

THE UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY

Franciscan roots of *Fratelli tutti*



Martín Carbajo-Núñez

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by Martín Carbajo-Núñez

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Printed at :

Jyoti Printers, C-12, Sector -8, Noida, U.P. - 201301
Ph: 0120-2424113/4/5

Published by: Media House®

Regd Office:

375-A, Pocket 2, Mayur Vihar Phase-I, Delhi - 110 091
Phone: 09555642600
E-mail: mediahousedelhi@gmail.com

Admin Office:

C-12, Sector 8, Noida, UP - 201301
Phone: 0120-4222346, 07599485900
E-mail: books.mediahouse@gmail.com

www.mediahouse.online

ISBN: 978-9394507340

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Original edition: CARBAJO-NÚÑEZ M., *La fraternidad universal. Raíces franciscanas de Fratelli tutti*, Ed. Efarantzazu, Vitoria-Gasteiz, 2022 (ISBN 978-84-7240-336-9).

First English edition: CARBAJO-NÚÑEZ M., *The universal fraternity*, Tau Publishing, Phoenix (AZ) 2023.

To my Franciscan brothers,
with whom I have experienced the gift of fraternity.

Abbreviations

1. Biblical books

1Cor	1 Corinthians
1Jn	1 John
2Cor	2 Corinthians
Act	Acts of the Apostles
Col	Colossians
Gal	Galatians
Gn	Genesis
Heb	Hebrews
Is	Isaiah
Jn	John
Mc	Mark
Mt	Matthew
Phil	Philippians
Ps	Psalms
Rm	Romans
Sir	Sirach

2. Magisterium sources

AL	FRANCIS, <i>Amoris Laetitia</i> . Post-synodal exhortation
APar	PAUL VI, <i>Alma parens</i> . Apostolic Letter
CA	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Centesimus annus</i> . Encyclical
CCC	Catechism of the Catholic Church
CD	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, <i>Christus Dominus</i> . Decree
CELAM	Conference of the Latin American and Caribbean Episcopate
CIC	Code of Canon Law
CV	BENEDICT XVI, <i>Caritas in veritate</i> . Encyclical
DC	BENEDICT XVI, <i>Deus caritas est</i> . Encyclical

DFH	FRANCIS – AL-AZHAR AHMAD AL-TAYYEB, Document on Human Fraternity
Ec-Fco	FRANCIS, Letter for the event " <i>Economy of Francesco</i> "
ECS	PCSC, Ethics in communications
EG	FRANCIS, <i>Evangelii Gaudium</i> . Exhortation
EN	PAUL VI, <i>Evangelii nuntiandi</i> . Exhortation
EV	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Evangelium Vitae</i> . Encyclical
FC	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Familiaris consortio</i> . Exhortation
FcAA	FRANCIS, Address to the Alphonsian Academy»
FF	<i>Fonti Francescane</i> , Ed. Francescane, Padova ³ 2011
FT	FRANCIS, <i>Fratelli tutti</i> . Encyclical
GE	FRANCIS, <i>Gaudete et Exsultate</i> . Exhortation
GS	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, <i>Gaudium et spes</i> . Pastoral constitution
IM	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, <i>Inter mirifica</i> . Decree
InsB16	Insegnamenti di Benedetto XVI (Benedict XVI)
InsFco	Insegnamenti di Francesco (Pope Francis)
InsJP2	Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II (John Paul II)
LF	FRANCIS, <i>Lumen fidei</i> . Encyclical
LG	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, <i>Lumen gentium</i> . Dogmatic constitution
LS	FRANCIS, <i>Laudato si'</i> . Encyclical
NA	SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL, <i>Nostra aetate</i> . Declaration
PCID	Pontifical Council for Inter-religious Dialogue
PCJP	Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace
PCSC	Pontifical Council for Social Communications
PEG	CONGREGATION FOR CATHOLIC EDUCATION, Global compact on education. <i>Instr. laboris</i>
PL	MIGNE, J.-P. (ed.), <i>Patrologia latina</i>
PP	PAUL VI, <i>Populorum progressio</i> . Encyclical
PT	JOHN XXIII, <i>Pacem in terris</i> . Encyclical
QA	FRANCIS, <i>Querida Amazonia</i> . Exhortation
RM	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Redemptoris misio</i> . Encyclical
S19df	AMAZON SYNOD, Final document
SCa	BENEDICT XVI, <i>Sacramentum caritatis</i> . Post- synodal exhortation

