

Fratelli Tutti Advent Reflections

Introduction:

As we wait again for the celebration of the birth of Christ, let us wait reflecting on the wisdom expressed in Pope Francis' new encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*; may Francis' words lead us on this year's Advent journey.

Access the online interactive Advent calendar version of the resource at: educationforjustice.org/fratelli-tutti-advent-calendar/

Nov. 29—Day 1

"Every human being has the right to live with dignity and to develop integrally; this fundamental right cannot be denied by any country. People have this right even if they are unproductive, or were born with or developed limitations. This does not detract from their great dignity as human persons, a dignity based not on circumstances but on the intrinsic worth of their being." #107

During this Advent season, we ask for the grace to recognize and respect each and every member of the human family.

Nov. 30—Day 2

"Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility. . . Let us take an active part in renewing and supporting our troubled societies" #77. . . "All of us have a responsibility for the wounded, those of our own people and all the peoples of the earth. Let us care for the needs of every man and woman, young and old, with the same fraternal spirit of care and closeness that marked the Good Samaritan." #79

During this Advent season, may we take on our responsibility for the wounded and ignored, as the Good Samaritan did.

Dec. 1—Day 3

"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." #7

During this Advent Season, may we realize our kinship with one another so we may create a common dream of justice and peace.

Dec. 2—Day 4

“It is not possible to settle for what was achieved in the past and complacently enjoy it, as if we could somehow disregard the fact that many of our brothers and sisters still endure situations that cry out for our attention.” #11

During this Advent Season, let us pray and act for the common good as we continually face new challenges to build a just world.

Dec. 3—Day 5

“We are more alone than ever in world that promotes individual interests and weakens the communitarian dimension of life.” #12

During this Advent Season, we humbly confront our own individualism and pray for community and cooperation.

Dec. 4—Day 6

“We need to think of ourselves more and more as a single family dwelling in a common home.” #17

During this Advent Season, we continue to pray to affirm that we are one family, living together in Creation, our common home.

Dec. 5—Day 7

“We have grown indifferent to all kinds of wastefulness, starting with the waste of food. . .to the discarding of throwaway people.” #18

During this Advent Season, may we grow in respect towards God’s gifts of food, the natural world, and all peoples.

Dec. 6—Day 8

“Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfillment except “in the sincere gift of self to others”. Nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons.” #87

During this Advent Season, may we find new ways to encounter others and give them the gift of our listening.

Dec. 7—Day 9

“Instances of racism continue to shame us, for they show that our supposed social progress is not as real or definitive as we think.” #20

During this Advent Season, let us be aware of the racism that inflicts our communities and reflect on the solutions we must develop to respond to this sin.

Dec. 8—Day 10

"Many forms of injustice persist, fed. . . by a profit-based economic model that does not hesitate to exploit, discard and even kill human beings. While one part of humanity lives in opulence, another part sees its own dignity denied, scorned or trampled upon, and its fundamental rights discarded or violated." #22

During this Advent Season, we pray that we may awaken to the loss of economic rights so many endure, crushing their spirits.

Dec. 9—Day 11

"Doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence, since they are frequently less able to defend their rights." #23

During this Advent Season, we pray that the rights and the dignity of all women are respected and supported in every nation.

Dec. 10—Day 12

"Trafficking in persons and other contemporary forms of enslavement are a worldwide problem that needs to be taken seriously by humanity as a whole." #24

During this Advent Season, we pray for an end to human trafficking and all forms of slavery in the global community.

Dec. 11—Day 13

"Today, new walls are erected for self-preservation, the outside world ceases to exist and leaves only 'my' world, to the point that others, no longer considered human beings possessed of an inalienable dignity, become only 'them'." #27

During this Advent Season, let us tear down walls and barriers that keep us in fear of others and in darkness.

Dec. 12—Day 14

"Isolation and withdrawal into one's own interests are never the way to restore hope and bring about renewal. Rather, it is closeness; it is the culture of encounter." #30

During this Advent Season, bring us out of isolation and restore our hope so we may act for renewal.

Dec. 13—Day 15

"The decision to include or exclude those lying wounded along the roadside can serve as a criterion for judging every economic, political, social and religious project. Each day we have to decide whether to be Good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders." #69

During this Advent Season, give us the grace to understand that all personal and political actions have an impact on those on the margins.

