

Prayer Resource



Fratelli Tutti



How to use the Mercy Partners Prayer Resource



About this Prayer Resource

This Prayer Resource contains nine prayers focused on Pope Francis' encyclical – *Fratelli Tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship). Each prayer examines a specific chapter of the encyclical:

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| 1. Introduction to <i>Fratelli Tutti</i> | 6. A better kind of politics |
| 2. Dark clouds over a closed world | 7. Dialogue and friendship in society |
| 3. A stranger on the road | 8. Paths of renewed encounter |
| 4. Envisaging and engendering an open world | 9. Religions at the service of our world |
| 5. A heart open to the whole world | 10. Final words |

For ease of use, the prayer resource is presented in a folder which contains 10 copies of each of the prayers, an acknowledgement of country and this how to use the resource card.

The prayer cards contain an overview of *Fratelli Tutti*, a reflection on the theme, a follow up discussion question and a prayer (references are included for all sources).

Prayer is essential at the commencement of meetings in a Catholic ministry for focus, to reinforce Catholic identity and to call God's blessings on the proceedings. Prayer time is also formative as it allows those present to examine aspects of life, faith and experience.

INTRODUCTION TO FRATELLI TUTTI

Fratelli Tutti (Brothers [and Sisters] All) is Pope Francis' third encyclical – after *Lumen Fidei* (Light of Faith) 2013 and *Laudato Si* (On Care of our Common Home) 2015. An encyclical is a letter written by a pope and addressed to the whole Church. Pope Francis, however, has addressed his encyclicals to: 'all people on the planet' in *Laudato Si* and 'all people of good will' in *Fratelli Tutti*.

Pope Francis states that this encyclical is ... *a contribution to continued reflection in the hope that in the face of present-day attempts to eliminate or ignore others we may prove capable of responding with a new vision of fraternity and social friendship that will not remain at the level of words* (#6). *Fratelli Tutti* honours the efforts of St Francis of Assisi to create a world where everyone and everything is nurtured and treated with compassion.

Peta Goldberg rsm situates *Fratelli Tutti* in a trilogy of papal teaching ... *made up of his Apostolic Exhortation Evangelii Gaudium* (Joy of the Gospel) *which focuses on repairing the Church; Laudato Si, which explores how to repair the planet and Fratelli Tutti which focuses on building a culture of peace and dialogue ... repairing our human family* (February 2022. La Salle Academy Publications. 3).

Pope Francis names and begins this encyclical with the words of St Francis – *Fratelli Tutti* - and once again situates this encyclical, like *Laudato si'*, within the Gospel consciousness of *this saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy...* (#2)

Pope Francis focuses particularly on the following aspects of St Francis' life:

- his work with those who were outcasts from society
- his love for every aspect of the natural world
- his inclusivity evidenced in his time with Sultan Malik-el-Kamil in Egypt
- his counter-cultural approach – in a world of brutal wars St Francis walked a path of peace.

This encyclical was written during the COVID pandemic and Pope Francis uses this global crisis to call for us all to work together, noting that *...for all our hyper-connectivity, we witnessed a fragmentation that made it more difficult to resolve problems that affect us all ...* (#7). As Goldberg rsm notes: *In developing the idea of universal love, Francis introduces the term 'social friendship' (#99) which he says contributes to making possible universal openness* (February 2022. La Salle Academy Publications. 4).

How
can your
ministry
contribute to
Pope Francis'
call for social
friendship?

May we be
challenged and inspired
by the social teaching of the
Church to build communities of
inclusion and respect that enrich
social friendship.

May we practise radical hospitality and
ensure we welcome everyone.

May we work tirelessly for a
peaceful world which upholds
the dignity of all.

Amen

Wherever he went, St Francis sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters (#2)

DARK CLOUDS OVER A CLOSED WORLD

In the first chapter of *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis takes a look at the current state of the world and outlines those factors which work against social friendship and human flourishing. These range from politics to human rights abuses; from aggressive nationalism to digital mass communication. He concludes the chapter, however, with the importance of hope, asserting that God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family. The experience of a world pandemic has reinforced this goodness with ... *ordinary people valiantly shaping the decisive events of our shared history: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, storekeepers and supermarket workers, cleaning personnel, caretakers, transport workers, men and women working to provide essential services and public safety, volunteers, priests and religious...* (#54).