SRS	JOHN PAUL II, <i>Sollicitudo rei socialis</i> . Encyclical
SS	BENEDICT XVI, <i>Spe Salvi</i> . Encyclical
VG	FRANCIS, <i>Veritatis Gaudium</i> . Apostolic constitution
WCD	World Communications Day
WDP	World Day of Peace

3. Writings of St. Francis

1LtaCus	The First Letter to the Custodians
2LtaF	The second version of the Letter to the Faithful
4LtaCl	CLARE OF ASSISI, The 4 th letter to Agnes of Prague
Adm	The Admonitions
CtC	The Canticle of the Creatures
ER	The Earlier Rule (<i>Regula non bullata</i>)
LR	The Later Rule (<i>Regula bullata</i>)
LtaA	A Letter to the Rulers of the Peoples
LtL	A Letter to Brother Leo
LtMin	A Letter to a Minister
LtO	A Letter to the Entire Order
OfP	The Office of the Passion
ParPN	A Prayer Inspired by the Our Father
PrsG	The Praises of God
RE	A Rule for Hermitages
SalV	A Salutation to Virtues
Test	The Testament
TestS	The Testament made at Siena

4. Franciscan Sources and Authors

1Cel	CELANO, The Life of St. Francis (<i>Vita Prima</i>)
1Sent	BONAVENTURE, <i>Commentaria in I librum Sententiarum</i>
2Cel	CELANO, The Remembrance of the Desire of a Soul (<i>Vita Secunda</i>)
2Sent	BONAVENTURE, <i>Commentaria in II librum Sententiarum</i>
Brevil	BONAVENTURE, <i>Breviloquium</i>

CAED	ARMSTRONG R.J., Clare of Assisi: The Lady. Early Documents
CAss	The Assisi Compilation (The legend of Perugia)
CCGG	GENERAL CURIA OFM, General Constitutions
Spec	The Mirror of Perfection
FAED	AMSTRONG R.J – HERMANN J.A.W. – SHORT W.J. (ed.), Francis of Assisi: Early Documents
Flor	The Little Flowers of Saint Francis
Giano	Cronaca di Giordano da Giano (Jordan of Giano)
Hex	BONAVENTURE, <i>Collationes in Hexaëmeron</i>
HO	JACQUES DE VITRY, <i>Historia Occidentalis</i>
Itin	BONAVENTURE, <i>Itinerarium mentis in Deum</i>
L3C	The Legend of the Three Companions
Lig.Vita e	BONAVENTURE, <i>Lignum vitae</i>
LMj	BONAVENTURE, The Major Legend
Lm	BONAVENTURE, The Minor Legend
OFM	Ordo Fratrum Minorum
Ord	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Ordinatio</i> (Opus Oxoniense)
Quaracc hi	BONAVENTURE, <i>Opera omnia</i> , Collegii S. Bonaventurae, Quaracchi 1882-1902
Vat	DUNS SCOTUS, <i>Opera omnia</i> .

5. Bibliographical and common

a.	Articulus
AAS	Acta Apostolicae Sedis
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BAC	Biblioteca de autores cristianos
c.	Chapter
CCW	UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
cf.	Confer, see, compare
d.	Distinctio, distinctiones
ed.	Editor, publisher, coordinator, editorial
EDB	Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna
FCIV	The <i>Caritas in Veritate</i> Foundation
Ibid	Ibidem

Id	Idem, the same
IT	Information Technology
LAWS	Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
LEV	Libreria Editrice Vaticana
n.	Number, numbers
NYT	The New York Times
OR	L'Osservatore romano
Otto	OTTO P. – GRÄF E., 3th1cs. A reinvention of ethics in the digital age?
p.	Pars, page, pages
PL	MIGNE J.-P. (ed.), <i>Patrologia Latina</i>
Print	Printing
prol.	Prologus
q.	Quaestio, quaestiones
REB	Revista Eclesiástica Brasileira
RMS	Robotized military systems
Robot-2	LIN P. - JENKINS R. – ABNEY K., <i>Robot ethics 2.0.</i>
RTM	Rivista di teologia morale
S.Th	THOMAS AQUINAS, <i>Summa Theologiae</i>
SelFran	Selecciones de Franciscanismo
Trad.	My translation
Univ.	University
UP	University Press
Vol.	Volume, volumes

