

EDITORIALE

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Nonostante le difficoltà dovute alla pandemia, dal 19 al 21 novembre 2020, migliaia di giovani da tutto il mondo — imprenditori, studenti, ricercatori, docenti — hanno risposto all'appello di Papa Francesco, ritrovandosi online per condividere idee e progetti nel corso dell'evento *The Economy of Francesco (EoF)*. In realtà, già dal maggio 2019 si era attivato un percorso di incontri e di lavori preparatori in vista di quell'appuntamento, il cui svolgimento in Assisi è stato seriamente limitato dalla situazione sanitaria. Pur provenienti da diversi contesti ed esperienze formative, i giovani si sono ritrovati intorno al Papa, animati dallo stesso desiderio di contribuire ad un cambiamento profondo del modo di intendere l'economia e il progresso, uniti dalla speranza di poter ripensare l'economia al servizio dell'essere umano e del suo sviluppo integrale, per una società inclusiva, attenta ai più fragili e alla salvaguardia dell'ambiente. Esperti e professionisti in vari settori li hanno accompagnati, ascoltati e guidati in questo confronto. Le riflessioni sono state condotte per aree tematiche in 12 villaggi: *management e dono, finanza e umanità, lavoro e cura, agricoltura e giustizia, energia e povertà,*

«The Economy of Francesco»

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business e pace, economia e donna, CO₂ delle disuguaglianze, vocazione e profitto, imprese in transizione, vita e stili di vita, politiche (policies) e felicità.

Alcuni docenti e studenti della Facoltà di Scienze Sociali (FASS) della Pontificia Università di San Tommaso d'Aquino hanno avuto l'opportunità di seguire da vicino sia l'evento di novembre, che la sua preparazione. Si è ritenuto utile, pertanto, dedicare uno spazio *ad hoc*, in questo numero di *Oikonomia*, alle riflessioni scaturite da questa importante esperienza. Sono stati raccolti, in particolare, i cinque interventi di alcuni rappresentanti del villaggio *economia e donna*, trasmessi in streaming durante *The Economy of Francesco* e frutto di una lettura collettiva dell'enciclica sociale *Fratelli tutti* («*A Collective Reading of Fratelli Tutti*»). Seguono, poi, gli articoli di tre studenti della FASS, dedicati rispettivamente al ruolo svolto da Andrey Sheptytsky nell'evoluzione del pensiero economico in Ucraina (presentato anche nel corso dell'evento parallelo *EoF Marathon: around the clock, around the world*, riservato alle esperienze locali di 20 Paesi); all'impor-

tanza del dialogo intergenerazionale come risorsa per una nuova economia; a possibili linee guida per una cooperazione internazionale più efficace, radicata nella cultura dell'incontro e della fraternità. Chiude questo spazio di riflessione il contributo autorevole di Roberto Bongianini, OFM, docente della FASS, sul tema della finanza, altro argomento chiave trattato nel corso dell'evento.

Nella convinzione condivisa, come affermato nella dichiarazione finale formulata dai giovani partecipanti, che «non si costruisce un mondo migliore senza una economia migliore e che l'economia è troppo importante per la vita dei popoli e dei poveri per non occuparcene tutti», *The Economy of Francesco* rappresenta un punto di partenza e non un punto di arrivo. Da qui, infatti, prende avvio un fondamentale processo di trasformazione verso il futuro che, per Papa Francesco, «sarà un tempo speciale», da vivere tutti, inclusa la nostra Comunità accademica, «come vocazione, come cultura e come patto».

STUDI

CONTRIBUTIONS

Introduction

Even before the new social encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* (henceforth FT) was issued last October 3, 2020, reservations were raised by various media about the supposed partiality of its title; some thought it should have been extended to '*sorelle tutte*' to include women more explicitly in this Pope Francis's call to a renewed sense of universal fraternity.

As a female Franciscan religious, however, I concur with the interpretation offered by Fr. Niklaus Kuster (2020), the Swiss Capuchin friar and theologian, who explained that the encyclical is, in fact, meant to address all men and women, all believers, and every person on the earth as members of one human family. Although the first words *Fratelli Tutti* are drawn and literally translated from the original formula used by Francis of Assisi

A COLLECTIVE READING OF FRATELLI TUTTI

PRIMA PARTE: FEMININE PERSPECTIVE

Fratelli Tutti. Highlights from a Feminine Perspective

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in his collection of undated writings known as the *Admonitiones*, specifically number VI, 1 (*Imitation of Christ*), a spiritual exhortation spoken to his brother friars (*omnes fratres*), research has shown that the final composition of the twenty-eight spiritual teachings was addressed to all people and intended for all the faithful (Armstrong *et al.* 1999, 131). Medieval admonitions were literary forms created to present not simply warnings,

but rather teachings of religious sense, from which to draw practical implications for daily life. Likewise, the twenty-eight Admonitions of St. Francis offered insights into biblical reflections that could be translated into concrete behaviors. We note that the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge is a preeminent theme in these (128). While in *Adm. VI, 1* St. Francis was specifically speaking to the friars, his writing should be conceived as an in-

tegral part of the entire collection of twenty-eight that were ideally addressed to all the faithful called to imitate Christ in their paths of holiness.

