

Contemplating Justice: We Are One Body

Meditation: Fratelli Tutti

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Introduction

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis writes, "In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading... 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 the Ignatian tradition, meditation is: "a reflective process by which we enter the richness of God's word and hear that word as spoken to us personally today" [*Timothy Gallagher, OMV in Meditation and Contemplation: An Ignatian Guide to Praying with Scripture*]. We hear the written text, and we ponder it. We notice any words, images, or ideas that speak to our hearts. We stay with those words, images, or ideas and pay attention to any feelings, memories, or thoughts that arise in us. We then speak to God about it.

This evening, the text we will use for our prayer is an excerpt from *Fratelli Tutti*. Read the passage through slowly twice. The first time, just to get a sense of what is being said. The second time pay attention to any words, phrases, images, or ideas that seem to speak to your heart. Once something catches you, you might close your eyes and stay with that word, phrase, image, or idea and ponder its meaning. Notice how it makes you feel. Let the Holy Spirit guide your thinking, imagining, remembering. Savor the experience, and talk to God about it. After you've done this for a time, you might consider some of the questions posed under the scripture passage.

If you are distracted, either by sounds around you or by your own thoughts, we invite you to very gently bring yourself back to prayer.

Begin by choosing a position that is comfortable, where you can be both relaxed and alert.

- You may want to close or lower your eyes.
- Become aware of your breathing as it goes in and out.
- Take a few deeper breaths, breathing out any preoccupations into God's hands.
- Become aware of God's presence, here and now, God looking at you with love.

Ask for a grace: "Lord, give me the joy to acknowledge and encounter people who are different from me."

Text from *Fratelli Tutti*

215. "Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter".[204] ...

216...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...

217. Social peace demands hard work, craftsmanship. It would be easier to keep freedoms and differences in check with cleverness and a few resources. But such a peace would be superficial and fragile, not the fruit of a culture of encounter that brings enduring stability. Integrating differences is a much more difficult and slow process, yet it is the guarantee of a genuine and lasting peace. That peace is not achieved by recourse only to those who are pure and untainted... Nor does it come from ignoring social demands or quelling disturbances... What is important is to create processes of encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences. Let us arm our children with the weapons of dialogue! Let us teach them to fight the good fight of the culture of encounter!

218. All this calls for the ability to recognize other people's right to be themselves and to be different. This recognition, as it becomes a culture, makes possible the creation of a social covenant. Without it, subtle ways can be found to make others insignificant, irrelevant, of no value to society. While rejecting certain visible forms of violence, another more insidious kind of violence can take root: the violence of those who despise people who are different, especially when their demands in any way compromise their own particular interests.

Guided Meditation

Is there anyone you have ever felt you have nothing to learn from?

Are you enthusiastic about encountering those who are different from you, including those who think differently than you do? Do you sometimes, instead, feel threatened by difference?

What challenges do you face when you try to accept those who are different from you?

Take a few moments to talk with God or with Jesus or Mary about all of these things. Ask for any help you need.

And when you are ready, close with your favorite prayer.

Review of Prayer

St. Ignatius recommends this practice to help us see how God is moving in us. I have put some suggested questions in the chat, but I am only going to give you three minutes, so please do not try to answer all of them. You may also finish the review after we close. Some questions to assist with your review [*Paste into chat, do not read aloud*]

What happened in your prayer?

What feelings did you experience?

During prayer, when did you feel encouraged?

When did you feel discouraged?

Did you receive the grace you asked for?

What did you receive?