



Christmas Message 2020
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The following is a translation of the original French.

In this Christmas of 2020, when the concerns of our human family are so deep and numerous, Pope Francis gives us the wonderful gift of his encyclical "Fratelli Tutti". It is in the light of his teaching that we, all members of Pax Christi International, want to welcome the mystery of the Incarnate Word. At the heart of the encyclical's message is the insistence that the dignity of every human person is sacred. The Word of God who came into our world in the person of the poor child of Bethlehem overturns all hierarchies, all systems of power and domination, putting in the first place the least to whom all, the shepherds and the Magi, come to pay homage.

Fratelli Tutti invites us to meditate on the dignity of every person and the fraternity that must unite people among themselves at all levels of relationships in our lives. It is therefore necessary for us to uncover all forms of violence lurking in our hearts, in our families, in our human groups, in our national, international or religious bodies. From indifference to fear, from economic violence to racism, from the confiscation of wealth to the rejection of the stranger, we must actively reject violence and discover what Love between people is, a love that has nothing to do with the coexistence of individualism, nor with the illusion of freedom offered by the abuse of social networks. We need to promote a "culture of encounter" that goes beyond the dialectics that confront each other and integrates all the peripheries, the poor and the weak. May each encounter offer us the precious "miracle of a kind person" (§ 24) which, if multiplied, acts like "stars in the darkness of a closed world.

We contemplate the incarnation of love in the life and passion of Jesus. It is woven in freedom; the freedom of his offering to the Father; it is woven in truth, the truth of his Word to those who question him; it is woven in love and forgiveness for those who persecute him; it confides in us in the refusal to use force despite injustice and lies.

In Fratelli Tutti's encyclical the radical truth and the demands of the Gospel are delivered to us. The revolution that Christ brought about by establishing the necessity of charity and by inviting his disciples to love as he loved us is revealed to us. Our world needs the strength of the Gospel and the love that Christ taught us, while some groups openly advocate violence as a way of

action to bring about a supposedly better world. "I give you a new commandment to love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John 13:34-35). "As I have loved you": this is the only Christian source for knowing what love is, a source that first unfolded, luminous, in the night of Bethlehem.

Pope Francis recalls those who for him embodied this revelation, at the time he was writing this text of reflection on universal fellowship: not only St. Francis of Assisi, but also non-Catholic figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, father of nonviolent protest, but also Martin Luther King, activist for the Black American civil rights movement, and Desmond Tutu, Anglican Archbishop of South Africa, Nobel Peace Prize winner for his theology of reconciliation (§ 286).

He reserves a very special place for Blessed Charles de Foucauld (§ 287) "he directed the desire for the total gift of his person to God towards identification with the last, the abandoned in the depths of the African desert. In the end, he wanted to be "the universal brother." But it was only by identifying with the last that he managed to become the brother of all.

Together with Pope Francis our Christmas wish and prayer is "May God inspire this dream in each one of us".