



Most Rev Anthony Randazzo
Bishop of Broken Bay

Message for BBNeighbourhoods
6 October 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Last Sunday at the tomb of Saint Francis of Assisi, our Holy Father Francis signed the third encyclical of his pontificate. It is called "[Fratelli tutti](#)" and in the letter Pope Francis takes up the theme of fraternity and social friendship.

"Fratelli tutti" is a literal quotation from Saint Francis of Assisi, who, as the Pope immediately explains: "...addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavour of the Gospel." (FT 1)

I think that what will be important for us as the community of the Church of Broken Bay, is to reflect prayerfully, not just on the thoughts and words of the encyclical, but also upon our own circumstances in the Diocese and in the society in which we live.

In Chapter One, there is an obvious reference to *shadows over the closed world* which are spreading and leaving people injured by the roadside, cast out, and discarded. These shadows plunge people into confusion, loneliness, and desolation. Dare I say that these shadows existed before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Within the Church there is at times division, animosity, and antagonism amongst members who call themselves brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. I have people from within our community who write to me selectively quoting bits and pieces of Church teaching to support their viewpoint or the ideology that they desire to promote. I am glad that people are reading the teachings of the Church, however, I would be even more grateful if people read them with an open mind and heart, with the desire to engage in fruitful and respectful dialogue, and within the context in which they were written. I suppose that this is an ongoing discipline that each one of us might need to attend to, in a spirit of fraternity and social friendship. If we are able to love one another, how much more effect will our witness to the Gospel be to the world?

Pope Francis reminds us that knowing how to dialogue is the way to open the world and build social friendship (cf FT Chapter Six) which manifests an open heart and provides the basis for better politics. Dialogue gives rise to the culture of encounter, which becomes a passionate way of life. People who dialogue are generous, recognising, and respectful of others. Time and time again in the Gospels, Jesus engages people through dialogue. Dialogue is animated by love and requires active listening as well as speaking.

The Holy Father offers us an opportunity for growth, as individuals and as a community of faith. He recalls that encounter is not enough. We have to face the reality of the injuries of past mis-encounters, and so we have to establish and walk paths of re-encounter (cf FT Chapter Seven). Wounds need healing. As individuals and as a community we need both to seek and to offer forgiveness (cf [Luke 15:11-32](#)). The Pope urges us to be daring and to start from the truth, which is the inseparable companion of justice and mercy.

A final thought is the reminder that for us Christians, the source of human dignity and fraternity is the Good News of Jesus Christ. Our inspiration to be faithful, active, and committed is always the joy of the Gospel. Pope Francis invites us to make our own the world's desire for fraternity, beginning with the recognition that we are all brothers and sisters – *Fratelli tutti*.

Peace be with you,

+Anthony