Hope 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 ... (#55).

In *Fratelli Tutti* Pope Francis outlines some of the factors which have created division and fragmentation in our human communities. These include:

- globalisation resulting in the exploitation of vulnerable peoples, disregard for the common good and the growth in power of multi-national corporations
- the spread of despair and discouragement – the use of extremism and polarisation as political tools
- loss of respect for the human person – the treatment of the elderly, racism, exploitation of workers
- human rights which are not equal – the treatment of women, the existence of slavery, human trafficking and organ farming
- attitudes to war and persecution including building walls, the rise of para-military groups, the arms industry and persecution of minorities
- moral deterioration and the weakening of spiritual values, silence about the inequitable distribution of resources and the death of millions through famine
- pandemics and other calamities which show that we need to rethink the way we live
- the impact of digital mass communication and loss of privacy, campaigns of hatred, social aggression and negative ideologies.

**Examine
the list of dark
clouds outlined by
Pope Francis: how
do these trends
impact on your
ministry?**

**Grant us God
of the Journey**

**the courage to confront those
things that bring division, hurt and
disharmony to our human family.**

**Embolden us to walk with determination
on paths of hope; healing the scars
of loneliness, isolation and
post-pandemic trauma.**

**Open our minds to the possibilities which
lie within us to be builders of social
friendship and community.**

**May we become seed for the sowing
of your Kingdom of justice,
mercy, compassion and love.**

Amen

*...goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity,
are not achieved once and for all, they have to be realised each day (#11)*

A STRANGER ON THE ROAD

In this chapter, Pope Francis uses the parable of the Good Samaritan to reflect further on the question of social cohesion.

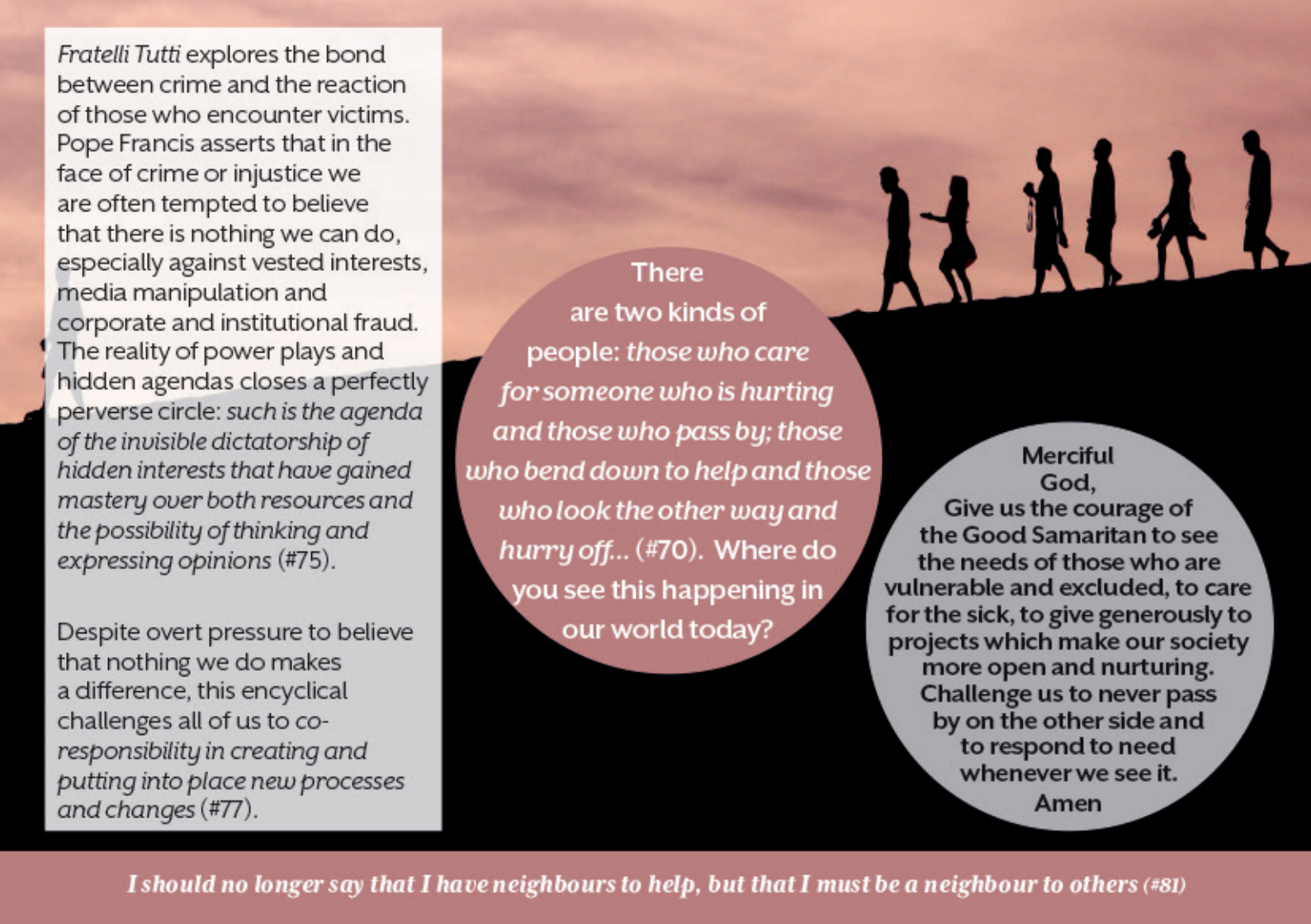
The Parable of the Good Samaritan was used by Jesus to answer the question, 'Who is my neighbour?' As Pope Francis notes: *Jesus asks us to be present to those in need, regardless of whether or not they belong to our social group. In this case, the Samaritan became a neighbour to the wounded Judean. By approaching and making himself present, he crossed all cultural and historical barriers (#81).*

