

Fratelli Tutti

On Fraternity and Social Friendship



Archdiocese of Washington

**Reflection Guide for
Small Group, Family
or Individuals**



Archdiocese of
Washington

“Let us dream, then, as a single human family, as fellow travelers sharing the same flesh, as children of the same earth which is our common home, each of us bringing the richness of his or her beliefs and convictions, each of us with his or her own voice, brothers and sisters all.”

*Fratelli Tutti, 2020,
Introduction*



Reflection Process for small group, family, or individual:

- ✓ Before each meeting, read the chapter of *Fratelli Tutti* that will be discussed that week.
- ✓ Pray the Prayer to the Creator offered by our Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti*.
- ✓ Proclaim the Scripture verse for each week’s study guide.
- ✓ Share aloud a word or a phrase from the Scripture that speaks to the heart of each group member. How is the Scripture calling them to respond?
- ✓ Reflect and answer questions raised in the chapter.
- ✓ Plan and implement concrete response by the group, family or individual action, keeping in mind Pope Francis’ call to listen, dialogue, act.

Prayer to the Creator in *Fratelli Tutti*

*Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.
Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.
May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams.
Amen.*

Listen, Dialogue, and Act: Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* asks us to Listen, Dialogue, and Act (Action). Our actions can be divided into two types: social justice (advocacy) and charitable works (charity). The USCCB explains the difference between social justice and charitable works in the Two Feet of Love in Action campaign. Learn more below about the need for all Catholics to act through works of social justice (advocacy) and charity.

“Catholic disciples on mission are called to put Two Feet of Love in Action! This foundational tool describes two distinct, but complementary, ways we can put the Gospel in action in response to God’s love: social justice (addressing systemic, root causes of problems that affect many people) and charitable works (short-term, emergency assistance for individuals).





Social Justice: Concerns the social, political, and economic aspects and, above all, the structural dimension of problems and their respective solutions” (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 201). We step with this foot when we work to address the root causes of problems facing our communities by advocating for just public policies and helping to change the social structures that contribute to suffering and injustice at home and around the world.

Charitable Works: Charitable Works are our ‘response to immediate needs and specific situations: feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, caring for and healing the sick, visiting those in prison, etc.’ (Deus Caritas Est, no. 31). We step with the Charitable Works foot when we work to aid or assist others both locally and globally to meet their immediate, short-term needs. Examples include engaging in direct service or providing food, clothing, shelter, or monetary assistance to help those in need.” From: [USCCB’s Two Feet of Love in Action](#)

Frequently Used Terms in Fratelli Tutti:

Charity (Love): The Theological Virtue by which we give love to God for his own sake and love to our neighbor on account of God (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Glossary).

Concupiscence: The disorder in our human appetites and desires as the result of Original Sin. These effects remain even after Baptism and produce an inclination to sin (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Glossary). “...the human inclination to be concerned only with myself, my group, my own petty interests. Concupiscence is not a flaw limited to our own day” (FT §166).

Cultural Colonization: The practice of denying history, and past experiences at the expense of religion, law, and culture by attempting to create a new uniform society (See [Homily by Pope Francis](#) for more information).



Fraternity: is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood for charity in the service of others. Fraternity is also articulated in terms of “friendship,” “social charity” and/or solidarity. (See CCC 1939). “Believers are called to express this human fraternity by safeguarding creation and the entire universe and supporting all persons, especially the poorest and those most in need” (A Document on Human Fraternity and Living Together).

Integral Ecology: The term Pope Francis uses in *Laudato Si'* to call for a common understanding that all is connected and we are to work for the good of all.

Solidarity: “The principle of solidarity, also articulated in terms of ‘friendship’ or ‘social charity,’ is a direct demand of human and Christian brotherhood”(CCC 1939). This principle involves a love for all peoples that transcends national, racial, ethnic, economic, and ideological differences. It respects the needs of others and the common good in an interdependent world (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Glossary).

Subsidiarity: “A community of a higher order should not interfere in the internal life of a community of a lower order, depriving the latter of its functions, but rather should support it in case of need and help it to coordinate its activity with the activities of the rest of society, always with a view to the common good.” (United States Catholic Catechism for Adults, Glossary).

