

Contemplating Justice: We Are One Body

Examen

(Inspired by Pope Francis' Fratelli Tutti)

Written by Catherine Heinhold and Rebecca Hoesterey

Introduction

After the completion of our first Contemplating Justice prayer series, which was focused on racial justice, we felt a strong desire to continue with another prayer series using Ignatian forms of prayer. We asked for feedback, and there was interest in the theme of unity -- in our relationships with others and especially in our society. In this series, we will continue to use Ignatian forms of prayer and turn to the inspiration of Pope Francis's encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, as a way to discern the invitation from God to our true identity as a single human family.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "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sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia. What reigns instead is a cool, comfortable and globalized indifference, born of deep disillusionment concealed behind a deceptive illusion: thinking that we are all-powerful, while failing to realize that we are all in the same boat.... Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter. Isolation, no; closeness, yes. Culture clash, no; culture of encounter, yes" (#30)."

In this Examen, we will reflect on our lives, asking God to show us the ways in which we are growing in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in the human family, as well as the ways in which we are moving away from or denying that solidarity.

Examen Prayer

1. Ask the Spirit for wisdom and help: *"Lord, open my eyes and my heart and shine a light on my life and my approach to fraternal love and solidarity."*

2. Thank God: *For all gifts of your life: (list what you are thankful for). Thank God especially for all the ways that love is manifested in your life – in the ways that you show love and the ways that you receive love.*

3. Now we'll take a few moments to look back over our lives, open to seeing the ways in which the call to or denying of solidarity has played a part. Before we begin, ask God to show you what God would like you to see. Let your memory take over and ask God to guide you as you look back on your personal life, and also your experience of recent events in the world and especially in our country. I'll be silent for a moment, and then offer some prompts that may be helpful to you:

- Reflecting on Pope Francis' call for a culture of encounter, I ask God to show me the ways in which I have responded to that call in my life. Times when I have met those who are different from me, either in person, in the news, or on social media -- someone who is richer or poorer than I am, someone who is a different race,

someone from another country, someone who is a different religion, someone who has different abilities than I do, someone who has different ideas than mine.

- What feelings usually arise in me when I meet someone who is different?

 - How have I responded to those feelings?

 - Do my feelings and responses vary based on the type of difference I encounter?
- Focusing on one experience where an encounter with someone different led to a deeper appreciation of God's love in the world or a deeper sense of solidarity, give thanks to God.

 - Reflecting on an experience where an encounter with someone different -- whether in person, in the news of the day, or on social media -- led me to a feeling of disconnection with the humanity of the person, and ask God for forgiveness and healing.
4. Has this experience of reflection led you to hear any invitations from God?
- Ask God for whatever you might need to respond to that invitation.

Close with your favorite prayer.