

NUNUNTIA

Newsletter of the Congregation of the Mission

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FRATELLI TUTTI: THE CONTEXT

The semesters that I teach Catholic social teaching, my students can be challenged not only by memorizing the Latin titles of papal encyclicals, but also the dates of them as well as the issues addressed in each. I encourage them to approach these richly inspirational texts with an appreciation that Catholic social teaching always tackles contemporary social, political, and economic concerns. If one knows one's history, one will understand that which the Church is addressing. It is a matter of context and content.

Austen Ivereigh, Pope Francis' biographer, has suggested rightly that *Fratelli Tutti* should be read much like Pope Benedict's own triptych of encyclicals on faith, hope, and love. For Francis, Ivereigh argues, *Fratelli Tutti* completes his own triptych. *Evangelii Gaudium* focused on how we are to live in relationship with God. *Laudato Si'* investigated our relationship with the global ecosystem. *Fratelli Tutti* examines our commitment to global solidarity, particularly with the more marginalized and those on the peripheries of society.

While I appreciate Ivereigh's insight, I believe there also is a more immanent context. It is the health and well-being of the global village since the beginning of 2020 and how the pope has understood God's promptings during this time.

On the afternoon of March 27, 2020, most of the members of my local community here at St. John's

University gathered in our common room to watch Pope Francis' *Urbi et orbi* prayer from a dark and empty St. Peter's Square at the Vatican. None of us confreres spoke a word during this time; it was a profound gripping service. The pope's words were our sentiments and his movements including blessing the world with blessed sacrament were our hope. In his homily, Pope Francis used Mark's passage about calming of the sea (4:35-41) to capture the global village's position. The world was overwhelmed with a biological crisis. A deadly virus had taken possession of our daily routines, and no end seemingly was in sight. The pandemic made most of us feel very vulnerable and lead others to despair. The holy father was calling on God to walk with the human community during this horribly exhausting and terribly exhausting pandemic. The holy father called upon God to renew humanity's faith in God's divine presence amongst us for we, like the apostles, have been crying out "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

At the end of the pope's remarks, he encouraged us the faithful: "Do not be afraid" (Mt 28:5) for we, like Peter can "cast all our anxieties onto you (sic), for you care about us" (1 Pet 5:7). While a very comforting message in its entirety, the midsection of the holy father's message is one not to miss as it forms a prelude to *Fratelli Tutti*. It addresses the reasons why

we might be afraid or be lacking in faith. Pope Francis returns to a foundational theme of his pontificate, as he expressed in previous encyclicals *Evangelii Gaudium* and *Laudato Si*: self-referentiality. Without God, it is all about me. When it comes to painful existential realities like Covid-19 where I do not have the power to alter what is before me, hopelessness can crush me. Pope Francis summoned the community then as he does in *Fratelli Tutti* to a “Lent” of conversion echoing the words of the prophet Joel “return to me with all your heart” (2:12).” The holy father’s words were impactful as evidence ensued about the liveliness and growth of faith among people even given the reality that churches were shuttered and worship moved online. The Pew Foundation recently reported that 24% of those surveyed said their faith had become stronger during this horrid time. Only 2% reported their faith becoming weaker while 47% related that their faith has not changed much. More recently, the Foundation distributed another set of results that indicated that a significant number (86%) of Americans see lessons to be learned from the pandemic. 35% believe that those lessons are promptings from God to make amends and restructure a more hopeful inclusive future.

This set of results echoed Pope Francis’ keen

observation that the Coronavirus crisis was a decisive moment for the global community to rebuild their relationship with God. The global health crisis is “a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not.”

This time is or, better yet, can be the moment of restoration of God’s place in our personal lives, relationships, and creation. Even give the crippling stress we experience at these times of confinement, safety, and uncertainty, these days also can serve as a keen opportunity to right our regard for the relationships “that matter.” In light of our global health crisis, Pope Francis’ promulgation *Fratelli Tutti* makes immense sense. Now, it is a matter to investigate the holy father’s words and respond accordingly.

