



**AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies**

67/5 Sept-Oct 2022, ISSN P-2249-1503 E-2582-791X | 33-42

DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.6853236

Stable URL: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6853236>

## Wellsprings of Human Dignity and Fraternity in Other Religions

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this essay is to build community and meaningful relationships with all the religions in Fraternity and Sorority in Life. In today's world we require people who have encountered Christ and translate His message into their day today life. The aim of this article is to show the essence of fraternity in the human dignity and fraternity in other religion, in the light of *Fratelli Tutti*. The Encyclical aims to promote a universal aspiration toward fraternity and social friendship. Beginning with our common membership in the human family, from the acknowledgment that we are brothers and sisters because we are the children of one Creator, all in the same boat, and hence we need to be aware that in a globalized and interconnected world, only together can we be saved.

Cite as: Joseph, Jismi. (2022). Wellsprings of Human Dignity and Fraternity in Other Religions (Version 1.0). *AUC: Asian Journal of Religious Studies*, Sept-Oct 2022 (67/5), 33-42.  
<http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.6853236>

**Keywords:** Human Dignity, Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, Fraternity, other religion, Confraternity, communitarian, fellowship, Solidarity, brotherhood.

“In the social and civil context as well, I appeal not to create walls but to build bridges” -Pope Francis

## Introduction

As it is very well mentioned in the encyclical of Pope Francis on *Fratelli Tutti* the complete fact of Fraternity lies in the nature of each human person. From the gift of communion with one another arises the duty to build fraternity, in other words, to become brothers and sisters in a given community where all are called to live together. From accepting with wonder and gratitude the reality of divine communion shared with mere creatures, there also arises conviction of the need to make it always more visible by building communities with virtues. It helps us to grow in integral relation with one another as one family as we live in this planet with various communities and faith. Here the relations remain humanity of the existence of transcendence truth which is the source of human dignity in this earthly life. Every religion and tradition is committed to feel co-responsible for fraternal life in common so that it will manifest clearly their loyalty and belongingness to this planet and allow one another to live together under the shadow of one Umbrella of Mutual love and Fraternity.

Fraternity is, as Pope Francis said in his Message on the World Day of Peace that, it is an essential human quality, for we are all relational beings without fraternity, it is impossible to build a just society and a solid and lasting peace. The various religions, based on their respect for each human person as a creature, are called to be a child of God, contribute significantly to building fraternity and

defending justice in society. Today we are in the world of hiking with technologies and other many gadgets, but forgetting of, the worth of fraternal love with one another. Here I emphasize the value of Human dignity and Fraternity in other religions, based on the eighth chapter of *Fratelli Tutti*, the encyclical letter of Pope Francis.

### **1. Call for Universal Fraternity**

Pope Francis, in his encyclical on *Fratelli Tutti*, mentioned about St. Francis of Assisi that “This saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy prompts me to devote this new Encyclical to fraternity and social friendship. Francis 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. Wherever he went, he sowed seeds of peace and walked alongside the poor, the abandoned, the infirm and the outcast, the least of his brothers and sisters.” Here he wants to emphasise that the ground breaking encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* is to transcend every barrier and border, and rise above the dividing factors like races, colour, faith, cast and class. And to live as brothers and sisters in fraternity and peace and precisely in freedom and in maturity.

Genuine love of God flows into authentic fraternal love, as Pope Francis says, “Life without fraternal gratuitousness becomes a form of frenetic commerce, in which we are constantly weighing up what we give and what we get back in return. God, on the other hand, gives freely, to the point of helping even those who are unfaithful. As we live in this universe with different people with their own cultures and background, we ought to live as one family by forgetting ourselves and giving ourselves to God and to our fellow beings gratuitously.

At the time when the world confronts the unprecedented crisis caused by the Coronavirus disease the pandemic, where the

universe linked together to protect the lives of the people without requiring the cast and the race. But the global response was based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation. Here the encyclical letter was more applied and lived. In these times we could see and recognize the valuable contribution of people of all religions, or beliefs, to humanity. Moreover, the letter of the Holy Father really played a specific role and allowed the people to open the inner eyes to the Almighty.

## **2. Fraternity in Other Faiths**

The ultimate foundation of fraternity is very well emphasized in *Fratelli Tutti*: “Only with this awareness that we are not orphans, but children, can we live in peace with one another (FT 272).” as we believers, we are convinced that, without an openness to the father of all, there will be no solid and stable reasons for the appeal to fraternity. As Indian Christians, we are called to move beyond our individual self to families, families to neighbourhoods, villages, cities, nations and the human race as a whole.

The following section explains fraternity in India, especially in other religions.

### **a. Communitarian Aspect in Christianity**

As St. Augustine says, “The ear sees through the eye, and the eye hears through the ear.” It is also urgent to continue to bear witness to the journey of encounter with the different Christians. The Principle of Human Dignity is that every human being is created in the image of God and redeemed by Jesus Christ. Created in the image and likeness of God the Trinity or the Absolute Communion, all humans are communitarian by nature. In the light of Christianity fraternity is more valued and given

importance to carry out in our daily lives. All are built on this principle of communion.