By way of analogy, in referring once again to the Saint of Assisi who inspired his pontificate, Pope Francis too, in the footsteps of his predecessors, addresses his latest social encyclical to men and women of good will, who are *all* called to cultivate universal fraternity beyond borders.¹ It is a unifying appeal that recognizes an openness of heart in every human being, an openness which knows neither boundaries nor differences of origin, nationality, color or religion (FT 3); an openness that is capable of seeing and valuing the goodness of the other. The human heart, however, needs to be shaped and trained in such an openness.

As all social encyclicals, *Fratelli Tutti* aims at presenting the Church's response to the ethical questions raised over time by human societies. Nevertheless, in the common journey of preparation towards the event of the «Economy of Francesco» — held in Assisi on November 19–21, 2020 — some members of the «Women for Economy» Village decided to spend time together reflecting upon principles in *Fratelli Tutti* that prove to be particularly significant from a *feminine* perspective. There was an effort to identify which *aspects* are key in enhancing women's participation and full recognition in a truly human-centered economy, and which *attitudes* women can nurture within society to promote a renewed sense of fraternity.

Therefore, the members of the Village developed a reflection by reading and attempting to interpret the encyclical through the three phases that characterize the Catholic social teaching approach — *see, judge, act*.²

1. Seeing the “dark clouds”

The first chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* allows us to assess where we are as a global society by looking — very realistically — at the paradoxes of our culture, the struggles, the pain engendered by the pandemic, the “dark clouds” which obscure a world that tends to close in on itself.

Hence, when we look around us and we *see* troubling trends:

“Shattered dreams” of unity and peace (FT 10).

A growing loss of the sense of history, what the pontiff identifies as “deconstructionism” (FT 13), where human freedom claims to create everything start-

ing from zero, instead of learning from passed mistakes and building upon a common heritage.

Spreading despair and discouragement: a permanent state of disagreement and confrontation (FT 15).

A “throwaway” world (FT 18), where *what* — or worse — *who* is no longer useful, is no longer needed.

Wars, conflicts and persecutions: a mentality of fear and mistrust, which fosters a “culture of walls” (FT 26–27).

Inequality of human rights, particularly — from our perspective — between men and women (FT 23).

Lack of solidarity and ability for interpersonal encounter (FT 10).

Progress and economic growth without a “shared roadmap” (FT 29), but rather oriented by a short-termed vision that does now allow us to sacrifice, nor plan for the next generations.

The pandemic: “a worldwide tragedy” that has exposed our common vulnerability everywhere (FT 32).

The illusion of communication based upon information without wisdom (FT 42–50), when one can too quickly separate ‘likes’ from ‘dislikes’ and isolate herself or himself from the real world, because digital connectivity is not capable *per se* of uniting humanity.

Despite these “dark clouds”, the first chapter of the encyclical ends emphasizing hope, one that is rooted in the human heart and can open itself to great ideals, because hope — Pope Francis states — makes us all capable of looking beyond our personal convenience.

2. Judging in the light of faith

If the first chapter allows us to *see* where we are, the second chapter leads us into the phase of *judgement*.

The encyclical provides us as women with a model by which we can *judge* what we *see*: the evangelical parable of the Good Samaritan. Along the way of his journey, the Good Samaritan comes across a man who has been assaulted, injured and left by the wayside. Many simply ‘pass by’. The Good Samaritan is the only one willing to stop, to care for him, and to provide for his needs.

This is very relevant to us because there are signs — the Pope says — that show when a society is not ‘healthy’: it seeks prosperity, but turns its back on those who suffer (FT 65).

Hence, the parable poses a basic question to each one of us, women and men alike, to encourage us to move forward

from a ‘globalization of indifference’ towards a ‘globalization of fraternity’.³

When confronted by human suffering, we are called to decide every day in many ways: What kind of people are we? Are we people who ‘care’ or are we people who just ‘pass by’?

