



WE ARE CHURCH International

Saturday, 11 April 2026

Leader: François B.

Theme: Fraternity: The "Sacrament of the Brother"

Facilitator: Hello and welcome. Invited by Jesus to share who he is and what he has experienced, we welcome one another and share some news:

News is shared, and those participating for the first time introduce themselves.

Facilitator Jesus invites us today to meditate and reflect on fraternity and sorority, on what some call the "Sacrament of Brothers and Sisters," that is, the sacrament that turns us toward our brothers and sisters, sons and daughters of the same Father, especially the poorest among us, to place ourselves at their service. The Evangelist John tells us:

"To all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12-13).

Let us celebrate this mystery of God's infinite love for every human being, the mystery of God's humanization, so that humanity may become God through grace.

Entrance Hymn: Refrain of People of God, People of Brothers (jo Akepsimas)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4oTG8yg8zA>

A people of brothers, a people of sharing, bearing the Gospel and the peace of God

Reader 1 VIRGINIA S. : Fraternal Love Linked to the Love of God

Fraternity is not primarily an ethic to be implemented, but rather a reflection of our relationship with God. It leads us to dare the impossible in trust. The relationship between human beings has the same sacred character as the relationship between God and human beings and is founded on agape love: whatever we do for others, we do for God. Fraternity, when lived, is capable of establishing a culture of encounter where each person respects the other for who they are.

Mt 22,36-39 (Mk 12,28-34 et Lk 10,25-28) *Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?...He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment....A second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."*

1 John, 2,9-11 ; 3,14-16 ; 4, 20-21 *Whoever claims to be in the light and hates his brother is still in darkness. Whoever loves his brother is in the light, and there is nothing in him to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness, not knowing where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes. ...We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Whoever does not love remains in death. ...Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. ...This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. ...If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen. And we have this commandment from him: that whoever loves God must also love his brother.*

Facilitator : The Requirements of Fraternity According to the New Testament:

Fraternity, like the New Testament, concerns every man and woman regardless of their religion, beliefs, nationality, ethnicity, or situation. Therefore, let us pay attention to what N. Ghrab and MJ Horchani, members of the Islamic-Christian Research Group (GRIC), have prepared on the **requirements of fraternity**: <https://gric-international.org/2026/fraternite/la-fraternite-dans-le-nouveau-testamenttandre-ferre-gric-tunis/>

Reader 2 VIRGINIA S. As believers, whether Muslim or Christian, we believe that fraternity is not only a relationship with others but also a relationship with the Wholly Other. Therefore, we have chosen texts from the New Testament, which we have grouped to highlight the requirements of fraternity: kindness, solidarity, forgiveness, and humility. Fraternity challenges us to examine our behavior in everyday life. What is our relationship to anger, envy, resentment, hatred, slander, and hasty judgment? How do we view the poorest among us, our differences, and the elderly? Are we capable of compassion, sharing, forgiveness, and accepting and practicing fraternal correction? In short, do we love "in deed and in truth," or are we among those of whom Matthew speaks (23:1-12): "they say, but do not do"?

Reader 3 VIRGINIA S. First requirement: Kindness

Excerpts from the Gospel: Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye, but do not notice the plank in your own eye? ... Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye! Then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye (Mt 7:3-5 (Lk 6:41-42)... Do not speak evil of one another, brothers. He who speaks evil of a brother, or judges his brother, speaks evil of the law and judges the law. But if you judge the law, you are not a doer of the law but a judge of it. (James 4:11) ...Do not rebuke an older man harshly, but exhort him as you would a father; exhort younger men as brothers. (1 Tim 5:1) ...If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have won your brother. (Mt 18:15) ...Do not regard him as an enemy, but warn him as a brother (2 Thessal 3:15) ...Therefore let us not judge one another any longer, but rather consider not to do anything that would cause your brother or sister to stumble or fall (Romans 14:10-13)... Therefore, if anything causes my brother or sister to stumble, I will never eat meat, so that I will not cause them to stumble. (1 Corinthians 8:13)

Galatians 3,28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is not male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

Reader 4 MAEVE W. : Second requirement: Solidarity and sharing

Excerpts from the Gospel: As he went out he saw a large crowd. He is moved to his very core for them: he heals their invalids (Mt 14:14 (Mk 6:31-34 and Lk 9:10-11)).... Jesus calls his disciples and says, "I am moved to my core for the crowd. They have already been with me three days, and they have nothing to eat! I cannot send them away hungry, for they will faint on the way" (Mt 15:32 (Mk 8:1)).... Give to the one who asks of you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you (Mt 5:42)).... Therefore, whatever you want others to do to you, do to them, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets (Mt 7:12 (Lk 6:31))... If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in poverty, If he needs to, he closes his heart to him; how then can the love of God remain in him?... Little children, let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth. (1 John 3:17-18)

