



FRATELLI TUTTI INSPIRES GLOBAL INTERFAITH CONFERENCE

Marita Grudzen – Kenya Virtual Chapter

Maryknoll Affiliates and the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns provided leadership for the three-day conference, “*Building Human Solidarity in the light of Pope Francis’ encyclical: Fratelli Tutti*” held August 19-21, 2021. It offered programs from three international hubs: the African Hub (Nairobi, Kenya), the Hub of the Americas (San Jose, CA/USA), and the Hub of South East Asia (Yogyakarta, Indonesia). The 16 programs, all in English, are available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/c/InternationalConferenceonFratelliTutti>

Christian and Islamic leaders from throughout Africa, Europe, and Indonesia, and representatives of the Pontifical Council of Interreligious Dialogue and the Grand Imam opened the conference. Approximately 3,000 people from 19 countries participated.

In panels like, “Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor,” We heard beacons of hope who build solidarity and foster dignity, inclusivity, and justice. Joanne Blaney talked about men and women in crowded prisons, many not yet formally charged, and exploited indigenous Amazonian peoples whose treaties are not honored. In Ecuador, Nichole Insuasti works for the human rights of both rural and urban indigenous. She stressed how important language is to a culture; it links the memories, myths, art, music—all of the cultural roots of a people.

In *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis calls us to embrace the “politics of love rather than fear or hatred.” This conference emphasized inclusion rather than exclusion, combating Islamophobia, the climate crisis, racism, and indifference to human suffering. We looked for ways to build bridges across the divides promoted by populists who use their platforms to separate rather than unite.

Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers Superior Lance Nadeau, MM, led the closing ceremony. He pointed out that Pope Francis is a political thinker who places before us a Politics of Love.

I encourage our Affiliates to visit the YouTube recordings of the conference and to study and reflect on this extraordinary document, *Fratelli Tutti*.



DEEPENING ONE’S CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

Liz Maxwell – Cincinnati Chapter

I was excited to attend an online Maryknoll Mission Institute program. From Monday through Friday, June 14-18, Sister Nancy Sylvester, IHM, led “Deepening One’s Contemplative Practice: Necessary for the Transformation of Our Time.” We began each day with quiet prayer—a profound unity on screen of prayers from the US and Latin America. Nancy skillfully shared how the evolution of consciousness has brought us to a place where our old beliefs no longer serve; witness the global chaos of today. Einstein warned that we cannot solve the problems of today with the level of consciousness of yesterday. We have to move from *me* to *we*.

That’s where contemplative prayer comes in. With regular practice of such prayer, we gradually get to know our true selves and are able to let go of what tries to control us. A quiet mind helps us live with paradox. We align with the Presence of Divine Love. In that evolving relationship, we enter the reality of the chaos. We become more open to our oneness with all. We “live and move and have our being” in the Presence, the energy moving us forward.

Can we envision a future with a new, emerging consciousness that transforms our *me* state to *we*?



Contemplation is nothing else
but a secret, peaceful, and
loving infusion of God,
which if admitted,
will set the soul on fire
with the spirit of love.
—John of the Cross