Key Documents to Consider:

[Fratelli Tutti](#) (2020)

USCCB: [An Overview of the Encyclical](#) (2020)

[Gaudium et Spes: The Church in the Modern World](#) (1973)

[Evangelii Nuntiandi: Evangelization in the Modern World](#) (1975)

[Message to the Handicapped, Angelus in Osnabruck, Germany](#) (1980)

[Sollicitudo Rei Socialis” On Social Concern](#) (1987)

[Evangelium Vitae: The Gospel of Life](#) (1995)

[Strangers No Longer: Together on the Journey of Hope](#) (2003)

[Deus Caritas Est: Of Christian Love](#) (2005)

[Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel](#) (2013)

[Address to Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements](#) (2014)

[Laudato Si’: On Care for Our Common Home](#) (2015)

[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#) (2016)

[A Document On Human Fraternity For World Peace And Living Together](#) (2019)

[Message for the World Day of Persons with Disabilities](#) (2019)



Chapter 1

Dark Clouds Over a Closed World

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Read [Hunger in Our Region](#)
- As a small group, family, or individual, contribute your time and talent to your parish's outreach programs, (food bank, thanksgiving meal program, etc.) or [Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Washington](#).
- As a small group, family, or individual, learn about the realities of hunger and poverty in your community, and how you can advocate for systemic change.

Listen:

“The first chapter describes for us the dark clouds over a closed world; these clouds extend to all parts of the world, hindering the development of universal fraternity (FT §9); they are the circumstances that leave many people wounded by the roadside, discarded and rejected. The clouds plunge humanity into confusion, isolation, and desolation.

The Holy Father calls us to hope. All men and women experience a thirst, an aspiration, a longing for a life of fulfilment, a desire to achieve great things, things that fill our heart and lift our spirit to lofty realities like truth, goodness and beauty, justice, and love. Hope can look beyond personal convenience, security, and the trade-offs that limit our horizons, and open us up to grand ideals (FT §55)” ([USCCB, The Overview of the Encyclical](#)).

Scripture:

“When the Son of man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, and he will place the sheep at his right hand, but the goats at the left. Then the King will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry and feed thee, or thirsty and give thee drink? And when did we see thee a stranger and welcome thee, or naked and clothe thee? And when did we see thee sick or in prison and visit thee?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those at his left hand, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when did we see thee hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to thee?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did it not to me.’ And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life” (Matthew 25: 31-46).

Dialogue:

- How is it possible to focus our sights on our neighbors, especially people who have been wounded by the roadside, discarded and rejected? (FT §15)
- What does injustice tell us about the equality of rights grounded in innate human dignity? (FT §19)
- How does the pandemic - COVID-19 - impact our thinking of our brothers and sisters and our world? (FT §31)



Chapter 2

A Stranger on the Road

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Learn more about the rich ethnic and cultural diversity of our Catholic brothers and sisters in the parishes in the archdiocese. Attend Mass at one of our cultural parishes. [Parishes celebrating Masses in multiple Languages.](#)
- Volunteer to attend an L'Arche meeting to get to know people living with Developmental Disabilities.
- Many parishes are now operating their own food pantries. Our parishes are in critical need of volunteers to help distribute food and welcome the hungry. Volunteer to help!

Listen:

Even within a society that ignores the cries of the suffering, we are called to be like the Good Samaritan, “a stranger on the road.” We are called to respond as he did with compassion and care for the frail and vulnerable (FT §64-65). Pope Francis asks us to envision and embrace our own vocation, seeing all people we encounter as our neighbor. We are asked to put aside our prejudices and see all persons, regardless of ability, status, race or creed as possessing equal dignity and created in God’s image. We must recognize our role in serving our brothers and sisters regardless of what resources the government supplies. Humans are “made for love.” We are made to speak clearly about “our conviction of the inalienable dignity of each person, and our reasons for loving and accepting all our brothers and sisters” (FT §86).

Scripture:

There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.” But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight. He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise” (Lk 10:25-37).

Dialogue:

- Who is our neighbor?
- Do we see the marginalized? Where? Why do they remain in the margins?
- How do we become co-responsible in creating a society that is able to include, integrate and lift up those who are on the margins or are suffering?
- Are those who are frail, disabled, or poor lesser? How do we love them into becoming our brothers and sisters?



Chapter 3

Envisioning and Engendering an Open World

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Educate yourself by connecting to [Maryland Catholic Conference \(MCC\)](#) or [District of Columbia Catholic Conference \(DCCC\)](#) on the upcoming 2021 legislation in your local county. How can you advocate for equitable resources?
- Support fair trade partners and organizations that advocate for people on the margins like CRS crs.org or serrv.org/crs_handcraft.