Reader 5 MAEVE W. : Third and fourth requirements: Forgiveness and humility

And I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Whoever says to his brother, "You scum!" is answerable to the Sanhedrin... Whoever says, "You fool!" is liable to the fire of hell. So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar and first go and be reconciled to your brother. (Matthew 5:22-24) ... Peter came to him and said, "How many times shall I forgive my brother or sister sin against me? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times" (Mt 18:21 (Lk 17:4)). Humility is inseparable from brotherhood, since every individual is important, since every being always has something to offer.

1 Peter 3:8: "Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble." **Matthew 23:8-9:** "But you are not to be called 'Rabbi,' for you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers. And do not call anyone on earth 'father,' for you have one Father, and he is in heaven."

Reader 6 COLM H. Brother Jean Marie Burucoa OSB of Belloc Abbey in the Basque Country tells us in his book "The Flavor of God," chapter 12: "Humanity of heart cares for the weak. It is solicitude, discretion, and moderation. But who among men is not weak? Who is only strength, without shortcomings or failings?... The confession of weakness is the cement of unity. Sharing it binds brothers together in truth. Whoever believes themselves strong undermines unity: they want to distinguish themselves, to separate themselves from their self-sufficiency. They exclude themselves from the communion that alone constitutes strength. There is no strength except in frank and collaborative solidarity, which creates fraternity. And this fraternity itself becomes all strength, the strength to support oneself and the strength to support others, each leading to the other. Fraternity is the sacrament of divine humanity through which we experience it by receiving it from others and giving it to them, receiving it only in order to give it." Those who keep the gift for themselves have not truly received it: God's humanity wants to animate ours.

Facilitator As Bishop Lalanne, Bishop Emeritus of Pontoise in France, tells us, "Let us be aware that 'as the Eucharist is the sacrament of Love, 'the sacrament of the brother' is no less this sacrament of Love, that is to say, a movement of offering, of giving of a free love for the other.'"

Reader 7 COLM H. Christ is truly present in the face of our brother or sister: “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt 25:40). “Christians love God through their brothers and sisters in humanity,” said a great theologian. Faith reveals what is at stake in every act of charity, in serving our neighbor: a relationship that is not merely human but reaches God “in person” through the person of his Son Jesus. Saint Benedict tells us that the humanity of the heart is not of human origin. It is inspired by God’s gaze, it bears witness to his tenderness, it draws from his boundless mercy.

Fraternity takes on a transcendent dimension, as Pope Francis emphasizes in his apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, paragraphs 91 and 92: “...it is about learning to discover Jesus in the faces of others, in their voices, in their requests.” It is also about learning to suffer by embracing the crucified Jesus when we endure unjust aggression or ingratitude, without ever tiring of choosing fraternity. “Therein lies true healing, provided that our way of relating to others, truly healing us instead of making us ill, is a mystical, contemplative fraternity, one that knows how to see the sacred grandeur of our neighbor, to discover God in every human being, that knows how to bear the inconveniences of living together by clinging to God’s love, that knows how to open our hearts to divine love in order to seek the happiness of others as their good Father does.” Fraternity is salvific.

Facilitator : And this brings us back to the threefold evangelizing action of the Church, which expresses its nature: the proclamation of the Word of God, the celebration of the sacraments, and the service of charity... Let us share with one another what we receive from these testimonies.

Sharing

Facilitator. Enriched by what we have just received from these texts and our discussions, let us be attentive, as we enter into our celebration, to what Pope Francis tells us in *Evangelii Tutti*:

Reader 8 RACHAEL A. The Pope observes that “certain trends in the world today hinder the promotion of universal fraternity.” He notes a gap between the desire and the dream of fraternity and the current landscape of a divided world, and he criticizes the movements of withdrawal into oneself, the tendencies to separate oneself from others: “The temptation to create a culture of walls reappears, to erect walls in the heart, walls built on the earth to avoid this encounter with other cultures, with other people.” Against these temptations of confinement, only love has an effective response that allows openness to the other: “No one can experience the value of life without concrete faces to love. Therein lies a secret of authentic human existence, for life persists where there is connection, communion, fraternity... A person and a people are fruitful only if they know how to open themselves creatively to others. And this openness never infringes upon the unique identity of a person or a country.” We all belong to the same human family.