Dec. 14—Day 16

"The spiritual stature of a person's life is measured by love, which in the end remains 'the criterion for the definitive decision about a human life's worth or lack thereof'. . . All of us, as believers, need to recognize that love takes first place: love must never be put at risk, and the greatest danger lies in failing to love (cf. 1 Cor 13:1-13)." #92

During this Advent Season, may we recognize that our spiritual development depends on our willingness to grow in love.

Dec. 15—Day 17

"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." #211

During this Advent Season, guide us to dialogue with openness, respect and concern for the common good.

Dec. 16—Day 18

"Often, the more vulnerable members of society are the victims of unfair generalizations. If at times the poor and the dispossessed react with attitudes that appear antisocial, we should realize that in many cases those reactions are born of a history of scorn and social exclusion." #234

During this Advent Season, help us deepen our understanding of the wounds that those at the margins have inherited.

Dec. 17—Day 19

"No one will ever openly deny that they [immigrants] are human beings, yet in practice, by our decisions and the way we treat them, we can show that we consider them less worthy, less important, less human. For Christians, this way of thinking and acting is unacceptable, since it sets certain political preferences above deep convictions of our faith: the inalienable dignity of each human person regardless of origin, race or religion, and the supreme law of fraternal love." #39

During this Advent Season, we pray that the rights and dignity of all immigrants are recognized; help us to act on this truth.

Dec. 18—Day 20

"[Social] peace is not achieved by recourse only to those who are pure and untainted, since 'even people who can be considered questionable on account of their errors have something to offer which must not be overlooked'. Nor does it come from ignoring social demands or quelling disturbances, since it is not 'a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority'. What is important is to create processes of encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences." #217

During this Advent Season, guide us to understand how to build peace with imperfect people, over time, through authentic dialogue.

Dec. 19—Day 21

"Individualism does not make us more free, more equal, more fraternal. The mere sum of individual interests is not capable of generating a better world for the whole human family. Nor can it save us from the many ills that are now increasingly globalized. . . Radical individualism makes us believe that everything consists in giving free rein to our own ambitions, as if by pursuing ever greater ambitions and creating safety nets we would somehow be serving the common good." #105

During this last week of Advent, give us the vision and courage to move beyond our individual interests and to pursue the common good.

Dec. 20—Day 22

"If only [our current] immense sorrow may not prove useless, but enable us to take a step forward towards a new style of life. If only we might rediscover once for all that we need one another, and that in this way our human family can experience a rebirth, with all its faces, all its hands and all its voices, beyond the walls that we have erected." #35

During this last week of Advent, we look to a rebirth of community, of care for the common good, and of care for Creation.

Dec. 21—Day 23

"A truly human and fraternal society will be capable of ensuring in an efficient and stable way that each of its members is accompanied at every stage of life. Not only by providing for their basic needs, but by enabling them to give the best of themselves, even though their performance may be less than optimum, their pace slow or their efficiency limited." #110

During this last week of Advent, grant us the wisdom to understand we have all been created to flourish and that we can only flourish by contributing to the common good and helping each other develop our gifts.

Dec. 22—Day 24

"We need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together or no one is saved. Poverty, decadence and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting the entire planet. . .in some parts of our world individuals or peoples are prevented from developing their potential and beauty by poverty or other structural limitations. In the end, this will impoverish us all." #137

During this last week of Advent, help us realize we are all interconnected; move us beyond borders in reaching out to all the members of the human family.

Dec. 23—Day 25

"Love impels us towards universal communion. No one can mature or find fulfillment by withdrawing from others. By its very nature, love calls for growth in openness and the ability to accept others as part of a continuing adventure that makes every periphery converge in a greater sense of mutual belonging. As Jesus told us: "You are all brothers" (Mt 23:8)." #95

As we end this Advent season, let us be blessed with the capacity to love others, following the example and teachings of Christ.

Dec. 24—Day 26

"If we accept the great principle that there are rights born of our inalienable human dignity, we can rise to the challenge of envisaging a new humanity. We can aspire to a world that provides land, housing and work for all. This is the true path of peace, not the senseless and myopic strategy of sowing fear and mistrust in the face of outside threats." #127

As we welcome the celebration of the birth of the Prince of Peace, may He bless the entire human family with His love and His peace.

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