

INTRODUCTION



God sees with the heart, not with the eyes.

2020 has been a remarkable and troubling year. With anger and divisiveness increasing and the entire globe isolating to fend off a new virus, we need new ways of reaching out without touching, connecting without physically meeting, and attempting to find ways to live a normal life when all is different.

Pope Francis has chosen this time to issue a new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti, On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, acknowledging the perils of both our divisions and isolation and offering good advice for building and rebuilding relationships, not just in our homes and neighborhoods, but between nations all over the world. Now more than ever, he says, it is time to see with God's eyes, letting our hearts lead the way, so that we may become one worldwide community, united in our love for one another.

May these thirty reflections on Pope Francis's words be a guide to opening our hearts so that we may reach out to each other in true love and genuine fraternity.

1 | ONE HUMAN FAMILY

What if victory means recognizing and lifting up our neighbor, and not eliminating our opponents?

In this time of quarantining, cautious reopening, and finding ways to create a new normal for our lives, Pope Francis cautions against the tendency to isolate even further. We are growing more distant from one another, he says, at a time when we need one another more than ever. This is a time for cooperation, not competition, for building bridges, not walls. The goal of establishing a worldwide community united in purpose is not impossible, he says. Indeed, it begins on the smallest possible level—within our hearts.

PONDER

How can I reach out instead of hiding within?

PRAY

God of hope and love, in these uncertain days, give me the strength and courage to approach and engage others in genuine love.

2 | GET OUT OF THE SAFETY ZONE

The vocation of brotherhood and sisterhood is the first victim of any war.

One need only look at different countries' responses to the pandemic to see that we're not only *not* on the same page, we're not even in the same book! Each country has different rules for isolating, gathering sizes, and getting back to school and work. Pope Francis reminds us that the approach of fraternity could make a huge difference, not just in how the world might have taken a united response to the virus, but in how we can all work together to care for our planet. We need safe ways to leave our safety zones and consider others.

PONDER

In my own experience, what has been the hardest part of obeying rules of isolation?

PRAY

God of hope and love, help me to see beyond my own borders and limits.

3 | EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS

*The walls we build in our hearts, in our lands,
restrict our vision and limit our horizons.
We must resist this temptation.*

When we build walls of any kind, Pope Francis warns, we risk becoming slaves within those walls. By shutting others out and refusing to welcome them, we are only hurting ourselves and our own potential for building the kingdom of God. Walls limit vision and keep us from seeing with God's eyes. We must avoid this tendency, the pope says, so that we may learn the gifts to be gained by reaching out to others and discovering all that we can achieve together. A wall can block our view of the horizon, but our horizon is unlimited when we allow ourselves to see beyond our walls!

PONDER

What walls have I built that I need to tear down?

PRAY

God of hope and love, quell my fears so that I may live without walls that shield without sheltering.

4 | AN OUTDATED UTOPIA?

*We are not all-powerful.
We are all in the same boat.*

Pope Francis says our global situation today, exacerbated by the pandemic, has made the idea of growing together as one single human family, working for justice and peace, seem like a pipe dream. Instead, he says, we have been overtaken by a cool indifference to others, which tends to isolate us even further. How do we take off the blinders and recognize that we're all in this together? Perhaps if we attempt to see with God's eyes, the eyes of the heart, we will realize that we are all God's children, no matter where we come from. And then we can begin to ensure that all God's children have equal access to basic human rights and dignity. That's when our true work can begin.

PONDER

Who in my own community is treated as "less"?

PRAY

God of hope and love, help me to see you in everyone I meet.

5 | SEEING WITH NEW EYES

*The global pandemic, at least for a little while,
helped us see our interdependence,
that we could stand united.*

As devastating as this pandemic has been, Pope Francis asks us to look at one of its benefits—at least at the beginning we were united in needing to combat this unseen but powerful foe. This is not a time to become more insular, but a time to find ways to cooperate and collaborate. For a while, we found ways of working differently, learning differently, and living differently. Later, as we began cautious reopening, our sense of acting for the common good started to slip, and infection numbers again began to rise. The pope asks us to look back to those early days when the good of all seemed more important than the good of the self.

PONDER

How quick am I to get back to normal?

PRAY

God of hope and love, give me eyes to see my brothers and sisters in need.