Pope Francis invites readers into the story. He challenges all of us to:

- *acknowledge that we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak (#64)*
- *imitate the Good Samaritan ... identify with the vulnerability of others ... reject the creation of a society of exclusion (#67)*
- *recognise ourselves in something of the wounded man, something of the robber, something of the passers-by and something of the Good Samaritan (#69)*
- *embrace the call to be builders of a new social bond (#66).*

Fratelli Tutti explores the bond between crime and the reaction of those who encounter victims. Pope Francis asserts that in the face of crime or injustice we are often tempted to believe that there is nothing we can do, especially against vested interests, media manipulation and corporate and institutional fraud. The reality of power plays and hidden agendas closes a perfectly perverse circle: *such is the agenda of the invisible dictatorship of hidden interests that have gained mastery over both resources and the possibility of thinking and expressing opinions* (#75).

Despite overt pressure to believe that nothing we do makes a difference, this encyclical challenges all of us to *co-responsibility in creating and putting into place new processes and changes* (#77).




There are two kinds of people: *those who care for someone who is hurting and those who pass by; those who bend down to help and those who look the other way and hurry off...* (#70). Where do you see this happening in our world today?

Merciful God,
Give us the courage of the Good Samaritan to see the needs of those who are vulnerable and excluded, to care for the sick, to give generously to projects which make our society more open and nurturing. Challenge us to never pass by on the other side and to respond to need whenever we see it.

Amen

I should no longer say that I have neighbours to help, but that I must be a neighbour to others (#81)



ENVISAGING AND ENGENDERING AN OPEN WORLD

Having described the dark clouds which hang over our world (in Chapter 1) and the challenge to be Good Samaritans in response to our neighbours – personal, communal and global (in Chapter 2), Chapters 3 to 8 of *Fratelli Tutti* then examine critical aspects in the building of a more peaceful, inclusive and socially caring world. The encyclical asks us to consider what we need to do and where we need to advocate and speak up for change.

Pope Francis concludes this chapter which focuses on developing an open world with these words:
If we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity. We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all (#127).

