

# Fratelli Tutti Study Guide (Chapter 5)

## Chapter 5: A Better Kind of Politics



Credit: Shutterstock

### 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 feel-

ings 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.

### Summary of Chapter 5

Pope Francis says some terms used politically have lost their true meaning and move us toward intense polarization. For example, "popular," "populist," and "liberal" are used to place individuals, groups, and governments into categories that exclude and tend to misconstrue what is meant by "people." Pope Francis states, "To be part of a people is to be part of a shared identity arising from social and cultural bonds" (158). Exploiting these bonds appeals to the worst in us, undermining institutions and the law.

"People" is a living dynamic, open to growth because differences are welcomed. The current political system fails for the most part to see this and address the underlying issues. Some liberal approaches tend toward individualism and deny a freedom not noted in a shared narrative.

Because of transnational economics, the financial sectors tend to win out over the political. Pope Francis calls for a reform of the United Nations, economic institutions, and international finance, that will place