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220 YEARS FROM HIS BIRTH. SAINT JUSTIN DE JACOBIS

“ARTIST OF DIALOGUE AND WEAVER OF FRATERNITY”

San Fele (PZ), 9 October 2020. Justin De Jacobis is remembered, in the small Lucanian town where he came into the world 220 years ago, as a “man of dialogue and weaver of fraternity.” The initiative intended to inaugurate the missionary month of October in Basilicata, fittingly indicating, for example, this extraordinary Vincentian missionary, son and disciple of Saint Vincent de Paul. Born in San Fele on 9 October 1800, he left for Ethiopia in May 1839 with the responsibility of Apostolic Prefect. He became Bishop and Apostolic Vicar in 1847. For the indigenous peoples, he will be Abuna Jacob Maryam (Father Jacob of the Virgin Mary). Saint Paul VI, in the canonization homily (26 October 1975), called him, “Father of the Church of Ethiopia.” De Jacobis understood clearly and ahead of his time (200 years before the Second Vatican Council!) the importance of constructive dialogue with native Coptic Christians, but also with all the confessional and religious realities present at the time in the very vast territory of the Ethiopian plateau.

The event began at 4:30 pm with the welcome of the participants in Piazza Nociocchio, about 100 meters from the birthplace of our Saint. Promoted at the regional level, among those present were priests and representatives of the other dioceses of Basilicata. On the occasion, Abba Keflemariam Asghedom and Abba Yohannes Keflemariam were presented to the large assembly. They are two of the three Eritrean priests of the new community established in Melfi at the service of the diocese. They will continue the decades-long presence of the Italian Vincentians destined by Superiors for another location.

“Church of God, people gathered in him, you are witness to his wonders.” On the notes of the song proposed by the diocesan polyphonic choir, at 5:00 pm the prayer and memory event was introduced with the Eucharistic celebration presided over by the Metropolitan and Archbishop of Potenza, Salvatore Ligorio. In his homily, he focused on some salient points from the life and work of De Jacobis. He

proposed him as: 1. a believer who responded in an exemplary manner to the common vocation of all the baptized to holiness, a man immersed in prayer, lover of the Eucharist, very devoted to the Madonna; 2. a passionate educator who guided the establishment of the first Ethiopian Catholic Seminary for the necessary formation of qualified formators and pastors and an indispensable resource for leading the Ethiopian peoples on the roads of the Gospel; 3. tenacious and courageous, who never became discouraged or held back in the face of challenges, fierce persecutions, and other innumerable difficulties encountered along the way in his work as a heroic witness and evangelizer in the name of Jesus Christ.

At 6:00 pm, a round table with several participants proposed a commemoration of the holy Apostle of Ethiopia. The coordinator was Father Michele Del Cogliano, young parish priest of the town. After the greetings of the president of the regional council, Dr. Carmine Cicala, and the mayor, Donato Sperduto, there were other talks by Archbishop Ligorio and then by Father Franco Viola, Secretary of the Regional Commission for Evangelization and Cooperation among the Churches. There were two important advances: the commitment of the Bishops and regional political executives to promote Saint Justin

De Jacobis as co-patron of Basilicata and patron saint of Lucanians who emigrated abroad. The brief conclusions were entrusted to the diocesan Bishop Ciro Fanelli. Then the inauguration of the exhibition, "The cry of the earth," on the themes of the Encyclical, *Laudato si'*, by Pope Francis, took place. It was set up in the rooms of the birthplace of Saint Justin. The exhibition, sponsored by the Episcopal Conference of Basilicata, will be at the disposal of the region's Diocesan Missionary Centers. Finally, with the use of extensive passages from his writings, a Reading on the life of the Saint, "Lucan by birth and Abyssinian by election and choice," was held. With the awareness of having given honor to the Saint with dignity in memory of his birthday, the evening ended with a play of lights and the bright colors of fireworks.

*Biagio Falco c.m.
Province of Italy*

KÉRÉ [FAMINE] SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

Madagascar is ranked among the poorest countries in the world.

Throughout the island, we see that the majority of the people live in difficult conditions, but this situation is exacerbated further by the Covid-19 pandemic. The number of poor is increasing; many people have lost their jobs.

As for the southern part of Madagascar, the two regions, Anosy and Androy, are currently in a critical situation, not only due to the coronavirus, but also due mainly to the drought, which, for years, remains a major problem to be solved. This is why the people from these regions always have suffered from significant food shortage.