The basis of an inclusive, caring and nurturing community is love. Love is the core of a social friendship that excludes no one and a fraternity that is open to all (#94). Yet there is an inadequate understanding of the imperative of universal love evident in:

- **Racism** ... *a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting* (#97).
- **Hidden exiles** ... *many persons with disabilities feel that they exist without belonging and without participating* (#98).
- **Ideologies which impose their ideas** ... *upon everyone else in a violent defence of the truth* (#92).
- **Unemployment** ... *to claim economic freedom while real conditions bar many people from actual access to it ... is to practise doublespeak* (#110).
- **Radical individualism** which ... *does not make us more free, more equal, more fraternal. The mere sum of individual interests is not capable of generating a better world for the whole human family* (#105).
- **The mockery of ethics, goodness, faith and honesty** ... *every society needs to ensure that values are passed on; otherwise what is handed down are selfishness, violence, corruption ... indifference* (#113).

How can political and community leaders encourage an open world which honours the dignity of all people?

Loving God,
Bless us with hearts for love.

Bless us with the courage to stand against hateful ideology, racial division, religious intolerance and violence in all its forms.

Bless us with peace in our families, communities, nations and our world.

Amen

Authentic and mature love and true friendship can only take root in hearts open to growth through relationships with others ... (#89)



A HEART OPEN TO THE WHOLE WORLD

Pope Francis argues in *Fratelli Tutti* that we need an open heart to those from different cultures. He highlights the need to communicate with each other, to discover the gifts of each person, to promote that which unites us and to disregard our differences as an opportunity to grow in mutual respect (#134). An open heart to migrants and people of different cultures *enriches both cultures as migrants bring an opportunity for enrichment and the integral human development of all* (#133).

Pope Francis' most powerful challenge comes with his warning that *nowadays we are either all saved together, or no-one is saved. Poverty, decadence and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting the entire planet* (#137).

Pope Francis notes that: *complex challenges arise when our neighbour happens to be an immigrant* (#129). He proposes practical steps which need to be addressed in order to respond compassionately to the global refugee crisis:

- *increasing and simplifying the granting of visas*
- *adopting programs of individual and community sponsorship*
- *opening humanitarian corridors for the most vulnerable refugees*
- *providing suitable and dignified housing*
- *guaranteeing personal security and access to basic services*
- *ensuring adequate consular assistance and equitable access to the justice system*
- *allowing the opening of bank accounts and the guarantee of the minimum needed to survive*
- *ensuring freedom of movement and the possibility of employment*
- *protecting minors and ensuring their regular access to education*
- *guaranteeing religious freedom and promoting integration into society*
- *supporting the reuniting of families and preparing local communities for integration.*

Pope Francis' list of issues for migrants is comprehensive. What else needs to be addressed?

Merciful
God, wake us from
the slumber of indifference,
open our eyes to the suffering
of refugees, and free us from the
insensitivity born of worldly comfort
and self-centredness.

Inspire us as nations, communities and individuals, to see that those who come to our shores are our brothers and sisters.

May we share with them the blessings we have received from your hand, and recognize that together, as one human family, we are all migrants, journeying in hope to you, our true home. Amen


(Extract from Pope Francis: Prayer for Immigrants accessed at www.jesuits.global)

A healthy openness never threatens one's own identity – it nourishes and enriches (#148)

A BETTER KIND OF POLITICS

The quest for social friendship and global fraternity calls for *politics which is truly at the service of the common good* (#154). Pope Francis begins this chapter with a critique of some of the terminology which describes politics today: populism and liberalism. He describes populism *as a source of polarisation in an already divided society* (156) and liberalism *as serving the economic interests of the powerful* (#155). Populist leaders *are able to exploit politically a people's culture, under whatever ideological banner, for their own personal advantage or continuing grip on power* (#159).

For Pope Francis, *charity is the spiritual heart of politics* (and) *is always a preferential love shown to those in greatest need; it undergirds everything we do on their behalf* (#187). For politicians this means *to be called to tend to the needs of individuals and peoples ... which takes strength and tenderness, effort and generosity in the midst of a functionalistic and privatised mindset...* (#188).



