

welcome all situations in which we are open to the newcomer. As we work toward this goal, let us not look condescendingly upon newcomers, but see each one through the eyes of God as beautiful creations, and celebrate our differences together. Just as many different, sometimes discarded pieces are sewn together to compose a beautiful quilt, so will the combination of all our differences create a healthy culture.

Call to Action:

1. What feelings do I experience when I am the newcomer/outsider?
2. In what ways can I welcome a newcomer into my neighborhood or next door that will help her/him overcome those same feelings?
3. Would it make a difference to me if that person/family were from another culture, race or religion? Why or why not? (Be honest with yourself, now!)
4. What attitudes need changing in my family/neighborhood/community that will make someone from another country feel accepted?
5. Can I change the attitudes of others? If so, how can I accomplish this? If not, why not?



CHAPTER 5

A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

A better kind of politics seeks the common and universal good; it is politics for and with the people. In other words, it is the people's politics, practicing social charity and pursuing human dignity. It can be carried out by men and women who, with political love, integrate the economy into a popular social, cultural, and political project.

The development of a global community of fraternity based on the practice of social friendship on the part of peoples and nations requires a better kind of politics, a politics that truly serves the common good (FT 154). Such a politics is different from the populism that arises when leaders politically exploit a people's culture under an ideological banner for their own personal advantage or to continue their grip on power (FT 159). The truly "popular" thing is to provide everyone with the opportunity to nurture the seeds that God has planted in them (FT 162).

Helping the poor means allowing them to lead dignified lives through work. There is no poverty worse than that which takes away work and the dignity of work (FT 162). Charity is expressed in personal encounters, including those with a distant or forgotten brother or sister. There is a need for a greater spirit of fraternity, but also a more efficient worldwide organization to help resolve the problems plaguing the abandoned people who are suffering and dying in poor countries (FT 165).

Education and upbringing, concern for others, a well-integrated view of life, and spiritual growth: all these are essential for quality human relationships (FT 167). We need a politics that puts human dignity back at the center, and on that pillar, we can build the alternative social structures we need (FT 168).

We must promote popular movements that invigorate governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny. We

must move beyond the idea of social policies as being for the poor but never with the poor (FT 169).

There is a need for reform of the United Nations Organization, as well as of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth. Justice is an essential condition for achieving the ideal of universal fraternity (FT 173).

Politics must not be subject to the economy, nor should the economy be subject to the dictates of an efficiency-driven paradigm of technocracy (FT 177). True statecraft is manifest when, in difficult times, we uphold high principles and think of the long-term common good (FT 178).

Pope Francis calls us to a social and political order whose soul is social charity. He urges us to rehabilitate politics as one of the loftiest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good (FT 180). Such political charity is born of a social awareness that seeks the good of all people (FT 182). "Social love" makes it possible to advance towards a civilization of love, to which all of us can feel called. It is a force capable of inspiring new ways of approaching the problems of today's world, of profoundly renewing structures, social organizations and legal systems (FT 183).

Charity needs the light of truth, the light of reason, and the light of faith (FT 185). Politicians are called to tend to the needs of individuals and peoples (FT 188). Politicians are doers and builders with ambitious goals; they should possess a broad, realistic and pragmatic gaze that looks beyond their own borders (FT 188). They are called to make the sacrifices that foster encounter and to seek convergence on at least some issues (FT 190).

Politics must also make room for a tender love of others, a love that draws near and becomes real. Tenderness is a movement that proceeds from the heart; it is the path of choice for the strongest, most courageous men and women (FT 194).

Politicians should ask themselves: "How much love did I put into my work?" "What did I do for the progress of our people?" "What mark did I leave on the life of society?" "What real bonds did I create?" "What positive forces did I unleash?" "How much social peace did I sow?" "What good did I achieve in the position that was entrusted to me?" (FT 197).

REFLECTION: *NCCW Education Committee – by Diane Tugander*

Fraternity equals brotherhood, our connection to others – has no borders. We should open our ears to hear what each other says, even if we do not agree. We must love our neighbors, as Jesus taught us to do, all our neighbors at home and worldwide.