This time, there was no rainy season for two years in this southern part of Madagascar. Food crops produce only very small quantities. Cattle, goats, and poultry are also in unfavorable conditions; they are starving. As a result, people no longer have purchasing power and cannot find enough to eat. The bush inhabitants eat BONTAGNE (ash + tamarind) for their hunger.

The children are all malnourished: 11,943 children from 6 to 59 months in a state of Moderate Acute Malnutrition (MAM) were supported by the FSS2 project (Social Safety Net). These children received Plumpy'sup as a food supplement. This project ended in June, so that figure is estimated at 14,332 this October.

NB: This report concerning Kéré in Southern Madagascar is taken from that of the Regional Coordinator of the ONN (National Office of Nutrition) Androy.

*Rose de Lima Ramanankavana
The president of AIC Madagascar*

THE GREAT FAMINE IN SOUTHERN MADAGASCAR

According to the request of Father Visitor, here is a report on what we have done as an organization to face KERE in the South part of Madagascar.

It's already been two weeks since we formed a small team based in Fort-Dauphin. This team is composed of three priests (myself, Fr Pierrot Martin, Fr Jerome and Fr Antonio) and three Sisters Daughters of Charity (Sr Zénaïde, Sr Georgette, and Sr Olivia, all specialists in social assistance).

What are we really here to do?

Some donors from La Réunion and Fr Pedro Opeka « Akamasoa » sent us money and Fr Alexandre, our visitor did not want us to work alone and, did not want to keep the use of this money for the Lazarists only, but he especially liked to promote teamwork within the FAMVIN (Lazarist Fathers, Diocesan Fathers, Daughters of Charity, AIC, AMM, VMY, St. Vincent de Paul Conference, Christian volunteers, even Protestants), knowing that unity is strength. He wanted not only a manifestation of solidarity but also a great witness for us, Vincentians, in the eyes of the whole world to show sincerely and humbly that we are capable of living our Vincentian charism and able to manage such a situation in total transparency.

The role of this commission is to plan a strategy to fight this famine more effectively according to the subsidies we have received. And this is what we have already done during the three meetings we have already had :

Choose the cities to target

To mobilize FAMVIN members in the target location to make field trips, to see the reality, to do door-to-door census, in order to give us accurate data to guide our decisions.

Decide what to do with the money.

Think about how to repair the damage and send the various donations (food, water, money, seeds, etc.) to the people concerned.

What can we say about what we have done so far?

The cities that are targeted are: Amboasary-Sud, tsivory, Ambovombe Centre and Brousse, Antanimora-Sud, Beloha, Bekily, Beraketa. Thanks to the efforts

of the local FAMVIN, we have received information on each site very quickly.

We were notified of the numbers of victims, the numbers of the affected family. And each site has already let us know how the local team could manage the situation. For example, to give so many kilos of rice per family or per person; instead of giving money per family to buy water decided to rent a tanker truck.

So we decided to buy 53.33 tons of white rice of 50 kg per bag. This purchase is intended for those cities except Tsivory and Bekily. Due to the lack of security we encouraged the team of Tsivory to buy some on the spot; while for Bekily, they prefer to buy rice on the spot because of the price.

For the transport, we have the truck of the Lazarist fathers of Androy which only asks for the cost of fuel, maintenance and hotel expenses of the driver and his help. We also have at our disposal the truck of the President of the FAMVIN of Tolagnaro city. We pay him the normal transportation costs. We need men we can trust!

For the distribution of the money (for water and grain) it is the Father Visitor himself who gave each post its share.

So far, so good. Jerome and Fr. Antonio to follow up in the field.

From what we have the project will continue until January 2021.

*Tolagnaro 27th October 2020
Father RAKOTOARISON Pierrot Martin, C.M.*

A YEAR AFTER THE SYNOD ON THE AMAZON AND THE ACTION OF INDIGENOUS YOUTH

“The Synod on the Amazon was the product of an effort of men and women over many years – people who never lost the dream of hope for a diverse and inclusive Church and society and a healthy Amazon.” Interview with the coordinator of the Panamanian National Chapter of the REMAM, Vincentian Father Joseph Fitzgerald, CM, who also talks to Vatican News about the Ngäbe indigenous people in Soloy with whom he has worked.