Introduction

This book studies the Franciscan roots of the universal fraternity proposed by the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. Even before writing this encyclical, Pope Francis had indicated that “it was the evangelical witness of St. Francis, with his school of thought, that gave this term [fraternity] the meaning it then preserved over the centuries.”¹

Therefore, in carrying out this study, we assume that Francis of Assisi and the Franciscan Tradition have laid the foundations of the concept of fraternity that we find in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. We will attempt to verify this assumption in the ten chapters that follow.

The Franciscan influence is attested by Pope Francis himself, who acknowledges that he was inspired by Francis of Assisi to “write the encyclical *Laudato si’*” and that this saint has once again prompted him to devote *Fratelli tutti* “to fraternity and social friendship.”² Besides, he chose to sign it in Assisi, a city that invites “to recognize each other as brothers and sisters”³ and that has also been a meeting point for religions.⁴

¹ POPE FRANCIS, «Fraternity as the governing principle of the economic order. Message to the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences» (April 24, 2017), n. 1, in *OR* 99 (April 29, 2017) 7.

² *FT* 2. The Pope also recognizes the influence of other people in the Encyclical: Charles de Foucauld, the great Imam Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, Martin Luther King, Desmond Tutu, the Mahatma Gandhi.

³ “¿Por qué Dios ha concedido a Asís este encanto natural...? La respuesta es fácil. Porque los hombres, mediante un común y universal lenguaje, aprendan a reconocer al Creador y a reconocerse hermanos unos de otros.” JOHN XXIII, «Pellegrinaggio ai santuari di Loreto e Assisi» (Oct. 4, 1962), in ID. *Discorsi, messaggi, colloqui del Santo Padre Giovanni XXIII*, vol. IV, LEV, Vatican City 1963, 555-566, here 564.

⁴ Cf. BENEDICT XVI, «Message to bishop Domenico Sorrentino on the 20th

Francis of Assisi, says the Pope, is the saint of fraternal love, who “felt himself a brother to the sun, the sea and the wind, yet he knew that he was even closer to those of his own flesh” (*FT 2*). In both encyclicals, the Pope presents him as a model, even if *Laudato si’* focuses on integral ecology and *Fratelli tutti* on universal fraternity.

The encyclical’s title “*fratelli tutti*” is taken from the Italian translation of the sixth admonition of St. Francis. *FT* also quotes his admonition 25, where Francis praises the one who loves and respects his brother “as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him” (*FT 1*). Scholars have usually agreed that St. Francis addressed these admonitions to his friars,⁵ but the Pope considers them valid for all people, thus broadening their horizon and their final addressees.

The choice of the sixth admonition is significant, since it was written around 1220, shortly after the martyrdom of the first Franciscan friars in Marrakech. Instead of wanting “to receive glory and honor” for the great things “the saints have accomplished,”⁶ demonizing those who martyred them, Francis invites his friars to follow the example of the “good shepherd” and reminds them that, for Christians, martyrdom and evangelization are always linked to the proclamation of peace (*Test 14*) and to universal fraternity. They must privilege the affable and friendly presence,⁷ instead of looking directly for

anniversary of the interreligious meeting of prayer for peace» (Sept. 2, 2006), in AAS 98 (2006) 749-754.

⁵ The codex 308 of the communal library of Assisi confirms that Francis had addressed these exhortations to his friars.

⁶ *Adm 6,3*. “Quando furono riferiti al beato Francesco il martirio, la vita e la leggenda dei suddetti frati, sentendo che in essa si facevano le lodi di lui, e, vedendo che i frati si gloriavano del martirio di quelli [...], rifiutò tale leggenda e ne proibì la lettura dicendo: «Ognuno si glori del suo proprio martirio e non di quello degli altri.»» «Cronaca di Giordano da Giano (Chronicle of Jordan of Giano),» n. 8, in *FF 278*.