3. Acting together because no one is saved alone

Once we make the decision not “to look the other way”, but to care for the suffering in imitation of the Good Samaritan, then it is time to *act* and take responsibility for what we *see*. The next chapters of the encyclical outline various ways to do so, not necessarily offering “technical solutions”,⁴ but presenting guidelines for a better type of economics and a better kind of politics.

Although it would not be possible to reflect on all possibilities, I think one can say that it clearly emerges from the encyclical that caring for those most vulnerable is the first action to take. It is, in fact, a feminine attitude, as women are physically created to care for life in its earliest stages, nurturing it and bringing it to full development within their own bodies (Petrini 2017, 60).

Women, therefore, are called in a special way to protect the most fragile in every dimension of human existence: family, market, politics, social life. Caring for fragility is an integral aspect of the common good, and from a feminine perspective, it contributes to building relationships of trust and reciprocity that are at the core of human fraternity. Such caring implicates a woman's capacity to choose priorities while multi-tasking; to balance the tension between ‘active’ and ‘contemplative’ dimensions of her life; and it implies a personal lifestyle that resists the ease of a ‘throwaway culture’. It entails a deeper awareness that being — in the long term — is more valuable than doing or functioning (Whelan 2020, 7; FT 188).

This ‘paradigm of care’ that we are identifying allows us to recognize our own dependence on others, becoming a foundation for social charity, and a building block of the “new architecture of peace” (FT 231; Petrini 2017, 58–59, 2020, 7–8). This ‘paradigm of care’ can counteract the manipulative logic of the ‘technocratic paradigm’, that is, the tendency to approach others as external objects, assuming that they can be changed, transformed, and adapted to perceived personal needs as one would with tech-

nology, irrespective of any limits.⁵

Such a capacity to recognize the vulnerability of those ‘who pass by’, as well as one’s own vulnerability, is necessary for authentic social dialogue. Women are naturally very good at developing networks.⁶ This type of dialogue, however, also implies a renewed manner of communication, which can happen even through social media, but cannot tolerate aggression, insults, verbal abuse, or violence, because it seeks to engage in respectful listening and interpersonal encounter. According to Pope Francis, social dialogue begins by rediscovering the very basic value of «kindness» (FT 222–224).

Women, including religious women, through their maternal instinct and natural capacity for self-gift, can actively co-operate in building peace as authentic *mediators*, not just *intermediaries*; by uniting and not dividing; by retaining nothing for themselves, but rather spending themselves generously to bring forth new life, by opening paths of dialogue, and embracing, not turning their back on, those who suffer (FT 284).

A key aspect of social dialogue occurs between men and women, and must be rooted in equality while still open to diversity. The Pope very clearly states that great work still needs to be done so that the organization of societies worldwide can reflect the truth that women inher-

ently possess the same dignity and identical rights as men do (FT 23). It is not acceptable for persons to be denied their rights by virtue of being women (FT 121).

Even the *Document on Human Fraternity* that was signed in Abu Dhabi by Pope Francis and the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar last February 2019 — a document that began to address some of the themes developed by this encyclical — stated it very clearly: “Efforts must be made to modify those laws that prevent women from fully enjoying their rights”. Fraternity is rooted in the truth of equal dignity among all persons (FT 22); thus, justice is an essential condition for achieving universal fraternity. Social charity demands justice as already stated by Benedict XVI in his social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2019, 6).

Yet, one of the main themes of *Fratelli Tutti* is openness to difference, because difference is mutually enriching, is an expression of multiple gifts and talents, and is creative. It involves “the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns” (FT 203). In this sense, as pointed out by Pope Francis in one of his messages,⁷ one could say that fraternity is one step beyond solidarity, because it not only allows the unequal to become equal, but it also allows the equal to embrace the different (Spadaro 2020).

Let us mention here that St. Francis of Assisi experienced fraternity in its fullness by way of his friendship with his brothers, but also with a woman, St. Clare.⁸ Besides being a faithful follower, she was a precious source of support for him. She shared his suffering, his call to witness to fraternal love, celibacy, and his mission to rebuild the Church albeit in a complementary, very different, more contemplative way, but first and foremost, she shared with him a very profound love for humanity in its diversity.

Therefore, St. Francis and St. Clare can be considered prototypes of the capacity of men and women to come up with shared goals that transcend their differences and allows them to engage in a common mission (FT 157).

Fraternity between men and women — a “new alliance” between men and women, Pope Francis would say (Romeo 2016) — is a foundational base for cultivating and strengthening social friendship (FT 8), a type of friendship that offers women a key to open a “closed world” in two directions: both *horizontally* — towards one another and the environment where our existence unfolds — and *vertically* — towards God the Creator on whom we are all ultimately dependent.⁹

Conclusion

Through their gifts: openness to diversity, and a capacity for dialogue and compassion for the suffering and the most fragile, women can offer an invaluable contribution “to rebuild a wounded world” (FT 67), actively promoting peace and a culture of care.