Pope Francis' critique of contemporary politics across the world suggests a deeply divided system where there is a tendency to label and vilify and an unwillingness to tackle issues affecting the world's most vulnerable people. As Pope Francis asserts, *everything depends on our ability to see the need for a change of heart, attitudes and lifestyles. Otherwise, political propaganda, the media and the shapers of public opinion will continue to promote an individualistic and uncritical culture subservient to unregulated economic interests and social institutions at the service of those who already have too much power* (#166).

Pope Francis asks:
Can we promote a healthy politics capable of reforming and coordinating institutions, promoting best practices and overcoming undue pressure and bureaucratic inertia? (#177).
Where can you see the emergence of a better kind of politics?

God of Justice
Help us to work proactively for better political systems in our nation.
Enable us to demand accountability, honesty, integrity and social commitment from our politicians.
May we work tirelessly for a system which hears all voices and respects the common good.
May the blessing of service, compassion and mercy encircle those who work in public life.
Amen

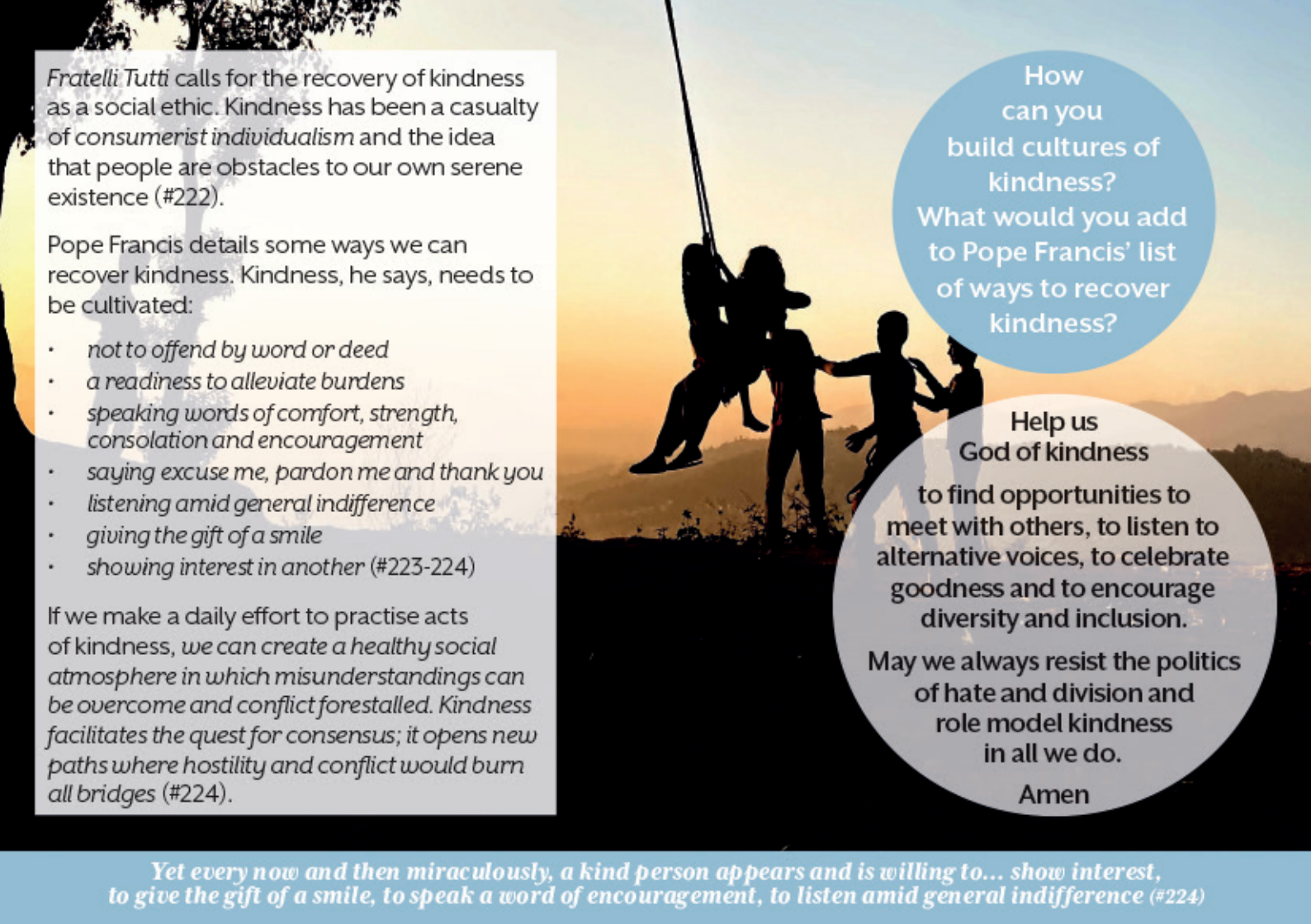
Even as forms of fanaticism, closed mindedness and social and cultural fragmentation proliferate in present day society, a good politician will take the first step and insist that different voices be heard (#191)