Today we are experiencing a worldwide disconnect, Politics has a big hand in how we see ourselves and others. Nations and countries of the world, who use political boundaries to keep what is theirs to themselves do not remember to live by the rule we learn as children – SHARE

what you have with others. This world and all its resources are meant for all to use and share equally. We need to step away from the *'what is mine is mine and what is yours is mine'* mentality of some of the world's leading countries.

Along with sharing we must protect the smaller and weaker among us. Today, it is not enough to give "handouts". Simply we need to remember the story taught to us, "it is not enough to give a man a fish to feed his family today, we need to teach him how to fish to sustain himself and his family for a lifetime."

Respect is also another important part of this equation. We have seen the loss of respect this past summer with all the violence, protests and marches we have witnessed. We need to come together for the common good and listen to each other in a respectful way, hear what the other side is saying and come together with a common goal which brings dignity and the spirit of brotherhood back to the center of our existence.

We need to be part of the solution that holds politicians, social organizations and legal systems to task; make sure they keep their promises to tend to the needs of their people. Get involved in local Catholic Days at your state Capitol, present your views and be respectful even if you disagree. Pope Francis suggests that Politicians ask themselves; 'What good did I do in the position that was entrusted to me' (FT197)

Call to Action:

1. Find a project to get involved with, reach out to the oppressed and marginalized in your local community.
2. Research the history and ideals of an international organization (i.e., CRS, Cross Catholic), and get more involved as an advocate for them.
3. Be a positive activist, vote and participate in your local/state days at the Capitol.



CHAPTER 6

DIALOGUE AND FRIENDSHIP IN SOCIETY

Dialogue is respectful, strives for consensus, and seeks the truth. Dialogue opens the way to a culture of encounter so that encounter becomes a passion, a desire, and a way of life. Those who dialogue recognize, befriend, and respect other persons. Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and finding common ground: all these things are summed up in the one word “dialogue” (FT 198).

A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture (FT 199).

Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns (FT 203). If society is to have a future, it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth. A society is noble and decent not least for its support of the pursuit of truth and its adherence to the most basic of truths (FT 207). Relativism always brings the risk that some alleged truth or other will be imposed by the powerful or the clever (FT 209).

In a pluralistic society, dialogue is the best way to realize what should always be affirmed and respected apart from any ephemeral consensus. There are certain enduring values that make for a robust and solid social ethics (FT 211). The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations.

This requires that they be treated differently (FT 213).

Life is the art of encounter. Pope Francis has repeatedly invited us to build a culture of encounter capable of transcending our differences and divisions. This means working to create a many-faceted polyhedron which represents a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations. This also means finding ways to include those on the peripheries of life (FT 215).

The word “culture” points to something deeply embedded within a people, its most cherished convictions and its way of life. To speak of a “culture of encounter” means that we, as a people, should be passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life. The subject of this culture is the people (FT 216).

The joy of acknowledging others implies the ability to recognize other people’s right to be themselves and to be different. A realistic and inclusive social covenant must also be a “cultural covenant”, one that respects and acknowledges the different worldviews, cultures and lifestyles that coexist in society (FT 219). A cultural covenant eschews a monolithic understanding of the identity of a particular place; it entails respect for diversity by offering opportunities for advancement and social integration to all (FT 220). Such a covenant also demands the realization that some things may have to be renounced for the common good (FT 221).

Reflection: *NCCW Education Committee - by Ellen Bachman*

In today’s globalized world, “the media can help us to feel closer to one another, creating a sense of the unity of the human family. The internet is something truly good, a gift from God.” (FT205). We need constantly to ensure that present day forms of communication are in fact guiding us to generous encounter with others, to honest pursuit of the whole truth, to service, to closeness to the underprivileged and to the promotion of the common good. As the Bishops of Australia have pointed out, we cannot accept “a digital world designed to exploit our weaknesses and bring out the worst in people”.

The internet, politics, and advertising make us wonder if what we are hearing is the truth? We have been lied to in all these medias. Who can we trust? How can we research to know what is in fact the truth? How much of this information goes against our moral values? In today’s society, the rich can push their agenda. Politicians are making laws that we may not agree with because they are against our values and don’t serve ALL the population. These are lots of questions and the answer is that it takes courage and it takes dialogue— true dialogue - listening to each other and trying to understand another point of view.