Social friendship is rooted in a fraternity between men and women, but the latter, in turn, are dependent on a more inclusive society, where both men and women are willing to work together to overcome the existing social inequalities. This can be realized only through an increasing involvement on the part of women, in the family as well as in every social, political and institutional domain (Francis 2021).

Hence, social friendship requires the protection of the unique and inviolable dignity of each man and woman as an end in himself or herself. Fundamental human rights that derive from this dignity, which are inalienable, universal and indivisible, must be upheld and respected, because a culture of care cannot develop without defending and promoting the dignity and rights of each person.



Finally, social friendship between men and women demands a deeper understanding of solidarity, of service, of gratuitousness, of thinking and acting as a community that overcomes a narrow-minded individualism and above all chooses a logic of collaboration over a logic of competition (Bauman – Giaccardi – Magatti 2016). Such an ambitious and charitable goal demands a heart open to Transcendence — where the true origins of fraternity can be found¹⁰ — that can be shaped, trained, and made capable of seeing the goodness of the other.

Fratelli Tutti invites us to restore human dignity to its central place as we strive to build a common future, especially as — in the «Economy of Francesco» — we rethink together economic priorities and the ways in which modern societies care for their members, particularly the more vulnerable.

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NOTES

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1. It is interesting to note that, according to Sorge (2016, 97–103), the inseparable relationship between truth rooted in our shared “paternity” (we are all sons and daughters of one Father) and charity as the natural outcome of a universal fraternity, is a fundamental and innovative key concept in the evolution of the social doctrine of the Church on which already rested *Caritas in Veritate* (2009). Every man, believer or non-believer, is called to experience this double gift of truth and charity. On the socio-cultural level, the radical human interdependence intensified by globalization requires a solidarity that recognizes this double gift and translates it on the moral level. Like Paul VI and Benedict XVI, Francis too reiterates that only fraternity allows development to be truly human and offers a soul in solidarity with globalization.

2. These are traditionally the three stages of

which John XXIII speaks in his social encyclical *Mater et Magistra* (1961, 236) as “stages which should normally be followed in the reduction of social principles into practice”.

3. This basic theme highlighted by several commentators of *Fratelli Tutti* was already at the core of Pope Francis' first Message for the World Day of Peace (January 1, 2014) entitled “*Fraternity, the Foundation and Pathway to Peace*”.

4. This was more recently reaffirmed by Benedict XVI in *Caritas in Veritate* (2009, 9). The Pontiff, however, also specified that although the Church does not claim to interfere in any way in the politics of States, she does have “a mission of truth to accomplish, in every time and circumstance, for a society that is attuned to man, to his dignity, to his vocation [...] This mission of truth is something that the Church can never renounce”.

5. The dangerous logic of this omni comprehensive paradigm against the development of a new humanism was already emphasized in the social encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015, 106–108). This paradigm, according to Hanby (2015, 745–746) is characterized by “the confluences of knowing and making, nature and art, truth and possibility [...] Missing in this contrast is an alternative sense of nature that can be regarded as rational, a nature that is a whole comprised of wholes, a comprehensive order of being inclusive of its own intelligibility and thus imbued with immanence, form, and finality”.

6. In his social encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* (2009, 5), Benedict XVI underlines the relevance, for both men and women, of their “call” to “weave networks of charity” as a way to “make themselves instruments of grace” and “pour forth God's charity”.

7. Here the reference is to the message of the Holy Father addressed to Prof. Margaret Archer, the then President of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, on April 24, 2017.

8. On the deep friendship between St. Francis and St. Clare, among numerous other Franciscan sources, see Bodo (1988, 37–39) and Jorgensen (1995, 131–150).

9. It should be recalled here that in his previous social encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015, 66), Pope Francis makes references to three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships in which human life is grounded: with God, with our neighbour and with the earth itself.

10. Pope Francis reiterates that globalization makes us neighbours, but not brothers (FT 1), referring to what Pope Benedict XVI had already pointed out in *Caritas in Veritate* (2009, 19): “As society becomes ever more globalized, it makes us neighbours but does not make us brothers. Reason, by itself, is capable of grasping the equality between men and of giving stability to their civic coexistence, but it cannot establish fraternity. This originates in a transcendent vocation from God the Father, who loved us first, teaching us through the Son what fraternal charity is”.