Listen:

We are social beings. We must push “outside the self” to realize “a fuller existence in another.” (FT §88) Pope Francis tells us “love impels us towards universal communion” (FT §95). It is love that draws us into deeper communion (fraternity) with others. Even as we are called to fraternity with our brothers and sisters, it is clear that many people lack basic human rights. Human rights have no borders, and cannot be denied to anyone regardless of ethnicity, national origin, gender or ability. Understanding this, the Holy Father asks us to consider “an ethics of international relations” (FT §126) with regard to goods and services being available to all those in need, regardless of borders. Pope Francis warns us that “unless the rights of each individual are harmoniously ordered to the greater good, those rights will end up being considered limitless and consequently will become a source of conflicts and violence” (FT §111).

Pope Francis highlights the damaging effects of ignoring people who cry out for justice and human rights. Pope Francis warns us of the evil of racism, which “is a virus that quickly mutates and, instead of disappearing, goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting” (FT §97). Another example of our brothers and sisters who lack full access to human rights are persons living with disabilities. It is not our duty merely to care for persons living with disabilities or welcome people of various cultures, but we must acknowledge and hold up their inherent dignity by advocating for their full and active participation in our Churches and in our communities. Solidarity is the solution to accompanying our brothers and sisters who are on the margins. Solidarity is, “thinking and acting in terms of community.” Human rights, dignity and access to the Earth’s goods belong to all people, and we must learn to act for the common good.

Scripture:

If I speak in human and angelic tongues but do not have love, I am a resounding gong or a clashing cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy and comprehend all mysteries and all knowledge; if I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give away everything I own, and if I hand my body over so that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It is not jealous, [love] is not pompous, it is not inflated, it is not rude, it does not seek its own interests, it is not quick-tempered, it does not brood over injury, it does not rejoice over wrongdoing but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. If there are prophecies, they will be brought to nothing; if tongues, they will cease; if knowledge, it will be brought to nothing. For we know partially and we prophesy partially, but when the perfect comes, the partial will pass away. When I was a child, I used to talk as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man, I put aside childish things. At present we see indistinctly, as in a mirror, but then face to face. At present I know partially; then I shall know fully, as I am fully known. So faith, hope, love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love” (1 Cor. 13:1-13).

Dialogue:

- What does it mean to live with common purpose for the common good of all people?
- What does the phrase, “rights have no borders” mean?
- How are you living out actions of solidarity with the poor, disabled, and immigrants?



Chapter 4

A Heart Open to the Whole World

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Consider volunteering with different [Catholic Charities DC](#) ministries that support the efforts of the people of our diocese who are migrants or immigrants.
- Consider advocating with a locally and nationally funded CCHD group, or [Washington Interfaith Network](#), to support people of our Archdiocese who are migrants, immigrants, disabled, or struggling economically.

Listen:

“An appropriate and authentic openness to the world presupposes the capacity to be open to one’s neighbor within a family of nations. Cultural, economic and political integration with neighboring peoples should therefore be accompanied by a process of education that promotes the value of love for one’s neighbor, the first indispensable step towards attaining a healthy universal integration” (FT §151).

In Chapter 4, Pope Francis beckons each of us to remember God’s love for every person. As the People of God, regardless of our faith or connection to a ‘specific’ nation, we are invited to welcome our brothers and sisters into our lives, our countries, our Churches as God welcomes and calls each of us. We are called to be open to others; we have the opportunity to see this invitation to others as an invitation to our Triune God- to welcome Father, Son, and Spirit, not just into our personal lives, but also into every aspect of our communities. We build up our community, the ‘social friendships’ that guide us to encounter and moments of solidarity. The Holy Father notes that these efforts are “fruits of the common effort” (FT §132).

Scripture:

“And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen. Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons; and now the Lord your God has made you as the stars of heaven for multitude” (Dt. 10: 12-22).

Dialogue:

- How have you been a reflection of God’s call to welcome the stranger?
- Do you use language of superiority or disparaging language when referencing those of a different age, nationality, ethnic identity, socioeconomic status (undocumented persons vs. illegal aliens; “those” people; racial or derogatory epithets)?



