

# “Watchman, what of the night ?”



“ The hour has come, the hour is striking, and striking at you, the hour and the end!” Ezekiel 7:6 (Moffatt)

## “THE PAPAL SOCIAL AGENDA - POPE FRANCIS'S VISION OF A GLOBAL UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD” (Part 2)

### POPE FRANCIS'S LATEST ENCYCLICAL LETTER: “FRATELLI TUTTI” (2) <sup>1</sup>

#### Critical Synopsis, Observations, And Implications Of The Document As A Whole (conclusion) –

Moving past the first 8 introductory paragraphs of this encyclical letter brings the reader to the 8 titled principal chapters which comprises the main body of the papal decree. Chapter One, ominously entitled *Dark Clouds Over A Closed World*, sets the tone for the 'storm' (obstacles to social fraternity) that Pope Francis believes current world trends are leading humanity into. This 'sets the stage' for him:

“ ... to consider certain trends in our world that hinder the development of universal fraternity.” (Par. 9).

As the preceding 8 paragraphs served as an introductory to the sources of inspiration for the pope's writing of this letter, so this first chapter (which consists of 8 major and 4 minor subsections) appears to be an introductory to the reasons why Francis thinks the world is presently moving away from a more socially integrated global community:

“For decades, it seemed that the world had learned a lesson from its many wars and disasters, and was slowly moving towards various forms of integration. ... ” (Par. 10).

“Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts



thought long buried are breaking out anew ... influenced by various ideologies ... creating new forms of selfishness and a loss of the social sense ... " (Par. 11).

It is under this increasingly "dark" advancement of contemporary circumstances that the concepts embodied in previously widely esteemed words like democracy, justice, freedom, community, and unity are being redefined and, consequently, emptied of their original historic meaning. Through various forms of manipulation, distortions, and fabrications, powerful socio-politico-economic forces are using these terms to promote indifference, selfishness, marginalization, and exploitation. This has deceptively created an ever increasing polarization among greater numbers of people thereby closing off the world and leaving many socially isolated, rejected, and even discarded. Accordingly:

"In today's world, the sense of belonging to a single human family is fading, and the dream of working together for justice and peace seems an outdated utopia." (Par. 30).

And yet for all of this, Francis assures us that there is *hope!* He closes the first chapter on this note:

"Despite these dark clouds, which may not be ignored, I would like in the following pages [ *Meaning the remaining 7 chapters of the encyclical* ] to take up and discuss many new paths of hope. For God continues to sow abundant seeds of goodness in our human family." (Par. 54).

"I invite everyone to renewed hope, for hope 'speaks to us of something deeply rooted in every human heart, independently of our circumstances and historical conditioning' ... Let us continue, then, to advance along the paths of hope." (Par. 55).

So while the "dark clouds ... may not be ignored," the pope will go on to outline vari-

ous solutions that he thinks will dispel "these dark clouds" thereby setting before us his idea of a universal fraternity of humanity during this present age. And though he mentions God's goodness among the "human family," this human 'brotherhood' he envisions will be almost entirely realized by the efforts of humans themselves.

Chapter Two, *A Stranger On The Road*, is entirely devoted to the parable of the Good Samaritan found in Luke 10: 25-37. By citing this parable, one would think that the major point of it would be primarily expounded upon: that the Lord Jesus, *Himself*, *is* the Good Samaritan, the stranger's (lost humanity's) only hope traveling life's journey in a sinful, hostile world (from Jerusalem to Jericho). Instead, Francis mainly uses it as a sort of 'springboard' to enlarge the concept of social fraternity. As such, the parable is basically used as a pattern of what humanity can achieve by following the example of the caring Samaritan rather than that of the self-centered, uncaring Jewish religious leaders. Now certainly there are valid lessons regarding social friendship to be drawn from this story (and overall the encyclical does do a fair job of bringing out a number of these points), but Jesus as the way / means of achievement is not presented as the main focus - rather humanity is:

"Each day offers us a new opportunity, a new possibility ... Today we have a great opportunity to express our innate sense of fraternity, to be Good Samaritans who bear the pain of other people's troubles rather than fomenting greater hatred and resentment. Like the chance traveller in the parable, we need only have a pure and simple desire to be a people, a community, constant and tireless in the effort to include, integrate and lift up the fallen. ... " (Par. 77, emphasis added).