DIALOGUE AND FRIENDSHIP IN SOCIETY

Authentic social dialogue is described as, *the ability to respect another's point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns* (#203). Pope Francis asserts: *A country flourishes when constructive dialogue occurs between its many rich cultural components: popular culture, university culture, youth culture, artistic culture, technological culture, economic culture, family culture and media culture* (#199).

One of the obstacles to dialogue is the media. *The feverish exchange of opinions on social networks is not true dialogue. These exchanges are merely parallel monologues ... their content frequently self-serving and contradictory* (#200). The media is a vehicle for those who want to *discredit and insult*, for those with vested interests and focused on serving power *not the common good* (#202).

Another obstacle to authentic dialogue is relativism. *Relativism always brings the risk that some or other alleged truth will be imposed by the powerful or the clever* (#209). This lack of consensus on values weakens the process of authentic social dialogue as, *in the end, the law of the strongest prevails* (#210).



Fratelli Tutti calls for the recovery of kindness as a social ethic. Kindness has been a casualty of consumerist individualism and the idea that people are obstacles to our own serene existence (#222).

Pope Francis details some ways we can recover kindness. Kindness, he says, needs to be cultivated:

- *not to offend by word or deed*
- *a readiness to alleviate burdens*
- *speaking words of comfort, strength, consolation and encouragement*
- *saying excuse me, pardon me and thank you*
- *listening amid general indifference*
- *giving the gift of a smile*
- *showing interest in another* (#223-224)

If we make a daily effort to practise acts of kindness, we can create a healthy social atmosphere in which misunderstandings can be overcome and conflict forestalled. Kindness facilitates the quest for consensus; it opens new paths where hostility and conflict would burn all bridges (#224).

How
can you
build cultures of
kindness?

What would you add
to Pope Francis' list
of ways to recover
kindness?

Help us
God of kindness

to find opportunities to
meet with others, to listen to
alternative voices, to celebrate
goodness and to encourage
diversity and inclusion.

May we always resist the politics
of hate and division and
role model kindness
in all we do.

Amen

Yet every now and then miraculously, a kind person appears and is willing to... show interest, to give the gift of a smile, to speak a word of encouragement, to listen amid general indifference (#224)

PATHS OF RENEWED ENCOUNTER

Fratelli Tutti calls all people to be builders and cultivators of paths of peace. There are many things which stand in the way of building a peaceful world and Pope Francis speaks of the need to develop both an architecture (frameworks, processes and social structures) and an art (ways of living and being) of peace. As he notes, *there is an architecture to peace, to which different institutions of society contribute, each according to its own area of expertise, but there is also an art of peace which involves us all* (#231).

The path to peace has clear foundations outlined by Pope Francis in this encyclical:

- the path to peace is based on truth telling and recognition of past hurts. Pope Francis calls this *penitential memory* – one that *accepts the past without clouding the future* (#226)
- the path to peace is not *produced behind desks or in offices* but within the human heart
- the path to peace is not achieved in one moment, *it is an open-ended endeavour, a never-ending task that demands the commitment of everyone...* (#232)
- the path to peace must *recognise, protect and concretely restore the dignity of... the most impoverished and vulnerable sectors of society* (#233)
- the path to peace involves forgiveness and rejecting *vengeance and hatred* (#242)
- the path to peace must acknowledge that *war is the negation of all rights and a dramatic assault on the environment* (#257)
- the path to peace cannot be based on the *threat of mutual destruction or total annihilation* (#262)
- the path to peace cannot be built on the killing of human beings whether through retaliation, punishment or the legally sanctioned death penalty practised in many countries (266)

What foundations would you include on a path to peace in our world?