Chapter 5

A Better Kind of Politics

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Pray the [Novena for Faithful Citizenship](#).
- Learn more about [Catholic Social Teaching](#) by watching these seven videos.

Listen:

“What is needed is a model of social, political and economic participation “that can include popular movements and invigorate local, national and international governing structures with that torrent of moral energy that springs from including the excluded in the building of a common destiny”, while also ensuring that “these experiences of solidarity which grow up from below, from the subsoil of the planet-can come together, be more coordinated, keep on meeting one another...such movements are “social poets” that in their own way, work, propose, promote and liberate. They help make possible an integral human development that goes beyond “the idea of social policies being a policy for the poor, but never with the poor and never of the poor, much less part of a project that reunites peoples” (FT §169).

This chapter encourages each of us to move through the world alongside one another. The concepts from Catholic Social and Moral Teaching of solidarity, subsidiarity, and the common good take center stage (see the introduction to this study guide for definitions of these terms). The chapter also engages each of us into the wider call of the political or civic life. We must participate in the world- in our local, regional, national, and international political systems. While participation looks different for each of us, we must remember that we work to support the common good. We continue to work to the end of supporting human dignity.

Scripture:

Jesus said to the chief priests and the elders of the people: “Hear another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a hedge around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a tower. Then he leased it to tenants and went on a journey. When vintage time drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants to obtain his produce. But the tenants seized the servants and one they beat, another they killed, and a third they stoned. Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones, but they treated them in the same way. Finally, he sent his son to them, thinking, ‘They will respect my son.’ But when the tenants saw the son, they said to one another, ‘This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and acquire his inheritance.’ They seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. What will the owner of the vineyard do to those tenants when he comes?” They answered him, “He will put those wretched men to a wretched death and lease his vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the proper times.” Jesus said to them, “Did you never read in the Scriptures: The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; by the Lord has this been done, and it is wonderful in our eyes? Therefore, I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that will produce its fruit” (Mt. 21:33-43).

Dialogue:

- Our Holy Father challenges us to “a better form of politics”. What steps can you take to meet this challenge?
- What role does concupiscence – the inclination to be concerned only with myself, my group, my interests, play in our current culture?
- Integral Ecology is the common understanding that all is connected. We are to work for the good of all. This is key to our understanding of “a better form of politics.” How does integral ecology encourage us to be engaged in the mission of the Church and be missionary disciples?



Chapter 6

Dialogue and Friendship in Society

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- The USCCB's *Civilize It* program encourages civil dialogue between different groups. This program is a Catholic, non-partisan call to focus on the dignity of all people and to put faith into action by bearing witness to compassion and civility. You can take the pledge toward constructive dialogue and find helpful resources [here](#).
- Racism is still prevalent in the United States and our Church today. As we seek to work against systemic racism in our nation, we have to foster opportunities for dialogue. Consider gathering a group together to determine which efforts you and your community will undertake [here](#).

Listen:

“In a pluralistic society, dialogue is the best way to realize what ought always to be affirmed and respected apart from any ephemeral consensus. Such dialogue needs to be enriched and illumined by clear thinking, rational arguments, a variety of perspectives and the contribution of different fields of knowledge and points of view. Nor can it exclude the conviction that it is possible to arrive at certain fundamental truths always to be upheld...The dignity of others is to be respected in all circumstances, not because that dignity is something we have invented or imagined, but because human beings possess an intrinsic worth superior to that of material objects and contingent situations” (FT §211-213).

Fratelli Tutti highlights the need for civil dialogue. As a culture, we have moved away from an acceptance of diversity, in part because of increasingly polarized political and religious conversations. We need to seek out people in our pluralistic society who will embrace dialogue for the sake of the common good. This mission is strengthened by diversity in religious and public life. Pope Francis reminds us that an authentic pluralism is not just an acceptance of diversity, but also a celebration of the many traditions and identities that make up our cultures; a true sense of pluralism does not just highlight what we have in common, but also celebrates what makes each of our cultures and traditions unique. Cooperation between different social, political, cultural, and religious groups requires intentional and respectful conversations built around the pursuit of justice and universal truth. In turn, this universal truth is based in respect for the life and dignity of the human person. Kindness is the bridge that helps us to build these conversations.

Scripture:

“Then Peter began to speak to them: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him. You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all” (Acts 10: 34-36).

