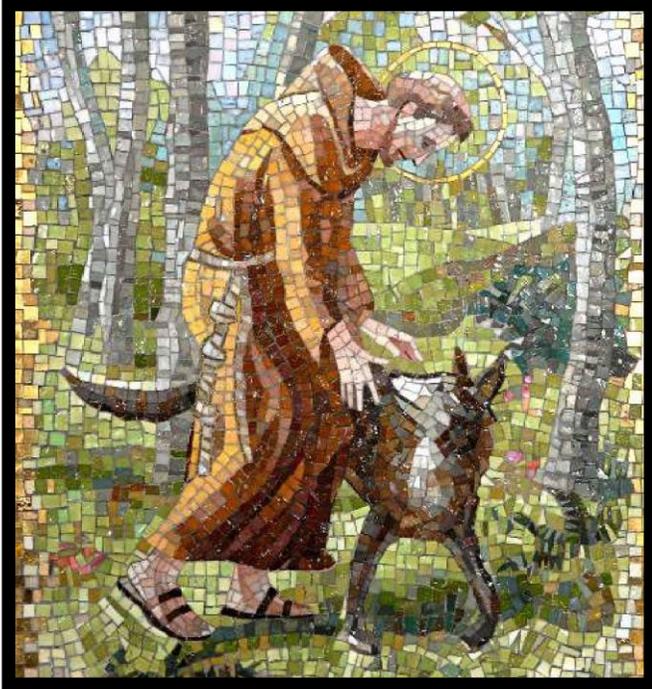


## Chapter 4

### A Heart Open to the Whole World



Credit: Fr. Paul Reczek, OFM

### A Word about Inclusive Language

The announcement that the Holy Father was going to Assisi to sign a new encyclical on social relationships caused some people to applaud. When we learned that the encyclical would be known as *Fratelli Tutti*, much of that applause died out. Didn't using the masculine noun show that the Catholic Church is still out of touch with today's realities? In fact, Church language is not known for keeping up with the times. As we go forward, we Franciscans share a deep concern about inclusive language and the role of women in the Church while also sharing the urgent plea of this letter from Pope Francis.

This document would once have been called "an encyclical of the Holy Father Francis on fraternity and social friendship." Somewhere down the line people started referring to papal documents, such as encyclicals, bulls, etc., by their incipit, the first two or three words of the document itself, making it easier to remember and discuss them.

Every word has a denotation, a precise definition, which we can find in dictionaries; however, it also has a connotation, a commonly accepted meaning, even some emotional impact.

For this reason, the same word can evoke feelings of joy and security in one person while causing someone else to feel threatened or repulsed. In any conversation or dialogue, both parties need not only to listen to the words, but also to delve into what the other is saying. I personally find it encouraging that the English translators of this encyclical show some sensitivity to the issue by leaving the incipit in Italian.

Basically, the Holy Father is encouraging all of us to discover what Francis did after that fateful day when he stripped himself and said, "Now I can truly say, 'Our Father.'" If we are all children of one father, we are then all brothers and sisters.

*Sr. Nancy Celaschi, OSF*

### How to Use This Guide

1. This guide can be used with small or large groups and for personal reflection.
2. Feel free to share with others the URL where you found the guide. You are free to print it for others who prefer a printed text. This guide is **free**.
3. This guide serves as an overview to the chapter featured but cannot in the space available do justice to the richness of each chapter.

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*Margaret Carney, OSF and Pat McCloskey, OFM coordinated this study guide series.*

## Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter has three sections: Borders and Their Limits; Reciprocal Gifts; and Local and Universal. It treats issues that come to the fore when we move from generalizations about “a global village” and must deal with the complexities of immigration: racial and ethnic diversity, the need for global systems, and the preservation of unique cultures.

Describing the problems created by current migrations that create critical situations in host nations, Pope Francis describes the process by which immigrants should be integrated into the receiving country in four words: “welcome, protect, promote and integrate” (110). Beneath each of these terms is a world of political choice regarding legal remedies and citizens’ response to immigrant populations as they become enculturated in their new home. We do well to study the list of fifteen specific policy issues (130). This is thoughtful study of the legal policy standards that exist—or are negated—in nations where immigration requires governmental response.

The encyclical moves then to consider the difficulties that arise when cultures are in conflict or are a source of division within a community, whether it is a locality or an entire nation. Here there is no tendency to brush over the real work that is entailed in creating a healthy climate of unity and diversity combined. Pope Francis points to the problems created when a group is a victim of “cultural sclerosis” (134)—the inability to welcome and to benefit from what the “other” brings to it. He also points to the evidence of “local narcissism” (146) that refuses to accept what enrichment may occur by a real exchange of cultural goods. The antidote would be found in “universal [mutuality] and social friendship” (142).

We realize as we ponder this chapter that these terms are laden with significance. They are “shorthand” for a sustained commitment to create the kind of intelligent governance that can overcome the crises created by forced migration. The closing proposal is that educators focus on real love of neighbor—the kind of political charity that knows that “common good” (153) must be realized in solidarity among nations and within nations.

*Margaret Carney, OSF*

## Quotes from Chapter 4

- *We need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together or no one is saved (137).*
- *Let us realize that as our minds and hearts narrow, the less capable we become of understanding the world around us (147).*
- *A living culture, enriched by elements from other places, does not import a mere carbon copy of those new elements, but integrates them in its own unique way (148).*
- *No one people, culture, or individual can achieve everything on its own: to attain fulfillment in life we need others (150).*

## Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

1. Describe an experience in which you were enriched by real encounter with another culture. Were you required to “give up” some personal bias or beliefs?
2. Fifteen practices that will improve the lives of immigrants are listed as responses to people fleeing “grave humanitarian crises” (130). Are you engaged in the development or support of any one of these proposals? (This includes engagement through advocating to legislators or support of agencies that respond to these needs.)
3. Education that seeks to promote love of neighbor—as described by the pope—is clearly an education that goes beyond the catechism. What evidence do you see that our Catholic and Franciscan schools (at all levels) are striving for this?

## Author



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