⁷ “I like to recall what Saint Francis of Assisi used to say to his friars: ‘Preach the Gospel at all times; if necessary, use words.’ Words come... but witness comes first.” POPE FRANCIS, «Address to participants in the international

contrast and then praise their martyrs and belittle the infidels. Their followers must always be ready to donate their own lives, even in martyrdom,⁸ but Francis, in his testament, does not urge them to seek it at all costs as an ideal of perfection, but “wherever they have not been received, let them flee into another country” (*Test* 26). Thus, the ideal of fraternity prevails over the desire for self-perfection.

At the beginning of his pontificate, cardinal Jorge Maria Bergoglio chose the name Francis, thus showing that the saint of Assisi was going to be an essential reference in his pontifical magisterium.

“Then, right away, thinking of the poor, I thought of Francis of Assisi. Then I thought of all the wars, as the votes were still being counted, till the end. Francis is also the man of peace. That is how the name came into my heart: Francis of Assisi. For me, he is the man of poverty, the man of peace, the man who loves and protects creation.”⁹

He underlines Francis’ “universal heart,” his joy, his “care for the vulnerable” and his generous self-giving (*LS* 10). He also highlights the importance of the fraternal closeness, “real and cordial” (*EG* 199), which characterized the saint of Assisi in his relations with all people and with all creatures.

Covid-19 and universal fraternity

The universal fraternity proclaimed by the Franciscans has also been highlighted by the current epidemic, initiated in Wuhan (China) at the end of 2019. This health crisis has caused a huge socio-economic crisis and, once again, has uncovered our vulnerability, the absurdity of our despotic

congress on catechesis» (Sept. 27, 2013), in *OR* (Sept. 29, 2013) 8; cf. Id., «Homily» (April 14, 2013), n. 2, in *OR* (April 15/16, 2013) 8.

⁸ “Let them not resist anyone evil.” *ER* 14,4. “Do not fear those who kill the body.” *ER* 16,18.

⁹ POPE FRANCIS, «Address to representatives of the Communications media» (March 16, 2013), in *OR* (March 17, 2013) 9-11.

anthropocentrism, and the falsity of our claim “to be like gods.”¹⁰ One tiny and inert element of nature has been enough to bring into disarray the entire technocratic society of competitive individualism and globalized indifference.

Fascinated by technological advances, we have neglected fraternity and relational goods, that are “the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities.”¹¹ As the Bible illustrates: “in his prime, man does not understand” (Ps 49,21).

Some authors have recently maintained that, through biotechnological progress, we will be able to overcome the physical limitations that derive from our belonging to the physical Web of Life. They claim that we will achieve a post-human (or trans-human) condition that will be more secure and self-sufficient. “The era when humankind stood helpless before natural epidemics is probably over.”¹²

This claim of increasing superiority and autonomy over the rest of creation has again fallen to the ground with the Covid-19 pandemic, which is unmasking the technocratic and individualistic ideology that has prevailed in contemporary culture. Surely, the long weeks of confinement have been a good occasion to reflect on the need for a more relational paradigm. We also need to learn from the experiences of the past; for example, from the responses that the Franciscan friars offered in the 14th century during the Black Death epidemic.

¹⁰ Gn 3,5. The author has developed these ideas on the Covid-19 pandemic and has related them to the Franciscan economic proposal in the preface to his book: CARBAJO-NÚÑEZ M., *Franziskanische Wirtschaft. Ein Vorschlag um aus der Krise Herauszukommen*, Be&Be Verlag, Heiligenkreuz 2020.

¹¹ FRANCIS, «Extraordinary moment of prayer» (March 27, 2020), in *OR 72* (March 29, 2020) 8. “We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other.” *Ibid.*

¹² HARARI Y.N., *Homo Deus: a brief history of tomorrow*, Harvill Secker, London 2015, 14.

The need to overcome the dialectic of perennial conflict

Covid-19 obliges us to review the concept of self-sufficient freedom that has aggravated the health crisis. Franciscans see freedom as the essential aspect of everything that exists and relates it closely to gratuitousness and gift. Liberal ideology, however, has reduced it to a simple absence of constraint, making of it another individual property. Each one must follow his own way, fighting mercilessly against the other competitors.

