

# origins

CNS documentary service

## ***Fratelli Tutti:*** **Encyclical**

**Pope Francis**

*Professing faith in God as the creator of all human beings, or even simply recognizing that all people possess an inherent dignity, has concrete consequences for how people should treat one another and make decisions in politics, economics and social life, Pope Francis wrote. "Human beings have the same inviolable dignity in every age of history, and no one can consider himself or herself authorized by particular situations to deny this conviction or to act against it," the pope wrote in his encyclical, "Fratelli Tutti, on Fraternity and Social Friendship." Pope Francis signed the encyclical Oct. 3 after celebrating Mass at the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi, and the Vatican released the text the next day. The pope had been rumored to be*

*"Each day we have to decide whether to be good Samaritans or indifferent bystanders."*

*writing an encyclical on nonviolence; and once the COVID-19 pandemic struck, many expected a document exploring in depth his repeated pleas for the world to recognize the inequalities and injustices laid bare by the pandemic and adopt corrective economic, political and social policies. "Fratelli Tutti" combines those two elements but does so in the framework set by the document on human fraternity and interreligious dialogue that he and Sheikh Ahmad el-Tayeb, grand imam of al-Azhar Mosque in Cairo, signed in 2019. The encyclical takes its title from St. Francis of Assisi and is inspired by his "fraternal openness," which, the pope said, calls on people "to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives." The encyclical follows, copyright © 2020 by Libreria Editrice Vaticana.*

**1** "FRATELLI TUTTI."<sup>1</sup> With these words, St. Francis of Assisi addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel. Of the counsels Francis offered, I would like to select the one in which he calls for a love that transcends the barriers of geography and distance, and declares blessed all those who love their brother "as much when he is far away from him as when he is with him."<sup>2</sup> In his simple and direct way, St. Francis expressed the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless

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