

## **Maryknoll Leadership Statement on Pope Francis' Encyclical *Fratelli Tutti***

The leadership of the four branches of the Maryknoll family – the Maryknoll Sisters, Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, Maryknoll Lay Missioners and Maryknoll Affiliates – want to express their heartfelt gratitude to Pope Francis for *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, the historic encyclical on peace and dialogue that offers a vision for healing the world from deep social and economic divisions in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic.

As missioners dedicated to sharing the Gospel through love and hope by serving those most in need around the world, we can attest to the pressing challenges facing the world during the COVID-19 pandemic, from sickness, poverty, and hunger, to violent conflict, climate change, nuclear weapons, unchecked market capitalism, and the disparity of rights and persistent inequalities. These are challenges that the Holy Father says can only be met when we come together in love as sisters and brothers, with care like that shown by the Good Samaritan.

Our lived experience as Maryknoll missioners affirms the pope's teaching of the parable as a lesson not solely about charity, but also a transformative encounter of mercy. "It leaves no room for ideological manipulation and challenges us to expand our frontiers," Pope Francis says of the parable. "It gives a universal dimension to our call to love, one that transcends all prejudices, all historical and cultural barriers, all petty interests" (FT 83).

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis offers a prophetic vision when he says healing the world from COVID-19 is an opportunity to build something better, a "civilization of love" (FT 183). The pursuit of "social love" based on charity and justice will lead to a global economy at the service of integral human development and protective of our common home. It requires ridding ourselves and society of the "heartless individualism" that reinforces greed and the exploitation and fear of others (FT 209).

Within this opportunity to transform the world, we see the need to address the role of women. We long for the "conscious and careful cultivation of fraternity" which Pope Francis says is required to achieve women's equality (FT 104). Many of the problems and topics mentioned by the pope in this letter have different impacts upon men and women; the solutions require both of their participation, possibly in new ways.

Just weeks before the U.S. elections, we are stirred by the pope's call for a "better kind of politics, one truly at the service of the common good" to support a global community of fraternity (FT 154). We embrace the pope's call for all people of good will to commit to the sense of belonging to a single human family and the dream of working together for justice and peace – a call that includes embracing diversity, encounter, and dialogue, and rejecting war, nuclear weapons, and the death penalty.

Maryknoll celebrates this significant teaching of Pope Francis and, with our communities around the world, we look forward to reflecting on the encyclical and embracing the Holy Father's call to peace and dialogue in the coming years. Compelled by the love of God, we humbly say we are brothers and sisters all.

**Maryknoll Sisters   Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers   Maryknoll Lay Missioners   Maryknoll Affiliates**