



Many and One

Part of *A symposium on 'Fratelli tutti'*

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. *Fratelli tutti* delves into the relationship between the global and the local, the universal and the particular. Where, both inside and outside of church, have you witnessed “deep specifics and vast abstractions”? What might “obtaining the universal by way of the local street” look like?

2. What particulars characterize your life? How does your membership in social, religious, racial, or linguistic groups open you to the particularities of others, as well as help you to find common truths? As Cunningham asks, how can we be many and also one?

3. In *Fratelli tutti*, Pope Francis focuses on our relationships to cities and civic spaces. Where have you seen fruitful encounters between the global and the local? Where do you witness cultural sharing and transformation?

4. We may often be tempted to think of Jesus in the abstract. How does it change or deepen your faith to think of him as a specific man with particular characteristics? What does the Incarnation reveal about the relationship between the particular and the universal?

5. In many of his writings and teachings, Pope Francis opposes neoliberalism, a system by which life is ruled by the dictates of market systems. Do you agree that neoliberalism tends to “flatten and homogenize” specific cultures? How does the notion of “peoplehood” challenge both neoliberalism and insularity?

6. How should the Church handle the tension between particular cultures and universal truths? Can you think of examples of this tension? What does it mean for the universal Church to change and learn from local circumstances?

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING:

Collection of Commonweal’s writing on ‘Fratelli tutti’: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/fratelli-tutti-0>

Susan Bigelow Reynolds, “Way Stations for a Pilgrim Church,” April 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/way-stations-pilgrim-church>

Brett C. Hoover, “Look Who’s Here,” April 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/heart-work>

Bryan P. Galligan, SJ, “Teetering on the Edge,” October 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/teetering-edge>

Paul Lakeland, “Spiritual Resistance,” June 2020: <https://www.commonwealmagazine.org/spiritual-resistance>