Dialogue:

- How have you seen a diversity of cultural identities represented in various Church practices?
- How can we celebrate diversity while embracing universal truths that protect the dignity of each human person?
- In what ways might we need to embrace a preferential option for the poor as we work toward a more just society?



Chapter 7

Paths of Renewed Encounter

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Explore Catholic Charities: [DC Re-Entry Program](#), to support the ministry and become involved.
- Explore how you can work towards restorative justice. The [Catholic Mobilizing Network](#) and local life issues groups offer opportunities to become engaged in advocacy.

Listen:

The path to peace does not mean making society uniform, but people working together, side-by-side, pursuing goals that benefit everyone. A wide variety of practical proposals and diverse experiences can help achieve shared objectives and serve the common good. The problems a society is experiencing need to be clearly identified so that the existence of different ways of understanding and resolving these problems can be appreciated. The path to social unity always entails acknowledging the possibility that others have, at least in part, a legitimate point of view, something worthwhile to contribute, even if they were in error or acted badly.

The Beatitudes remind us, “Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they will be called Children of God.” The breakdown of our communities and the injustices we face in the world today cannot be resolved without investment from all members of our society. History and contemporary culture have made it clear that our leaders cannot be the sole solution to the problems in the world today; rather, justice requires a dialogue that includes everyone, especially the poor and vulnerable. In order to work toward renewed encounter, we need to foster conversations toward reconciliation, working to a greater understanding of what it means to be one human family.

In this chapter, Pope Francis highlights past teachings on the death penalty, reinforcing that the death penalty is never a just source of reconciliation; rather, the death penalty is a failed source of retribution. Catholics are called to oppose the death penalty and to work toward its abolishment across the world. Any unjust punishment, including a life sentence of imprisonment, is a “secret death penalty” (FT §268) that also deprives human persons of their dignity and freedom. Pope Francis asks Catholics to stand up against war in the modern world, where war is often a pursuit of “partisan interests” that fail to uphold the “universal common good.”

Scripture:

“You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, ‘You shall not murder’; and ‘whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, ‘You fool,’ you will be liable to the hell of fire. So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister, and then come and offer your gift” (Mt. 5: 21-26).

Dialogue:

- Do you have intergenerational friendships in your own life?
- How have these friendships helped you to understand the past, the present world and to look to the future?
- Does our culture provide opportunities for encounter and reconciliation?
- How can we build these opportunities into our communities, families, and justice systems?



Chapter 8

Religions at the Service of Fraternity in Our World

Act:

Social Justice Advocacy and Charity

- Host a virtual interfaith gathering in your own community or among neighbors and friends. Join [WIN](#) and become active in local ecumenical and interreligious efforts for the common good.
- Examine the work of [Maryland Catholic Conference \(MCC\)](#) and the [District of Columbia Catholic Conference \(DCCC\)](#). Participate in opportunities to advocate for public policies that promote the dignity of all persons.

Listen:

“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 his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God’s love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised”...It follows that “we believers need to find occasions to speak with one another and to act together for the common good and the promotion of the poor. This has nothing to do with watering down or concealing our deepest convictions when we encounter others who think differently than ourselves... We believers are challenged to return to our sources, in order to concentrate on what is essential: worship of God and love for our neighbor, lest some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The truth is that violence has no basis in our fundamental religious convictions, but only in their distortion” (FT §281-282).

As Catholics, we believe that our salvation is tied to Jesus’ Life, Death and Resurrection (Paschal Mystery), which was for the sake of all people. As Catholics, we also believe that Jesus’ Paschal mystery is lived out in the communion of the Church, and that the Church is universal. Since the Church is universal, our faith celebrates all cultures and calls for us to live the Gospel of Christ in community- the community of our Church and world. Since we live out our faith within a pluralistic culture, we must dialogue with other faith traditions. Pluralism, both in culture and religion, does not weaken our faith; rather, it strengthens our faith in God by building up our understanding of community and helping each of us to prioritize relationship with God over relationship with material things. Religious liberty must be guaranteed for all people of faith, and all people of faith must condemn religious violence.

Scripture:

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many members, yet one body” (1 Cor. 12: 12-20).

Dialogue:

- How can we, as Christians, dialogue with other faith traditions while continuing to teach and share our own faith?
- How can we use our own voices in the public sphere “to build bridges, to break down walls, to sow seeds of reconciliation” (FT §276)?

