



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

Pastoral message to the Diocese, 4th October 2020

My dear brothers and sisters

These last months have been challenging for us all. They will remain so, for the next foreseeable months, too, as we all strive to live our lives in the shadow of the pandemic, and at the same time to care for the weakest. What this experience is showing us is that we are all in the same boat. We are all vulnerable. We know more deeply now that life is precious. Human life is to be treasured. We share a common humanity. All of us are brothers and sisters. We recognise the great dignity of each person.

This is why we warmly welcome and embrace Pope Francis' new Encyclical Letter, *Fratelli Tutti, Brothers and Sisters, All*, which was published today. The Holy Father reminds us that we share a common fraternity, because we are all made in the image and likeness of God. Pope Francis shares with us a remarkable vision of what it means to live a social friendship with one another, not just those whom we meet on a day to day basis, but those who are far from us, whom we must take the risk of coming to know and embracing.

We believe in a God who, in Jesus Christ, took on our human condition. Jesus is the brother who walks beside us in the journey of life and who challenges us to walk across the road to our brother or sister in need. He knew what it was to be hungry, to be poor, to be far from home, to be rejected, die the death of a criminal and to be buried in a borrowed grave. He is the Lord who has conquered death and the dark forces of hatred, violence and war. He shows us the path of true fraternity, of mutual love, which leads us along the way of beatitude and union with Him, and a deeper unity with one another.

I urge all of us to read and reflect carefully, and prayerfully, on this profound and beautiful letter which the Holy Father has written to us.

Let us join in the prayer which the Holy Father himself makes:

“O God, Trinity of love, from the profound communion of your divine life, pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love. Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus, in his family of Nazareth, and in the early Christian community. Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel, discovering Christ in each human being, recognising him crucified in the sufferings of the abandoned and forgotten of our world, and risen in each brother or sister who makes a new start. Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty, reflected in all the peoples of the earth, so that we may discover anew that all are important, and all are necessary, different faces of the one humanity that God so loves. Amen”.

I ask you, too, to pray for me.

Yours devotedly,

+Mark

Bishop of Plymouth

I invite you to read the full text of the Encyclical here:

http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

A summary of the Encyclical can be found here:

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-10/fratelli-tutti-pope-fraternity-social-friendship-long-summary.html>

Video presentations of the Encyclical are here:

<http://www.vaticannews.va>