Consumerist individualism has led to great injustice. How are we treating others? We can choose to cultivate kindness. To be the light in the darkness. To lift our families, communities

and the world up to a new level. A level of love and caring. A level where we can see Christ in everyone and treat them accordingly. We must make the time to be kind... The more we practice this the more it becomes part of who we are – the Christ here on earth.

Call to Action:

1. How can I truly dialogue with those of different cultures, different beliefs?
2. The internet brings the world together. But the internet brings the evil in the world to the forefront. The human trafficking, pornography, scams, stealing people's identities are all evil consequences of the internet. What can I do to stop this evil in the world?
3. What kindness am I going to practice that will become part of who I am.



CHAPTER 7

PATHS OF RENEWED ENCOUNTER

There is a need to cure wounds and restore peace. We need boldness (FT 225) and truth. Those who were fierce enemies have to speak from the stark and clear truth (FT 226). 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 (FT 226).

Truth is an inseparable companion of justice and mercy. All three together are essential to building peace (FT 227). The path to peace does not mean making society blandly uniform; rather, it means getting people to work together, side-by-side, in pursuing goals that benefit everyone. The problems that a society is experiencing need to be clearly identified, so that different ways of understanding and resolving them can be found. We should never define others by what they may have said or done in the past; we should value them for the promise that they embody, a promise that always brings with it a spark of new hope (FT 228).

True reconciliation is achieved proactively (FT 229). Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone (FT 230).

There is no end to the building of a country's social peace; rather, it is an open-ended endeavour, a never-ending task that demands the commitment of everyone (FT 232). Those who work for a tranquil social coexistence should never forget that inequality and lack of integral human development make peace impossible. If we have to begin anew, it must always be from the least of our brothers and sisters (FT 235).

There are those who prefer not to talk of reconciliation, for they think that conflict, violence and breakdown are part of the normal functioning of a society (FT 236). But forgiveness and reconciliation are central themes in Christianity and, in various ways, in other religions as well (FT 237). Jesus never promoted violence or intolerance. He openly condemned the use of force to gain power over others (FT 238). Calling for forgiveness does not mean renouncing our own rights when confronting corrupt officials, criminals, or others who would debase our dignity (FT 241). It is no easy task to overcome the bitter legacy of injustices, hostility and mistrust left by conflict. It can be done only by overcoming evil with good (FT 243).

Authentic reconciliation does not flee from conflict, but is achieved in conflict, resolving it through dialogue and open, honest and patient negotiation (FT 244). Those who have endured much unjust and cruel suffering should not be asked to offer a sort of "social forgiveness" (FT 246). Forgetting is never the answer (FT 246), for we can never move forward without remembering the past (FT 249).

Those who truly forgive do not forget, but they choose not to yield to the same destructive force that caused them so much suffering. This does not mean impunity; justice is properly sought solely out of love of justice itself and out of respect for the victims, as a means of preventing new crimes and protecting the common good (FT 252). War is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment. If we want true integral human development for all, we must work tirelessly to avoid war between nations and peoples (FT 257). We can no longer think of war as a solution; it is very difficult to invoke the rational criteria elaborated in earlier centuries to speak of the possibility of a “just war”. Never again war! (FT 258).

The goal of ultimately eliminating all nuclear weapons becomes both a challenge and a moral and humanitarian imperative (FT 262). The death penalty is inadequate from a moral standpoint and no longer necessary from the standpoint of penal justice. It is simply inadmissible. The Church is firmly committed to calling for its abolition worldwide (263). A life sentence is a secret death penalty (FT 268).

Reflection: *NCCW Education Committee - by Beth Mahoney*

Truth, justice and mercy are all related to the path of renewed encounter. Pope Francis is placing before us a challenge to heal the wounds of society and restore peace within our world. In order to achieve this, we need to develop a boldness and truthfulness with our family members, friends, coworkers and basically any one with whom we come in contact with throughout life. Our ability to truly enter into a state of reconciliation takes humility, honesty and prayer. One cannot simply say I’m sorry or ask for forgiveness when within their heart they still hold resentments and hostility toward the individual or the circumstance.

In Fratelli Tutti, Pope Francis wrote: True reconciliation is achieved proactively (FT 229). Working to overcome our divisions without losing our identity as individuals presumes that a basic sense of belonging is present in everyone (FT 230). Reconciliation is at the heart of forgiveness. One needs to learn how to forgive someone authentically in order to experience the true presence of reconciliation. When this is not competed, it places the individual in a need to receive God’s grace.