The coordinator of the Panamanian National Chapter of the Mesoamerican Ecological Ecclesial Network, Vincentian Father Joseph Fitzgerald, explained that although his country is not part of the Amazon, however, it is clear to them that, regarding the Synod on the Amazon, its central themes belong to the Panamanian reality.

To arrive at the Synod on the Amazon, there was a long process that began in Peru, when Pope Francis, after hearing the indigenous peoples’ words, opened a process of dialogue. Fitzgerald said that, to arrive at the Synod last year in Rome, there was a path marked by many efforts, by the efforts of many men and women over many years, people who never lost the dream of hope for a diverse and inclusive Church and society and a healthy Amazon.

The original peoples, said the priest, lived their entire history in relation to the one God of Life and offered life proposals in the face of societies of death. The Synod on the Amazon gave voice to the indigenous peoples, previously “suffocated and rejected.” Since the end of the Synod, there have not been many changes or improvements in the Amazon, he said. Racist policies against indigenous people, the massive destruction of forests and rivers, and the growing social and economic gap continue. On top of the other existing crises, the pandemic does not help this situation at all.

One of the advances of the Synod has been the foundation of the Mesoamerican Ecological Ecclesial Network, Remam, which took place in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, Mexico, with the participation of delegates from the various Mesoamerican countries, Mexico to Panama. This network was founded from the extensive experience of REPAM, the Pan-Amazonian

ecological network that played a central role in carrying out the process of the Synod on the Amazon, involving historically excluded actors.

For Father Fitzgerald, seeing the real fruits of the Synod is difficult to define, since the Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation, Dear Amazon, was presented in February of this year, a few weeks before the arrival of the pandemic in the world. That is why, he said, many plans were not carried out. However, more energy was given to virtual meetings to deepen reflection and strengthen it with prayer and team work. It is very important, he said, to boost consciousness and raise awareness based on the experience and documents of the Synod, both within the Church and in society and the world.

Father Fitzgerald also said that to achieve and realize the dreams of Pope Francis in his encyclical, we must make real changes in society. Dear Amazon, Laudato si’, and now Fratelli Tutti, he affirmed, point to the current system of extraction, production, consumption, and discard as a global system that is leading the human family to total destruction and all creation with it. Faced with this reality, “another question arises, whether we are able, as communities of faith and as the Church, to influence the course of our societies and our nations so that they are more in line with the basic values of life, justice, equity, and caring for the common home. I hope so, this response is so urgent,” he said.

Father Fitzgerald has lived and worked among the Ngäbe indigenous people in Soloy, Panama since 2005 (site of the 2019 World Indigenous Youth Meeting). In one of the photos he gave to Vatican News, we can see some indigenous lay people performing an ancestral rite of purification that, especially in this time of pandemic, they are doing against evil. Father explains how it is done and what it means.

*Patricia Ynestroza-Vatican City
22 October 2020*

<https://www.vaticannews.va/es/iglesia/news/2020-10/sinodo-amazonia-entrevista-fitzgerald-panama-ngabe.html>

MY FIRST DEATH

***Look at the birds in the sky;
they do not sow or reap, they gather nothing into barns,
yet your heavenly Father feeds them.
Are not you more important than they?
Matthew 6:26***

I saw my first death there when I was 22. I did not see the body, but something that we could define as “a dying.” Life had literally escaped from a body unable to welcome it.

There was this man sitting on the ground. He was constantly throwing his head backwards, as if an invisible hand had grabbed his neck and hit him, repeatedly, against the gate.

The metallic banging was rhythmic with a precision that seemed artificial. It was death’s metronome. I stood there, staring at him while waiting for the ambulance.

Santarelli was a homeless person welcomed at the night center where I worked. An accident had crushed his skull. The scars on his head were the canyons of Mars. Everything was unknown on that planet. Santarelli had not only lost his mind due to the accident, but he also had lost everything else: work, home, family. Sometimes it was unmanageable. Not by choice. Although he was often blamed for it. His relationship with reality was broken. Reality was a new place for him and he was a stranger for reality. He no longer had the tools to inhabit the world and the world was involved with a society that did not want him. That is why he lived in the hostel. There he could stay, fenced off, playing the village idiot.

Except that in that structure there were 190 guests and four workers for a total of around 180 fools from the village. In that place, we could have turned around the adage and said that there was “the healthy man of the village.” I am not referring to social workers, because most of the time what distinguished a worker from a homeless person was only the keys.

