



REMAIN

In My Love

John 15:9

As we approach Pentecost and the conclusion of Easter time, the Gospel readings continue to draw from Jesus' words to his disciples during the last meal he shared with them.

It is clear that the love of God that Jesus experienced is what he wants for his disciples. We share in that same mission, to make the joy of God's love known to others.

FRATELLI TUTTI - FRATERNITY & SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP

Pope Francis released this encyclical in October last year. In many ways it holds all of the major movements of his pontificate, as a dream for the whole world.

Love also impels us towards universal communion.

No one can mature or find fulfilment by withdrawing from others. By its very nature, love calls for growth in openness and the ability to accept others as part of a continuing adventure that makes every periphery converge in a greater sense of mutual belonging. n 95

The writing of this encyclical was completed during the outbreak of Covid 19 across the world. Pope Francis notes that the pandemic highlighted the inability of countries to work together for the common good. The impact on the poor and most vulnerable people around the world are those who have greatly suffered and continue to do so. He remarks that 'anyone who thinks that the only lesson to be learned was the need to improve what we were

already doing, is denying reality.' n 7

Pope Francis invites us to dream together as the one global human family about how we can work together to bring about respect for the dignity of all people; the ability to work together in solidarity for the common good.

Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travellers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all. n 8

THE HEART OF FRATELLI TUTTI

Chapter 2, is a wonderful reflection on Luke's parable of the Good Samaritan. (Lk 10:25-37). This is the lens through which Pope Francis goes on to view the complexities of international politics, nationalism and populism, global economics and many other issues of this time that oppress the poor and rob people of their dignity.

Pope Francis writes:

All of us have in ourselves something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by, and something of the Good Samaritan. n 69

We are challenged with the questions: *Which of these persons do you identify with? Which of these characters do you resemble?* n 64

TURNING TO ONE ANOTHER

Margaret Wheatley is a well known author and facilitator, particularly in educational circles. She works globally, including in places of great poverty and deprivation. After writing on Leadership for many years, in 1999 she wrote a rather different style of book which named many of the things that Pope Francis has observed now need urgent attention. This book was simply called *Turning to One Another, Simple Conversations to Restore Hope in the World*.

One of her observations: 'We have never wanted to be alone. But today, we are alone. We are more fragmented and isolated from one another than ever before. Archbishop Desmond Tutu describes it as "a radical brokenness in all of existence." We move at frantic speed, spinning out into greater isolation. We seek consolation in everything except each other. The entire world seems hypnotised in the wrong direction - encouraging us to love things rather than people, to embrace everything new without noticing what's lost or wrong, to choose fear instead of peace. We promise ourselves everything except each other.' P 4

The following are some further thoughts from Margaret Wheatley that echo some of Pope Francis' thoughts written twenty years after *Turning to One Another*.

As humans, we often contradict ourselves – we say one thing and do another. We state who we are, but then act contrary to that. We say we're open-minded, but then, but then judge someone for their appearance. We say we're a team, but then gossip about a colleague. If we want to change our behaviour, we need to notice our actions, and see if we can uncover the belief that led to that response. What caused me to behave that way and not some other way?

Paulo Freire, a Brazilian and world educator who used education to support poor people in transforming their lives, said that we "cannot be truly human apart from communication ... to impede communication is to reduce people to the status of things."

Freire had a deep faith in every person's ability to be a clear thinker, and a courageous actor. Sometimes, it takes faith to believe that others have as much concern and skill as we do.

Paulo Freire believed in people. Many times he stated that we have "a vocation to be fully human" He demonstrated

that when poor and illiterate people learned to think, they could understand what was causing their poverty. Once they understood this, they then acted powerfully to change their world. His approach to education has been called a "pedagogy of love".

When we work for the common good, we experience each other in new ways. We don't worry about differences, or status, or traditional power relationships. We worry about whether we'll succeed in accomplishing what needs to be done. We learn the necessity of good communication.

I think of a gesture of love as anything we do that helps others discover their humanity. Any act where we turn to one another. Open our hearts, Extend ourselves. Listen. Any time we're patient. Curious. Quiet. Engaged.

BACK TO POPE FRANCIS

In his book *Let Us Dream*, Pope Francis writes about being stuck in a labyrinth either as individuals or as he states, the world is in a labyrinth right now.

'You come out of a labyrinth only in two ways; either by going up, decentering and transcending, or by

being led out by Ariadne's thread. Ariadne's gift of a thread to lead us out is the Spirit calling us out of ourselves - "the twitch upon the thread" of which G K Chesterton spoke of in his Father Brown stories.'

Pope Francis asks 'We might wonder: And now what must I do? What could be my place in this future, and what can I do to make it possible? His advice is to:

Create a space inside yourself to listen.
Open yourself ... decentre ... transcend.
And then act ... offer your service.

pp 135, 136, 137

I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope "speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning. Hope speaks to us of a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfillment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice and love... 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". Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope. *Frattelli tutti* 55

