terris*** (*Peace on Earth*) 1963, St. John XXIII – Issued only two months before the pope's death, this encyclical is the first to be directed to "all men of good will," instead of just to Catholics. In a response to the Cold War, the encyclical outlines necessary conditions for lasting world peace, looking at respect for human rights and disarmament. St. John XXIII calls for the development of a world authority to protect the universal common good, condemns the arms race, and supports efforts to build peace.

*Populorum Progressio* (*On the Development of Peoples*) 1967, St. Paul VI – This encyclical, which Pope Benedict XVI's new encyclical commemorates, examines the economy on a global level, and addresses the rights of workers to decent work, just wages, decent working conditions, and to form and join unions. St. Paul VI calls development the new name for peace, criticizes unjust economic structures that lead to inequality, and supports new international and social relationships.

*Laborem Exercens* (*On Human Work*) 1981, St. John Paul II – Issued to mark the 90th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, this encyclical once again emphasizes the dignity of work and the rights of workers, and the priority of labor over capital. St. John Paul II also addresses disabled workers, emigration, materialism, and the spirituality of work.

*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (*On Social Concern*) 1987, St. John Paul II – This encyclical honored *Populorum Progressio* on its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, offering solidarity as a central requirement of our faith and times. St. John Paul II critiques East-West blocs and other “structures of sin” that compromise the progress of poor nations and calls for solidarity between rich and poor nations.

*Centesimus Annus* (*The Hundredth Year*) 1991, St. John Paul II – On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, St. John Paul II reflected on the current state of issues that Leo XIII had addressed in his day. It focuses on the moral dimensions of economic life, the advantages and limitations of the market, the role of business, and the responsibilities and limitations of government.

*Evangelium Vitae* (*The Gospel of Life*) 1995, St. John Paul II – An affirmation of the gift of human life and the need to protect it, this encyclical explored many threats to human life, including the evils of abortion, euthanasia, and the use of the death penalty. It called the Church to be “a people of life and for life.”

*Deus Caritas Est* (*God is Love*) 2005, Pope Benedict XVI – Benedict's first encyclical emphasized the connections between love of God and love of neighbor. Pope Benedict XVI wrote the Church could no more neglect charity than it could Scripture or the sacraments. He located love of the poor at the center of Catholic life.

*Caritas In Veritate* (*Charity in Truth*) 2009, Pope Benedict XVI – This encyclical followed up on the themes of St. Paul VI's *Populorum Progressio*. It dealt with the ethics of contemporary economics; poverty and development; global solidarity; charity, justice, and the common good; rights and duties; and care for creation, among other topics.

*Lumen Fidei* (*Light of Faith*) 2013, Pope Francis – Pope Benedict began this encyclical before the end of his papacy, and it was meant to follow his two previous encyclicals on love and charity. Pope Francis completed the document and shared important reflections on the power the life of faith can have for us personally and for our communities.

*Laudato Si'* (*On Care for Our Common Home*) 2015, Pope Francis – This encyclical calls the Church and the world to acknowledge the moral and social dimensions of the ecological crisis. It emphasizes the beauty of nature, the effects of industrialization on the environment, and the importance of integral ecology. Francis provides a thorough analysis of human life and its three intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor, and with creation.

*Fratelli Tutti* (*On Fraternity and Social Friendship*) 2020, Pope Francis – the third encyclical from Pope Francis was already being drafted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020 but was released in midst of the worldwide health and economic crisis. The dark cloud over the world which Pope Francis alludes to includes the many inequalities which the pandemic exacerbated and accelerated. It focuses on the need for a recommitment to fraternity, solidarity, and the common good as a primary motivation in personal, economic, and political realms.