And, as the document continues forward, this will be a reoccurring concentration.

Chapter Three, *Envisaging And Engendering An Open World*, has Francis stressing the importance of a rudimentary attitude of love, particularly in the light of poverty, inequality, and class privilege as it exists in the social structures of today's world:

"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.' Yet some believers think that it consists in the imposition of their own ideologies upon everyone else, or in a violent defence of the truth, or in impressive demonstrations of strength. 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.*") (Par. 92).

Considering the centuries long recorded history of the Papal Church, this present-day "vicar of Christ," before he identifies anybody or anything that is responsible for humanity's inability to achieve a universal social fraternity, needs to ardently himself consider the scriptural "proverb" voiced by Jesus: "Physician, heal thyself." (Luke 4: 23a). When "measured by love," what truly "definitive decision" about the lives of the papal leadership and their associates, as professed "believers," can rightfully be made regarding "the spiritual stature" of their actions and deeds throughout most of their institutional existence? How often did they frequently, repeatedly, forcefully, and ruthlessly impose "their own ideologies upon everyone else"? In practically every sphere of human life - political, civil, financial, and religious - Romanism, "in a violent defence of (what its leaders dogmatically and intolerantly set

forth as) the truth," has utterly failed to embrace the social friendship that it claims to support and promote! Its "impressive demonstrations of strength" especially during the lengthy medieval time era, were often characterized by horrific periods of persecutions of people for little more than disagreement and non-conformity to the intrusive demands mandated by the papal system. Multitudes were hounded, hunted, coerced, tortured, and murdered because of their resolve to not acquiesce to this tyranny. And without getting into a detailed discussion at this juncture, Bible prophecy indicates that this same entity, along with all its worldly allies, will pursue a similar course just before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ (see for example, Revelation 13: 1-18).<sup>2</sup>

In the name and pursuit of global social brotherhood equally for and among all people collectively, Francis speaks elegantly, loftily, and hopefully of this as an ideal that we can strive for and reach. The supreme attribute that he states will accomplish this goal is love. Sadly, however, the pope's endorsement of this whole concept rings extremely hollow in light of the Vatican's outrageous track-record of atrocities committed against humankind that were all detrimental to this goal. Contrary to their profession, the self-serving attitudes and objectives on display through the hypocritical actions of the papal hierarchy shows that the "need to recognize that love takes first place," that "love must never be put at risk, and the greatest danger lies in failing to love" leaves this mystical latter day "Babylon" as "weighed in the balances, and ... found wanting" as was its literal ancient counterpart (compare Daniel 5: 1-6, 23-31 with Revelation 17: 1-5; 18: 1-10).

Also of interest in this chapter, under a major sub-section entitled *Re-Envisaging the Social Role Of Property*, is the pope's endorsement of a portion of Roman Catholic social doctrine known as: "The principle of the common use of created goods" which is understood "as the 'first principle of the whole ethical and social order'; it is a natural and inherent right that takes priority over all others." (Par. 120). In turn this is drawn from another overarching principle taught as "the principle of the universal destination of created goods" which Francis explains as follows:

"In the first Christian centuries, a number of thinkers developed a universal vision in their reflections on the common destination of created goods. This led them to realize that if one person lacks what is necessary to live with dignity, it is because another person is detaining it. Saint John Chrysostom summarizes it in this way: 'Not to share our wealth with the poor is to rob them and take away their livelihood. The riches we possess are not our own, but theirs as well.' In the words of Saint Gregory the Great, 'When we provide the needy with their basic needs, we are giving them what belongs to them, not to us.'" (Par. 119).

Note the conclusions that this "universal vision ... on the common destination of created goods" postulated by these post-Apostolic Church Fathers are making. First, one person's lack of necessities to live with dignity is because another person is detaining it. Simply put, what one lacks in necessities is the fault of another by detaining (withholding) those necessities. Even if we acknowledge that this *can* be true, both experience and Scripture reveal that this isn't *always* the case:

"The soul of the sluggard desireth, and

hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

"The desire of the slothful killeth him; for his hands refuse to labour. He coveteth greedily all the day long: but the righteous giveth and spareth not." (Proverbs 13: 4; 21: 25-26).