God, make me a channel of thy peace, that where there is hatred, I may sow love; where there is wrong, the spirit of forgiveness; where there is discord, harmony; where there is error, truth; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there are shadows, light; where there is sadness, joy.

God, grant that I may not so much seek to be comforted, as to comfort; to be understood, as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

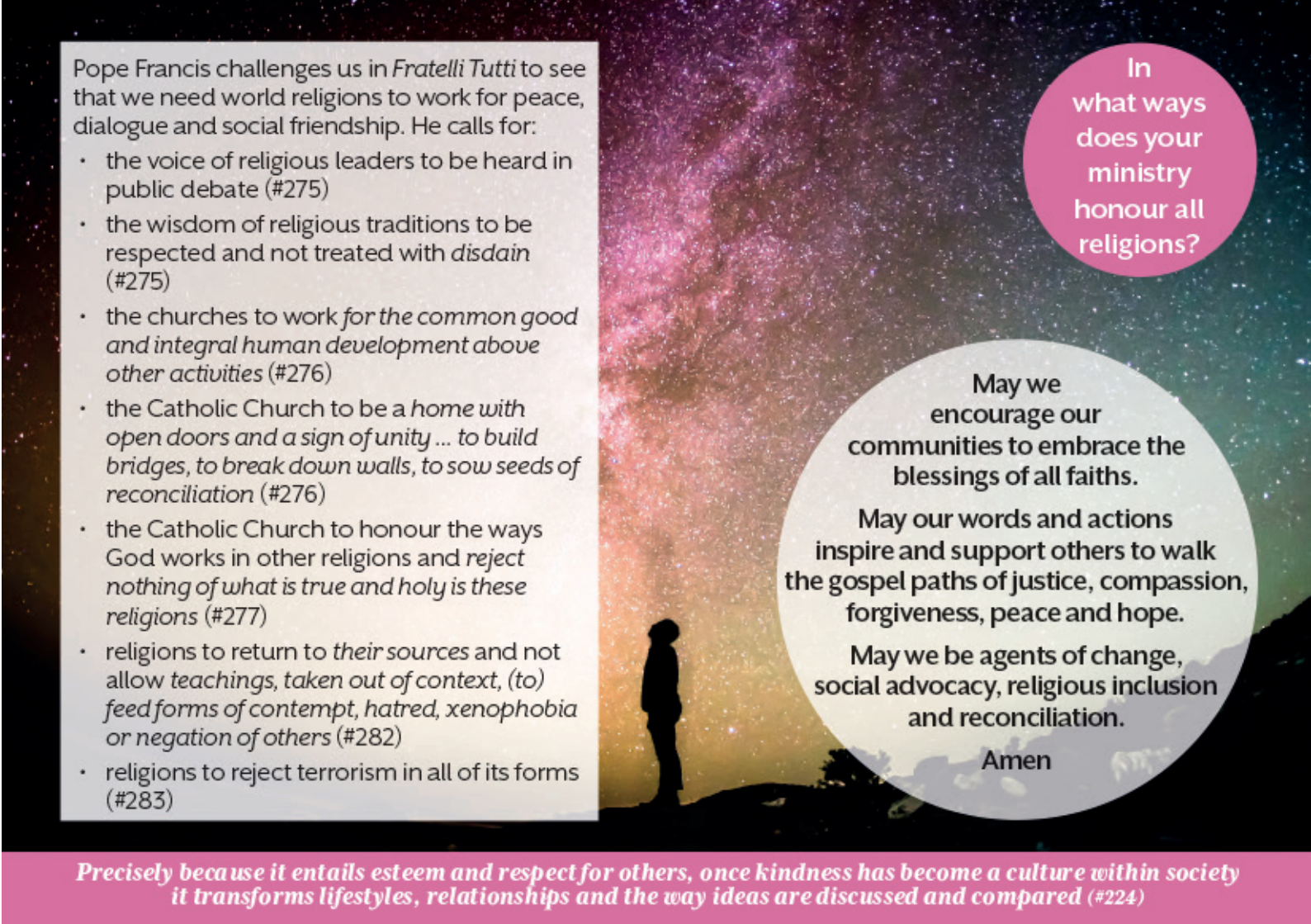
(Prayer attributed to St Francis of Assisi)