The former had them and could access every room in the structure, the latter no.

The keys were the good-luck charm of assimilation. The homeless do not have the keys to anything. They do not have house keys, car keys, keys to their destiny. The workers have the keys. Today I know they were useless. You always entered the same place made up of misery and neglect. No matter how many doors I opened and how many I closed, you were always there,

inside the enclosure in which they had locked up Mr. Santarelli.

It was said of him that he had been a professor. I think so, because when he got angry with me on the times I forced him to take a shower, he would run after me screaming “Coward.” This was a teaching certificate for me.

Santarelli often had epileptic seizures, neuronal landslides that shook the subsoil of the canyons on his bald skull. This would be the last. Attending the scene were the canteen manager and a volunteer who served meals. Then there was I. We waited for the ambulance, while his head banged on the gate.

The volunteer who was a nurse by profession insisted on intervening. She had valium with her and wanted to inject it into the underground rivers of the planet Santarelli. To do that, she needed a syringe. We had the syringe, but the canteen manager did not want to take responsibility for such a gesture. In moments like these there are only two paths: the regulations and the values. The regulations protect you, always. Values are a risk. Always. The regulation said not to touch Santarelli and to wait for the ambulance. The values we thought we believed in said to take the risk of killing him with valium, rather than standing there and watching a seizure that lasted too long.

I was there, calm. Many complimented me later on my coolness. For a while we all believed it. I was 22 and I worked in a night shelter in the capital. The largest in the city. The historical one. The first. In the evening, there were two of us on shift, out of 190 people received. The average age was that of my father and I told men who could be much older than I, what the rules of that temporary house were and I took care of enforcing them. If not, I would have put them out. On the street. Again. The homeless were welcomed, but they were also hostages of the worker’s authority.

I do not owe it to courage, if I was there, unruffled, while Santarelli was dying, but to what is called systemic desensitization, a technique that derives from the principles of Pavlovian conditioning. It is a technique used

to cure phobias. If you are afraid of spiders, you start by listening to stories about spiders while keeping calm. Then you move on to looking at photos of spiders, keeping the focus on calm, then to videos, spiders in a display case and slowly ... you realize that they no longer make you afraid. But you are not brave. You are desensitized. This is what the homeless reception system does. It desensitizes those who work there, slowly. I had seen many of Santarelli's seizures. I was used to them. Even though this was abnormal, I was calm, barely shaken by my supervisor's decision not to intervene.

It would be of no use asking: if the volunteer had given him valium, would we have saved him? No. He would die a few days later with another seizure or a few years later. It was a matter of time. But the real question, however, is another. It is a question that we cowards asked ourselves from time to time, when, before returning home at night, we stopped for a couple of beers with the homeless whom we had not received due to a lack of beds.

But Santarelli, who after the accident, no longer understood a shit; that he was left without a penny; that he had no one to take care of him; that he wandered around the city doing nothing all day; that the only purpose of his life was waiting for the hostel's opening time. He, Santarelli, with weekly epileptic seizures, unable to follow any treatment, with the same clothes for months; he who slept in a four-meter-square room with four other homeless persons; he who remembered nothing of his past life and who had no future ... could he call himself alive?

*Girolamo Grammatico
Communication Office*

*Extracts from the article published in Minima@moralia blog
on occasion of the World Day of the Poor on October 17.
Font: <http://www.minimaetmoralia.it/wp/mio-primio-morto/>*

ORDINATIONES

TORRES VISARRAGA José Guadalupe	Sac	MEX	26/09/2020
SENSO Paul Peter	Sac	INM	08/10/2020
LÓPEZ MARTÍNEZ José Luis	Sac	SVP	24/10/2020

NECROLOGIUM

Nomen	Cond.	Dies ob.	Prov.	Aet.	Voc.
GOLIET Aimé Bernard	Sac	07/10/2020	FRA	82	63
DÍAZ DE CERIO SANTAMARÍA Ángel	Sac	09/10/2020	CAE	94	77
CORRADO Salvatore	Sac	20/10/2020	ITA	98	80
GIORGI CASELLI Alfio	Sac	20/10/2020	PER	92	76
FIorentino Giuseppe	Sac	26/10/2020	ITA	82	67

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