Next, these texts remind us that it is certainly not robbery to not share our wealth with a sluggish, slothful, lazy person. In most instances, this will only confirm and enable them to continue in their indolence. *Generally*, it is not the "diligent" (hard working) person ("soul") that robs such of their livelihood, rather it is their refusal "to labour." Also, according to Genesis 1: 28; 2: 15, "the common destination of created goods" at creation was conditional and dependent on Adam and Eve's obedience to God's command to "subdue" (effortfully dominate) "the earth" and "to dress ... and to keep" "the garden of Eden" (put forth effort to work and care for it). Again, for the most part, it is the diligent person (one who puts forth effort to acquire created goods) that "shall be made fat" (prosper, receive and enjoy the blessings of created goods) whereas the slothful person, though he continually "coveteth greedily" (deeply craves created goods), "hath nothing" due to his refusal "to labour" (put forth effort to acquire created goods) which "killeth him" (proves fatal)!

The pope continues by gleaning additional suppositions from Catholic social doctrine:

"Once more, I would like to echo a statement of Saint John Paul II whose forcefulness has perhaps been insufficiently recognized: 'God gave the earth to the whole human race for the sustenance of all its members, without excluding or favouring anyone.' For my part, I would observe that 'the Christian tradition has never recognized the

right to private property as absolute or inviolable, and has stressed the social purpose of all forms of private property.' ... The right to private property can only be considered a secondary natural right, derived from the principle of the universal destination of created goods. This has concrete consequences that ought to be reflected in the workings of society. Yet it often happens that secondary rights displace primary and overriding rights, in practice making them irrelevant." (Par. 120).

"The right to private property is always accompanied by the primary and prior principle of the subordination of all private property to the universal destination of the earth's goods, and thus the right of all to their use." (Par. 123).

In closing out this chapter, Francis is proposing, in a quest to realize a global brotherhood, what outwardly appears to be a model of the world which is patterned away from a capitalist method and toward a socialist / communist system. Rather than entering into the emotionally charged fray of warnings on the dangers of embracing socialist / communist ideologies, we instead should be focusing our attention on what the papacy is, and has been all along, advocating for *itself*.

However it may appear to be allied with one or another of these worldviews at various times, Bible prophecy reveals that this is all simply a means to an end. And that goal is not to promote a genuine Christian brotherhood among the nations but to regain its former lost power to control and dominate the world through deceit and coercion (Revelation 13: 1-4; 17: 7-11). The servant of the Lord has insightfully remarked:

"But Romanism as a system is no more in harmony with the gospel of Christ *now than at any former period in her history*. The Protestant churches are in great darkness, or

they would discern the signs of the times. The Roman Church is *far-reaching in her plans and modes of operation*. She is employing every device to extend her influence and increase her power in preparation for a fierce and determined conflict to regain control of the world, to re-establish persecution, and to undo all that Protestantism has done. ...

"Protestants have tampered with and patronized popery; they have made compromises and concessions which papists themselves are surprised to see and fail to understand. Men are closing their eyes to the real character of Romanism and the dangers to be apprehended from her supremacy. The people need to be aroused to resist the advances of this most dangerous foe to civil and religious liberty." (GC, pgs. 565-566, emph. added).<sup>3</sup>

Chapter Four, *A Heart Open To The Whole World*, discusses the issue of migration. Appealing to countries to "welcome, protect, promote, and integrate" migrants in various ways, Francis believes that even these measures will prove insufficient to remedy this growing problem. Since "states are not able, on their own, to implement adequate solutions" he urges the international community to respond by developing "a form of global governance with regard to movements of migration." (Par. 132). Is this not just a thinly veiled call for a one world government?

Chapter Five, *A Better Kind Of Politics*, advocates for a more international solution to politics:

"The twenty-first century 'is witnessing a weakening of the power of nation states, chiefly because the economic and financial sectors, being transnational, tend to prevail over the political. Given this situation, it is essential to devise stronger and more efficiently organized international institutions ...

empowered to impose sanctions.'" (Par. 172).

"In this regard, I would also note the need for a reform of 'the United Nations Organization, and likewise of economic institutions and international finance, so that the concept of the family of nations can acquire real teeth.'" (Par. 173). Again, another prod toward a one world government?