As we live reconciliation, forgiveness is at the heart of Christianity and is also part of many other religions as well. When Jesus walked the earth, he never promoted violence or intolerance. As one of his followers reached for his sword to lance the ear of one of the soldiers, Jesus immediately addressed this action and healed the ear of the soldier. We are called to give witness to this action not to enter into violent reactions with others. As individuals we are called to seek forgiveness and to live reconciliation with others. Only when we can achieve this act of forgiveness will we begin to truly walk the path of renewed encounters within the world.

Call to Action:

1. How do you de-escalate situations that are brought to your attention?
2. How do you handle a difficult situation that calls you to forgive someone who had wronged you?
3. Share a time when you needed to ask for forgiveness?



CHAPTER 8

RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF FRATERNITY IN OUR WORLD

Because of their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, the different religions contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue among religions seeks to establish friendship, peace, and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love (FT 271).

We all share an ultimate foundation: openness to the Father of all. Only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality of all human beings and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity (FT 272).

As visible images of the invisible God, human persons possess a transcendent dignity; they are therefore by their very nature the subjects of rights that no one may violate (FT 273). Our witnessing to God benefits our societies. The effort to seek God with a sincere heart helps us recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters (FT 274).

The Church, while respecting the autonomy of political life, does not remain on the sidelines in the building of a better world, nor does it fail to reawaken the spiritual energy that can contribute to the betterment of society. It is true that religious ministers must not engage in the party politics that are the proper domain of the laity, but neither can they renounce the political dimension of life itself, which involves a constant attention to the common good and a concern for integral human development (FT 276).

Christian identity

The Church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. Yet we Christians are very much aware that if the music of the Gospel ceases to resonate in our very being, we will lose the joy born of compassion, the tender love born of trust, and the capacity for reconciliation that has its source in our knowledge that we have been forgiven and sent forth. For us, the wellspring of human dignity and fraternity is in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. From that source there arises, for Christian thought and for the action of the Church, the primacy given to relationship, to the encounter with the sacred mystery of the other, and to universal communion with the entire human family, as a vocation of all (FT 277).

Called to take root in every place, the Church has been present for centuries throughout the world, for that is what it means to be “catholic”. The Church can thus understand, from her own experience of grace and sin, the beauty of the invitation to universal love. Indeed, all things human are our concern. Wherever the councils of nations come together to establish the rights and duties of men and women, we are honored to be permitted to take our place among them. For many Christians, this journey of fraternity also has a Mother, whose name is Mary. Having received this universal motherhood at the foot of the cross, she cares not only for Jesus but also for “the rest of her children”. In the power of the risen Lord, she wants to give birth to a new world, a world where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, and where justice and peace are resplendent (FT 278).

We Christians ask that we be guaranteed freedom in those countries where we are a minority, even as we ourselves promote that freedom for non-Christians in places where they are a minority. Since the important things we share are so many, it is possible to find a means of

serene, ordered and peaceful coexistence, accepting our differences and rejoicing because, as children of the one God, we are all brothers and sisters (FT 279).

We ask God to strengthen unity within the Church, a unity enriched by differences reconciled by the working of the Spirit. Hearing his call, we recognize with sorrow that the process of globalization still lacks the prophetic and spiritual contribution of unity among Christians (FT 280).

A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things, because "God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart" (FT 281).

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 (FT 282).

Sincere and humble worship of God bears fruit not in discrimination, hatred and violence, but in respect for the sacredness of life, in respect for the dignity and freedom of others, and in loving commitment to the welfare of all. Religious convictions about the sacred meaning of human life permit us to recognize the fundamental values of our common humanity, values in the name of which we can and must cooperate, build and dialogue, pardon and grow; this will allow different voices to unite in creating a melody of sublime nobility and beauty, instead of fanatical cries of hatred (FT 283).

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 one of us is called to be an artisan of peace, by uniting and not dividing, by extinguishing hatred and not holding onto it, by opening paths of dialogue and not constructing new walls (FT 284).

