

## **Open letter to Pope Francis and to the teachers of Latin America and the Caribbean**

Dear Father, Dear Colleagues,

We wish to express our immense gratitude for the encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. As lay communities of teachers, organized in the International Movement of TEACHER TEAMS, we have been strengthened in our deep longing for the Kingdom among us and for the dream of ANOTHER POSSIBLE WORLD to become a reality.

Dear colleagues, *Fratelli Tutti* is an encyclical from Pope Francis inviting us to build a fraternal world, to break bread together under the roof of our Common Home and to share all the gifts of the earth: its water, rivers, seas, forests, wetlands, minerals, even the sun and the air. It invites all humanity to adopt the perspective of Saint Francis of Assisi, to change this continent and the whole planet, becoming true brothers and sisters with no barriers between us.

We, the Teacher Teams of Latin America and the Caribbean, call upon all teachers, students and parents to think of America as our common home. We are ready to contribute our faith, our hope, our joy and our youth. We already have workers of all descriptions: teachers, labourers, poets, musicians, writers, painters, photographers, footballers, craftspeople, scientists, chemists, physicists, doctors, nurses, engineers, mathematicians, journalists, economists, computer scientists, technicians. All of them have been brought up by their teachers and parents in their villages and towns; they have a homeland and a story to tell. They are a treasure trove of seeds that took years to grow and bear fruit. Life continues and is open to new possibilities; we do not want to see the end of the human race. We ask everyone to unite and fight together to overcome all the dangers that threaten us. This is a tremendous challenge!

The task of educating ourselves and of teaching others in the way of life proposed by *Fratelli Tutti* is enormous. The pandemic caused by Coronavirus has put our SEEING, REFLECTING and ACTING in a very different light. Covid 19 has pushed children, young people and adults out of the classroom and into situations where distance learning has become the immediate challenge. The lack of networks, computers and internet connections have all been problems to solve; we have managed to reach almost everyone with educational television, study guides and social networks to keep people in touch. The experience of coming to each other's aid to avoid infection has nurtured the desire in us to give birth to a different, better humanity. It has made us think that our democracies deserve better political leaders: wise, loving, tender, capable men and women, who know how to exercise power in the service of the common good rather than their petty, personal interests.

We, the Teacher Teams of Latin America, see ourselves as a People's Church, faithful to gospel of Jesus Christ and brothers of the poor. We know how hard the struggle is to

educate ourselves and to teach others, and we wish to join this great crusade of Francisco the Argentinean Pope. He knows our continent very well, he speaks our language and knows our history, our brightest lights and darkest shadows, our native peoples and our colonizers. May we use all our senses fully, our eyes open to SEE, our ears able to hear the cry of the poor, our tongues relishing all flavours, our touch never causing offence. Let us rewrite together a *credo* and a new history for the man and woman of today.

Thank you, Pope Francisco, for this encyclical and for being with us as we take it to all teachers; it will be rewritten again and again with the stories of our own lives as educators of the people.

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Lidia Flowers  
Latin American EDAL Coordinator

Thonny Etienne  
Northern region co-ordinator

Santiago Ramirez  
Central region co-ordinator

Iris and Edie Pradier  
Southern region co-ordinators

*Translation by Jonathan Ticher*