***There is a need for peacemakers, men and women prepared to work boldly and creatively to initiate processes of healing and renewed encounter* (#225)**

RELIGIONS AT THE SERVICE OF OUR WORLD

In the final chapter of *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls for dialogue between the leaders and followers of different religions in the quest for world peace. *The goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love* (#271). For Pope Francis, *a journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. God does not see with (God's) eyes, God sees with (God's) heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, (God's) love is the same* (#281).

Pope Francis concludes this encyclical by acknowledging his inspiration as coming not just from St Francis of Assisi, but also Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi, Blessed Charles de Foucauld and other apostles of peace. (#286)



Pope Francis challenges us in *Fratelli Tutti* to see that we need world religions to work for peace, dialogue and social friendship. He calls for:

- the voice of religious leaders to be heard in public debate (#275)
- the wisdom of religious traditions to be respected and not treated with *disdain* (#275)
- the churches to work *for the common good and integral human development above other activities* (#276)
- the Catholic Church to be a *home with open doors and a sign of unity ... to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation* (#276)
- the Catholic Church to honour the ways God works in other religions and *reject nothing of what is true and holy in these religions* (#277)
- religions to return to *their sources* and not allow *teachings, taken out of context, (to) feed forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others* (#282)
- religions to reject terrorism in all of its forms (#283)

In
what ways
does your
ministry
honour all
religions?

May we
encourage our
communities to embrace the
blessings of all faiths.

May our words and actions
inspire and support others to walk
the gospel paths of justice, compassion,
forgiveness, peace and hope.


May we be agents of change,
social advocacy, religious inclusion
and reconciliation.

Amen

Precisely because it entails esteem and respect for others, once kindness has become a culture within society it transforms lifestyles, relationships and the way ideas are discussed and compared (#224)

FINAL WORDS

*While acclaimed by many, Fratelli Tutti has met with criticism. The major criticism of the document is focused on its title. The Latin term *fraternitas* translates as 'all brothers' and is an exclusively masculine term... despite the outcry from women regarding the use of the word 'fraternity' prior to publication, no change was made. Women have to read themselves into the document. Not only are women eliminated by the title, but they are also not even considered in the subtitle *On Fraternity and Social Friendship*! The masculine resonances of fraternal language are underlined by the sole use of male exemplars: Francis of Assisi, Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, Patriarch Bartholomew ... no female exemplars are noted in the encyclical, no women are cited as inspiration and no women scholars are used for theological reflection (Peta Goldberg rsm. February 2022. La Salle Academy Publications. 11).*



The tension between the laudable content of Fratelli Tutti with its call for global solidarity and social friendship, and the valid criticisms of the encyclical as gender-biased and exclusive, suggests the need for stronger dialogue within the Catholic Church on the role of women and the building of a gender inclusive culture. As Goldberg rsm notes: *the deficit-orientated focus on women in the encyclical (as vulnerable victims of abuse, violence, human trafficking and enslavement) points to ignorance of their agency and strength* (ibid. 11). Here there is a challenge for all leaders in the Church to advocate not only for a gender-just world and gender-just communities but also for a gender-just Church.

Tensions such as these are addressed by Howard Zinn who calls for action to create change: *to be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic, it is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasise in this complex history will determine our lives* ... (accessed at howardzinn.org).

How does the pope tell the world what it needs to do when he spearheads an institution grounded in patriarchy, hierarchy and ontological differences?

(Ilia Delio osf. 2020. www.globalsistersreport.org)

How does your ministry work for a gender-just Church?

God of All
May our hearts be open to all the peoples and nations of the earth. May we recognise the goodness and beauty that you have sown in each of us, and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects and shared dreams.

Amen

Fratelli Tutti 2020 (143)

Our love for others, for who they are, moves us to seek the best for their lives. Only by cultivating this way of relating to one another will we make possible social friendship that excludes no-one (#95)