### **b. Fellowship in Islam**

According to Quran, “Every Muslim who removes the need of his Muslim brother is promised a reward by God, and I think no reward other than heaven is adequate for him.” One of the strongest and most deep-rooted links in human relations, is the tie of brotherhood. Brothers love each other, are benevolent towards each other, and share each other’s joys and sorrows. Sometimes differences may occur between brothers, causing anxieties, but very soon these acrimonies are replaced by affection and sincerity, and rifts completely forgotten. Islam makes use of this firm link in order to strengthen social order and ameliorate human relations, and considers all devout Muslims as true brothers.

### **c. Solidarity in Hinduism**

In *Bagavat Gita* it is written that “men who are ever integrated and commune with me in Love I give that integration of the soul by which they may draw nigh unto me” (BG X. 9). It is only love and friendship that elevates us to God and God draws towards us. Also Hindu Solidarity speaks of “unity in diversity.” It is not a unity which levels or obscures the distinct and different beliefs and traditions. Indeed, some of the Hindu sects are more accurately viewed as complete religions in themselves. All of history proclaims this to be true. Hinduism is truly a divine family of religions. All Hindus encourage one another to follow his/her own sectarian path.

### **d. Brotherhood in Buddhism**

In the words of John Hick, “Give the ones wings of Love to fly, roots to come back and reason to stay.” According to Buddhism, true fellowship begins in giving and sharing the great Virtue of Love. The Buddhist’s fellowship envisions a future in which people from all backgrounds come into a

heartfelt realization of our interconnection to each other and to the Earth. We believe that actions generated from this understanding will create societies guided by generosity, compassion, wisdom, and justice. The purpose is to help human beings to liberate themselves from the suffering that manifest in individuals, relationship, institutions, and socially.

#### **e. Confraternity in Jainism**

According to Jainism the confraternity rests in each individual. It is divinity which is present everywhere in the universe and that the individual soul can achieve Godhood through a self-realization. Jains believe that many of humanity's problems are rooted in the power of passions, particularly those of desire, violence and materialism; and these passions can only be overcome by a rigorous conquest of self. So, they try to be with the people and with one another in love and concern rather than keeping the enmity between the people. Their main motto is that living beings should not be slain, nor treated with violence, nor abused, nor driven away.

### **3. Biblical Concept of Fraternity**

Pope Francis reminds us that for all "Christians the journey of fraternity has a Mother: Mary. Having received this universal motherhood at the foot of the cross, Mary cares not only for Jesus but also for "the rest of her children ART.274)." In the power of the risen Lord, Pope Francis says, Mary wants to give birth to a new world, a world where all of us are brothers and sisters, where there is room for all those whom our societies discard, and where justice and peace are resplendent.

#### **a. Recognizing God and Neighbour ( Mt 22:39)**

"You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Mt 22:39) is the basic principle of Christianity to which Love follows

knowing one another. We cannot love someone unless we know that person. Often, we wish to love God and neighbour, but many a time our wish remains merely a wish. In today's era many individuals are unable to recognize who God is, and who their Neighbour is. But still today the Truth is in Light that Jesus is the best and first example of this great value, that is, Love. Loving one another is the ultimate principle of Humanity.

### **b. The Blessedness of Unity (Ps 133:1)**

According to the Psalmist, "How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity" (Ps 133:1). It signifies the importance of unity among the people of God. Not everything that is good is pleasant, and not everything that is pleasant is good. Here Unity among God's people is such a remarkable blessing because it is both good and pleasant – and both to a high degree, indicating to the fraternity in being with one another especially with our fellow beings.

### **c. Beacons of Love to the Humanity (1 Jn 4:11-12)**

1Jn 4:11-12, "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us," is the backbone of John's letter. The primordial way Christians are to be recognized is by love. This is not merely what we feel, but what we do for others without any discrimination. True, godly love is the most powerful evidence of being "born again" as a child of God. This love comes from God, who loved us before we loved Him. When we live in obedience to God, according to love, we can be confident in our relationship with Him, and have no need to fear His judgment.

## **4. Building Fraternity from Me to Us**

The prime pillar of me and you is constructed in Fraternity. Living in fraternal love is to remain in the love of God that is the oxygen that we breathe with one another. Dialogue

between the followers of different religions is to modify and strongly build up the fellowship with one another in peace and harmony. As we see in the context of today, specially, at the peak time of the pandemic, there was no barrier between the rich and poor, healthy and non-healthy, cast or divisions, but rushing together to the one hospital to breathe for a while. There we could see the real fellowship with one another without any botheration of religion. That was the real time where the foundation of fraternal love, understanding and respect for each other's identity, background and culture existed. Here it has come true is that "God does not see with his eye, God sees with Heart. And Gods love is the same for everyone, regardless of religion.

## Conclusion

As I conclude basically on the *Fratelli Tutti*, it is a journey of peace which is possible between religions. Its point of departure must be God's way of seeing things. We, the believers, are challenged to return to our sources in order to concentrate on what is essential worship of God and love for our neighbour. At least some of our teachings, taken out of context, end up feeding forms of contempt, hatred, xenophobia or negation of others. The first and most important aim of religions is to believe in God, to honour Him and to invite all people to believe that this universe depends on a God who governs it.

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Article received: Jan 13, 2022: Accepted: May 15, 2022. Word count: 2390



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