

A large, thick, pink wavy line curves across the top of the page. Below it, a faint pink silhouette of a person with arms raised is visible.

The mystique of “living together”



Thursday, November 4, 2021

- **Seeking forms of social friendship** (groups 1 and 3)

Recognizing that all people are our brothers and sisters, and **seeking forms of social friendship** that include everyone, is not merely utopian. It demands a decisive commitment to devising effective means to this end. Any effort along these lines becomes a noble exercise of charity. For whereas individuals can help others in need, when they join together in initiating social processes of fraternity and justice for all, they enter the “field of charity at its most vast, namely political charity.” This entails working for a social and political order whose soul is social charity. Once more, I appeal for a renewed appreciation of politics as “a lofty vocation and one of the highest forms of charity, inasmuch as it seeks the common good” (*Fratelli tutti*, 180).

- **Contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity** (groups 2 and 4)

It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can **contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity**. Fraternity between all men and women. “Here we have a splendid secret that shows us how to dream and to turn our life into a wonderful adventure. No one can face life in isolation... We need a community that supports and helps us, in which we can help one another to keep looking ahead. How important it is to dream together... By ourselves, we risk seeing mirages, things that are not there. Dreams, on the other hand, are built together.” Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers 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 (*Fratelli tutti*, 8).

- **The growth of a culture of encounter** (groups 5,7 and 11)

“Life, for all its confrontations, is the art of encounter.” I have frequently called for **the growth of a culture of encounter**, capable of transcending our differences and divisions. This means working to create a many-faceted polyhedron whose different sides form a variegated unity, in which “the whole is greater than the part”. The image of a polyhedron can represent a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations. Each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable. This also means finding ways to include those on the peripheries of life. For they have another way of looking at things; they see aspects of reality that are invisible to the centers of power where weighty decisions are made (*Fratelli tutti*, 215).

- **Choose to cultivate kindness** (groups 6, 8 and 12)

Consumerist individualism has led to great injustice. Other persons come to be viewed simply as obstacles to our own serene existence; we end up treating them as annoyances and we become increasingly aggressive. This is even more the case in times of crisis, catastrophe and hardship, when we are tempted to think in terms of the old saying, “every man for himself.” Yet even then, we can **choose to cultivate kindness**. Those who do so become stars shining in the midst of darkness (*Fratelli tutti*, 222).

- **Ability to recognize other people** (groups 9 and 10)

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 (*Fratelli tutti*, 218).