Reflection: NCCW Education Committee - by Coreen Glenn

In the concluding chapter of his encyclical, Pope Francis summarizes what can create true fraternity, brotherhood, unity, and a common goal for the world. After reading *Fratelli Tutti*, we find it's not politics. Not ethnicity. Not custom. Not financial status. All these are found outside of us and tend to divide, separate, and make different. So, what DO we have in common? When we have a cut, we all bleed red, no matter what color our skin. That is something that reminds us we are all creations of God, siblings in spite of outside influences. Another commonality is a "God Space" in our inner being that must be filled in order to find peace, serenity and that vertical relationship with God. Some try to fill it with wealth. Others try pleasure. Still others try power or addiction. But they all fail. However, once we find and accept the true Higher Power with which to fill the "God Space" and create a relationship with God, we have found faith! Only then can we experience being truly loved.

Next comes an overwhelming need to find how best to serve God in order to return the love He so freely gives. We call that expression religion! We must have the vertical (God) relationship before the horizontal (to others) can be effective. This prompts us to set off on another search because all religions contain something that is true and holy. We just have to find the one with ALL the treasure! Creating true brotherhood relies upon each of us, as well as our pastors, dialoguing with other religions to achieve that brotherhood for "the common good and a concern for integral human development." (FT 276) Because "as visible images of the invisible God, human persons possess a transcendent dignity: they are therefore, by their very nature, the subjects of rights that no one may violate." (FT 273)

When religions come together to dialogue, they should try to define what they have in common in order to build true brotherhood, leading us to becoming traveling companions on the pilgrimage of life. In so doing, we must employ our intellect and free will. Intellect (reason) is the mental activity of knowing. But it, alone, cannot lead to brotherhood. Choosing is an activity of our free will. If we as individuals and pastors can choose to dialogue with other religions, it will result, says Pope Francis, in a perfect world. In this manner we can take up the challenge (we can choose), to arrive at truth, fraternity, acceptance, and a common goal for everyone who inhabits the globe.

On one hand, we also realize we do not live in a perfect world. But, on the other hand, as Christian Catholics we must shoulder the mission to lead all peoples to fill the "God Space" in their heart and fulfill the commission to bring all souls to Christ.

Call to Action:

1. Do you know someone who tries to fill their "God Space" with something else? If so, with what do they attempt to fill it?
2. How have you attempted to fill your "God Space?"
3. How can you, in your state of life, help others to fill their "God Space?"
4. What must you do in order to bring about dialogue with another denomination?

AN APPEAL

God, the Almighty, has no need to be defended by anyone and does not want his name to be used to terrorize people. For this reason, I would like to reiterate here the appeal for peace, justice and fraternity that we made together:

In the name of God, who has created all human beings equal in rights, duties and dignity, and who has called them to live together as brothers and sisters, to fill the earth and make known the values of goodness, love and peace;

In the name of innocent human life that God has forbidden to kill, affirming that whoever kills a person is like one who kills the whole of humanity, and that whoever saves a person is like one who saves the whole of humanity;

In the name of the poor, the destitute, the marginalized and those most in need, whom God has commanded us to help as a duty required of all persons, especially the wealthy and those of means;

In the name of orphans, widows, refugees and those exiled from their homes and their countries; in the name of all victims of wars, persecution and injustice; in the name of the weak, those who live in fear, prisoners of war and those tortured in any part of the world, without distinction;

In the name of peoples who have lost their security, peace and the possibility of living together, becoming victims of destruction, calamity and war; In the name of human fraternity, that embraces all human beings, unites them and renders them equal;

In the name of this fraternity torn apart by policies of extremism and division, by systems of unrestrained profit or by hateful ideological tendencies that manipulate the actions and the futures of men and women;

In the name of freedom, that God has given to all human beings, creating them free and setting them apart by this gift;

In the name of justice and mercy, the foundations of prosperity and the cornerstone of faith;

In the name of all persons of goodwill present in every part of the world;

In the name of God and of everything stated thus far, we declare the adoption of a culture of dialogue as the path; mutual cooperation as the code of conduct; reciprocal understanding as the method and standard (FT 285).

Charles de Foucauld directed his ideal of total surrender to God towards an identification with the poor, abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In that setting, he expressed his desire to feel himself a brother to every human being, and he asked a friend to “pray to God that I truly be the brother of all”. He wanted to be, in the end, “the universal brother”. Yet only by identifying with the least did he come at last to be the brother of all. May God inspire that dream in each one of us. Amen (FT 287).