Chapter Six, *Dialogue And Friendship In Society*, has the pope turning to dialogue and its crucial role in creating a new world social fraternity. Viewing it as the balance "between selfish indifference and violent protest," a healthy society is built on valid dialogue. (Par. 199). While it respects other viewpoints, it should not degenerate while doing so into relativism. Instead, "it must respect the truth of our human dignity and submit to that truth." (Par. 207). The document then speaks of "Life, for all its confrontation, is the art of encounter." (Par. 215). In our interactions with one another "What is important is to create processes of encounter, processes that build a people that can accept differences." (Par. 217). "A realistic and inclusive social covenant must also be a 'cultural covenant', one that respects and acknowledges the different worldviews, cultures and lifestyles that coexist in society." (Par. 219). What a benevolent exposition championing tolerance by the present leader of an institution whose long, dark history has been one of consistent intolerance!

Chapter Seven, *Paths Of Renewed Encounter*, continues the concept of "encounter" by stressing the need for healing, renewed encounter, and forgiveness. Of special interest are the statements concerning modern conflict and war:

"' ... Growing interdependence and globalization mean that any response to the threat of nuclear weapons should be collective and

concerted, based on mutual trust. This trust can be built only through dialogue that is truly directed to the common good and not to the protection of veiled or particular interests'. With the money spent on weapons and other military expenditures, let us establish a global fund that can finally put an end to hunger and favour development in the most impoverished countries, so that their citizens will not resort to violent or illusory solutions, or have to leave their countries in order to seek a more dignified life." (Par. 262). In the face of these overwhelming challenges, who increasingly best appears to be morally qualified to oversee these vital efforts and who is increasingly, albeit stealthily, projecting and positioning himself as so if it is not the Roman Pontiff ?

Chapter Eight, *Religions At The Service Of Fraternity In Our World*, closes out the encyclical. Along with being a major force fostering the creation of a one world government, Francis (in harmony with his pontifical predecessors) unites it inseparably with the establishment of a universal world religion. This Letter simply uses "fraternity and social friendship" as a corollary to that end:

"The different religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and defending justice in society. Dialogue between the followers of different religions does not take place simply for the sake of diplomacy, consideration or tolerance. ... 'the goal of dialogue is to establish friendship, peace and harmony, and to share spiritual and moral values and experiences in a spirit of truth and love.' As believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the Father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for an appeal to fraternity." (Pars. 271, 272).

Notice that the dialogical mingling of persons of different religions (supposedly) goes beyond mere "diplomacy, consideration or tolerance" and bonds the participants in an ecumenical unity. This "openness to the Father of all" provides them a basis "for an appeal to fraternity" which is then given in an interreligious union. Therefore:

"The church esteems the ways in which God works in other religions, and 'rejects nothing of what is true and holy in these religions. She has a high regard for their manner of life and conduct, their precepts and doctrines which ... often reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens all men and women.'" (Par. 277). "A journey of peace is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. 'God does not see with his eyes, God sees with his heart. And God's love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion. Even if they are atheists, his love is the same. When the last day comes, and there is sufficient light to see things as they really are, we are going to find ourselves quite surprised.'" (Par. 281).

Again, Bible prophecy reveals that the outcome of this universal religious relativism

will not create a lasting brotherhood on this present earth. It will, however, unite all false religion in a global confederacy against the true God and His faithful remnant people who "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus." (compare Revelation 12: 17; with 14: 12). Only after the second coming of Christ will a lasting universal fraternity of all the loyal intelligences ("both which are in heaven, and which are on earth") be finally realized. (Ephesians 1: 10). ❖ GLP

1. Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti, On Fraternity and Social Friendship* (Vatican City / Rome, Italy: Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis). [http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20201003\\_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html](http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html)

2. For a concise biblical exposition see: Gary L. Patrick, *"Watchman, what of the night?"* (Nora Springs, IA: Adventist Laymen's Foundation of Iowa, Inc., Issue # 21 - Feb. / March 2017, "Is The Roman Catholic Papacy And Its Allies The Prophe-sied Apostasy Of The Latter Times ... Or Not?"), 2 to 6 [https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN%20IOWA\\_2\(17\)\\_3\(17\).pdf](https://www.alfiowa.com/IOWA-BACK-ISSUES/WWN%20IOWA_2(17)_3(17).pdf)

3. Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy Between Christ and Satan* (Mountain View, CA: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1950), 565-566.

\*All Scripture quotations are from the King James Version unless otherwise indicated.

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