It is not strange that the countries which are having more difficulties in managing the health emergency are those with a more accentuated liberal tradition, because they tend to minimize the problem, giving priority to economic interests, and because they have strongly privatized and neglected their health care system.¹³

At the toughest moments of the health emergency, a fierce fight broke out among these countries, as each of them wanted to get as much medical material as possible, without caring about other countries' needs. Some of them even tried to confiscate the equipment that was directed to another nation. Attempts were also made to secure the exclusivity of a future vaccine, while allowing the diffusion of inaccurate and unverified information on possible medical treatments.

The Franciscan response during the Black Death

The crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic can be compared to the social crisis provoked by the Black Death, which spread in Europe from the year 1347 onwards. That

¹³ The health system in the United States is more expensive than in many other countries and ordinary people find it more difficult to have an easy access to their services. EMANUEL E.J., «The Real Cost of the US Health Care System,» in *JAMA* 319/10 (2018) 983-985, and other articles in this issue. In Italy the number of beds per 1,000 inhabitants was 9.2 in 1980, 5.8 in 1998, 4.3 in 2007 and 3.6 in 2017. Cf. https://www.istat.it/files/2019/04/Istat-Audizione-fondi-sanitari-integrativi_Allegato-statistico.xlsx

pandemic killed a third of the European population and forced people to revise the way they saw reality and the human person. Seven years earlier, in 1341, a credit bubble had burst in Florence, thus giving way to a severe economic and financial crisis. More than thirty years were needed to get over it.

In those moments of enormous health and socioeconomic crisis, the Franciscan friars proposed again the ethical and economic principles that they had developed in the previous one hundred years. Based on them, the friars encouraged people to humbly recognize their own fragility and to strengthen collaboration at all levels.¹⁴ Avoiding a “paternalist social assistance that is demeaning to those in need” (CV 58), the Franciscans invited all citizens, rich and poor, to be active and creative in the construction of the community (*communitas*). In fact, on both theoretical and practical levels, the friars made a decisive contribution to overcome the crisis, strengthening community bonds and the common good. Today we need to assume those Franciscan principles that can help us to build a more relational paradigm.¹⁵

Distribution and content

After two introductory chapters that study the concept of fraternity (c. 1) and the importance of family relationships (c. 2), the following chapters are organized around the four fundamental relationships of the human being: with God (c. 3),

¹⁴ Bonaventure of Bagnoregio (+1274) had already warned against an arrogant manner of engaging in theology: “a pride of reason that sets itself above the word of God.” BENEDICT XVI, «General audience» (March 17, 2010) in *OR* (March 18, 2010) 8.

¹⁵ We have developed this topic in our book: CARBAJO NÚÑEZ M., *A free and fraternal economy. The Franciscan perspective*, Tau, Phoenix (AZ) 2017. The Franciscans even promoted financial institutions, such as the Mounts of Piety. *Ibid.*

with oneself (c. 4-5), with others (c. 6-9) and with creation (c. 9).¹⁶

In the first chapter, it is stated that fraternity is a perennial longing of the human heart but, at the same time, it is a complex and demanding concept. The French Revolution included it in its motto, but soon left it aside. Today that fraternal ideal is still in crisis. We need to overcome the current technocratic paradigm, which relegates family relations to the private sphere, ignores gratuitousness, and abuses nature (cf. *LS* 215).

The second chapter focuses on the importance of family relationships in the light of the exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*. The parental family is the first school of fraternity and, therefore, its current crises is leading us to an impoverishment of fraternal relations at all levels. By analyzing *Amoris Laetitia*, we prepare ourselves to better understand the theme of fraternity in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*, which we will study in the subsequent chapters.

After these two introductory chapters, the third chapter shows the transcendent dimension of fraternity (*via divina*). Both Francis of Assisi and the encyclical *FT* offer a Trinitarian and Christological perspective of fraternity that goes beyond the usual way of understanding it in our society. We are

