

UISG – Sisters Share Reflections on the Encyclical “FRATELLI TUTTI”

1. The encyclical is very rich and deeply challenging, calling for a new way of life, of living the Gospel in these times.
 - One aspect that touches me very much is Pope Francis’ reference to our vulnerability, which the pandemic has surely exposed.
 - His words are poignant: *Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still “illiterate” when it comes to accompanying, caring for and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies.*
 - How do we begin to embrace our vulnerability and accompany ourselves and others in this vulnerability?
 - A way is to identify with the vulnerability of others and acknowledge our shared vulnerability. Together we discern a way of recreating our human community and building a common future. In mutual accompaniment and solidarity, we will discover God’s gift of hope among us.

Reflection: Chapter 8 - Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World

2. As people of faith, diverse but with a common fundamental belief in the Transcendent One, we are entrusted with a unique service in our world:
 - To witness to God, the Transcendent One, and to transcendent truth: that we are children of God, sisters and brothers of one another. This demands new ways of living and engaging with one another and offers a prophetic and spiritual contribution greatly needed in our world today.
 - To live this truth, to undertake the journey of being and living as sisters and brothers, requires that together we defend justice and live and work for peace, giving attention to the common good and integral human development of all.

The journey, *a word used several times in this last chapter*, involves:

- **A journey of transformation** – a journey that often begins with identifying with the least, becoming painfully aware of the burdens they carry, and receiving their suffering as our own.

This requires:

- **A journey of encounter** – to meet one another, come to know one another, share joys and struggles, grow in respect of one another, appreciate difference, and value the richness of diversity, necessary to create and shape an authentic unity.

This leads us to:

- **A journey of peace** – possible between religions and among all peoples, that begins with God's way of seeing things, seeing with God's heart. With such seeing, we realize that all forms of violence are a distortion of the truth of who God is and of who we are, all beloved children of God.

Pope Francis noted that *“as religious leaders, we are called to be true ‘people of dialogue’, to cooperate in building peace not as intermediaries but as authentic mediators.”*

Each of us is called to be an advocate for peace and “an artisan of peace by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding on to it, by opening paths of dialogue and not by constructing new walls.”

In dialogue and with hearts open to the world and to all people, we find ourselves on:

- **A journey towards full communion**, a universal communion with the entire human family, where no one is abandoned, excluded, or forgotten. In this journey together, we “offer common witness to the love of God for all people by working together in the service of humanity.”

We become a sign of unity and an instrument of communion as we build bridges, break down walls, heal hearts, and sow seeds of reconciliation.

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