Facilitator Let us acknowledge that we do not always act as brothers and sisters, and that sometimes we fail to hear their cries, to see their distress. Forgive us, Father, as we forgive those who have offended us.

Let us sing "Kyrie eleison" "Lord, have mercy"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qbw2dlaIa7c>

Facilitator: Truly, most holy Father, confident of being forgiven our sins, it is right and just, for Your glory and our salvation, to offer You our thanksgiving, always and everywhere, through Your beloved Son, Jesus Christ:

He alone, by accepting death, delivers us from the law of death; He alone, by accepting to give His life, makes us live forever for You. Therefore, with the angels and all the saints, we sing Your glory, and with one voice we proclaim:

Song: Sanctus, Dominus Deus Sabbaoth Pleni sunt caeli et terra

... <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KILJcjKvCCo>

Reader 9 RACHAEL A. Praise be to you, Father, whom we acknowledge as the source of all life, all love, and all brotherhood.

Throughout the centuries, you have invited us all, through your prophets, to live as brothers and sisters, sharing bread, sharing shelter, clothing the naked, and not turning away from our fellow human beings.

Then one day, in our midst, there was a man, a man of flesh and blood; his name was Jesus, and he called you his Father.

In discovering all that the Gospels reveal to us about him, we too have discovered how, through his words and deeds, he drew near, brother, and friend to all his contemporaries, and today we want to thank him and continue his work.

By looking to Jesus, we have sought how to be inspired by him to become, like him, a neighbor to our contemporaries. We have sought to love one another as Jesus loved his own...and to forgive one another the offenses we have committed against one another.

Reader 10 SOLINE H. Thus, together we have explored paths of fraternity and forgiveness for today; help us to commit ourselves to them.

Today, with our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, we want to continue the work of fraternity and friendship that Jesus sought to establish and began to build. We offer to the Father who we are, including our failures, our abandonments, our despair, and our successes in our search for fraternity. So that we may have the strength and the will, Jesus offers himself to us to nourish us with who he is.

Everyone: The night before his death, during the farewell meal he shared with his disciples, Jesus called them to follow his path of truth, a path he himself followed, even unto death, out of love for us, to forgive his executioners and those who condemned him to death.

Then he took bread, said the blessing, and shared it with those around the table with him, saying, "Take and eat of it, all of you; I am given up for you and for many."

Likewise, at the end of the meal, he took the cup, said the blessing, and passed it around the table, saying, "Take and drink from it, all of you; this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and eternal covenant, which will be poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Facilitator By eating the bread and drinking the wine shared as Jesus asked us to, we commit ourselves to sharing and forgiving as He asks of us.

Each person eats the shared bread and drinks from the cup.

Song: Jesus Christ Bread of Life (Taizé)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6N_QxNTGOc

Jesus Christ, Bread of Life,
Those who come to you will not hunger.
Jesus Christ, Risen Lord,
Those who trust in you will not thirst.

Jésus-Christ, Pain de vie,
Ceux qui viennent à toi n'auront pas faim.
Jésus-Christ, Seigneur ressuscité,
Ceux qui se confient en toi n'auront pas soif

Everyone : Our Father

Our Father and Mother, deep in our hearts, You whom Jesus revealed to us so that we may love one another as You love us, You help us to commit ourselves to doing Your will on earth.

Our Father and Mother, You help us to produce and share the bread You give us.

Our Father and Mother, You help us to forgive as You forgive, to overcome temptation, and You deliver us from evil.

Our Father and Mother, You thus help us to build together a world of solidarity and brotherhood.

Final Prayer and Blessing

Reader 11 SOLINE H.

Before those who lie by the roadside, wounded by a closed world, recognizing that we are all brothers and sisters, grant us, Father, the strength and discernment to respond to Pope Francis's call in his encyclical "Fratelli Tutti" to embrace, and commit ourselves to, putting into practice the world's desire for fraternity.

You whom Jesus calls his Father, bless us in all that we undertake for the Kingdom. Jesus, our brother, watch over us and assist us in joy and in trials along our journey. Holy Spirit, never cease to pour your love into our hearts, never cease to inspire us with forgiveness and reconciliation so that the Kingdom may come about.

Closing hymn: Laudate Dominum

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nYBfHdbf-6M>