¹⁶ Part of the material in this book has been published in: CARBAJO-NÚÑEZ M. «Fraternity in the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. Franciscan roots,» in *REB* 81/319 (2021) 295-319 (c. 1,3,6); ID., «From *Amoris Laetitia* to *Fratelli Tutti*. The importance of family relationships,» in *Verdad y Vida* 79/277 (2021) 237-253 (c. 2); ID., «The Lord gave me brothers and sisters. Francis of Assisi, inspirer of the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*,» in XXXIX/75 (2023) 69-91 (c. 3,4,6); ID., «Fraternity in *Fratelli tutti* and in Franciscan spirituality. Converging points,» in *Verdad y Vida* 281 (2022); ID., «El espectáculo de la intimidad. Raíces históricas de la comunicación centrada en el yo,» in *Verdad y Vida* 261 (2012) 239-284 (c. 5); ID., «Libertà e comunità, populismo e liberalismo alla luce dell'enciclica *Fratelli tutti*,» in *Studi Ecumenici* 39/1-2 (2021) 263-272 (c. 7,8); ID., «The fraternal economy: A Franciscan perspective,» in *Collectanea Franciscana* 91 (2021) 565-580 (c. 7); ID., «Education and integral ecology. The role of family, spirituality, and university,» in *Carthaginensia* 38/73 (2022) 111-128 (c. 10); ID., «Autonomous Drone Warfare,» in *Warszawskie Studia Teologiczne* 35/1 (2022) 102-117 (c. 9). We are grateful to these publications for allowing us to use some of this material again.

brothers and sisters in Christ because we have the same Father and we are moved by the same Spirit.

The fourth chapter presents the foundations of Franciscan fraternity. Francis of Assisi trusts his friars and gives priority to each of them over the institutional aspects of their way of life. He invites them to exercise authority in a maternal way and to establish relations of equality, mercy, and forgiveness. Their minority and poverty should have a relational rather than an ascetic sense, for it should help them to follow Christ and to become universal brothers. For this very reason, they must avoid money and wealth, which break up fraternal relations and lead to domination and mutual distrust.

The fifth chapter shows that respect for human privacy is the basis of the fraternal encounter (*via persona*). The information society is favoring exhibitionism and morbid curiosity, which reduce the person to a mere object of observation. We need a new balance in the dynamism of revealing/concealing our own inner self to avoid narcissistic self-absorption and the lack of openness to diversity. Knowing and cultivating our interiority we prepare ourselves for a respectful and enriching contact with others.

After having analyzed the anthropological bases that make the fraternal encounter possible, the four successive chapters study various aspects of our relationships with others (*via umana*). Specifically, the sixth chapter insists on the need to build up the culture of encounter and, thus, attention is given to four significant encounters: those of Francis with the leper and the sultan, the one of the Samaritan with the wounded person and that of Pope Francis with the great Imam. It is emphasized that Francis' encounter with the leper was decisive in his conversion and that the parable of the Good Samaritan is the key to reading the entire encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. These four meetings show the importance of friendship and love as social categories.

In the seventh chapter, it is stated that the culture of encounter goes hand in hand with popular politics and fraternal

economy. Healthy and fraternal politics should not be confused with populisms or current liberalism. Likewise, the economy must be free and fraternal, avoiding the “paternalist social assistance, that is demeaning to those in need” (CV 58), and the merciless selfishness that increases inequalities.

In the eighth chapter we will study the dynamism of polar opposition which, following Romano Guardini, Pope Francis uses to invite us to build a fraternity that seeks unity without renouncing difference. The images of the polyhedron and the mosaic reflect this basic conception.

Chapter nine presents war as the complete breakdown of the fraternity dream. The use of autonomous drones further accentuates the inhumanity of armed conflicts. Likewise, recent technological advances, such as self-driving vehicles, present challenges for fraternity since they can accentuate people's indifference and lack of responsibility.

Finally, the tenth chapter focuses on the relationship with nature (*via natura*) and the need for education, spirituality, and mysticism to advance towards a fraternal relationship with all creatures. It is emphasized that the ideal of cosmic fraternity is an essential part of the Franciscan charism as the current OFM legislation indicates.

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THE UNIVERSAL FRATERNITY

Franciscan roots of *Fratelli tutti*

Martín Carbajo-Núñez

This book studies the Franciscan roots of the universal fraternity proposed by the encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. The Pope states that “it was the evangelical witness of St. Francis, with his school of thought, that gave this term [fraternity] the meaning it then preserved over the centuries.”

The pandemic of Covid-19 has uncovered “once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.” “Everything is connected.” The ties that unite us to all creatures are so strong that we can only survive if we promote fraternal relations at all levels to meet global challenges. This study offers some clues to that end.

THE AUTHOR

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Price: ₹ 395/-

ISBN: 978-93-94507-34-0

