

CLOSING PRAYER:

O God, Trinity of love,
 from the profound communion of
 Your Divine life,
 pour out upon us a torrent of
 fraternal love.
 Grant us the love reflected in the
 actions of Jesus,
 in His family of Nazareth,
 and in the early Christian community.

Grant that we Christians may live
 the Gospel,
 discovering Christ in each human
 being,
 recognizing Him crucified
 in the sufferings of the abandoned
 and forgotten by our world,
 and risen in each brother or sister
 who makes a new start.

Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
 reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
 so that we may discover anew
 that all are important and
 all are necessary,
 different faces of the one humanity
 that God so loves.

Amen.

CLOSING HYMN:

Prayer of St. Francis

Make me a channel of Your peace
 Where there is hatred,
 let me bring Your love
 Where there is injury, Your pardon Lord
 And where there's doubt,
 true faith in You

Make me a channel of Your peace
 Where there's despair in life,
 let me bring hope
 Where there is darkness, only light
 And where there's sadness, ever joy

Oh Master, grant that I may never seek
 So much to be consoled as to console
 To be understood as to understand
 To be loved as to love with all my soul

Make me a channel of Your peace
 It is pardoning that we are pardoned
 In giving to all men that we receive
 And in dying that we're
 born to eternal life.

B&C Reflection

HOPE BELIEVE, LIVE and GIVE



BRIDGING CULTURAL BOUNDARIES

EVENT: **Gawai / Kaamatan**

SOCIAL MEDIA TREND: **#respectculture**

INTRODUCTION:

To care for the world in which we live also means to care for ourselves. Yet, we need to think of ourselves more and more as a single-family dwelling in a common home. However, it appears that part of the human family can easily be sacrificed for the sake of others. Ultimately, "persons can no longer be seen as of paramount importance who are supposed to be cared for and respected, especially when they are poor and disabled, ineffectual or abandoned - like the elderly".



OPENING PRAYER

Invite a BEC member to lead the prayer.

OPENING HYMN:

They'll Know We Are Christians

We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord
And we pray that our unity
will one day be restored

And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love
Yes, they'll know we are Christians
by our love

We will work with each other,
we will work side by side
We will work with each other,
we will work side by side
And we'll guard each man's dignity
and save each man's pride

And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love
Yes, they'll know we are Christians
by our love.

DIALOGUE

"FRATELLI TUTTI". With these words, Saint Francis of Assisi addressed his brothers and sisters and proposed to them a way of life imbued by the flavour of the Gospel. In his simple and direct way, he expressed the essence of a fraternal openness that allows us to acknowledge, appreciate and love each person, regardless of physical proximity, regardless of where he or she was born or lives. 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.

There is an episode in the life of Saint Francis that shows his openness of heart, which knew no bounds and transcended differences of origin, nationality, colour or religion. It was his visit to Sultan Malik-el-Kamil, in Egypt, which entailed considerable hardship, given Francis' poverty, his scarce resources, the great distances to be travelled and their differences of language, culture and religion. That journey, undertaken at the time of the Crusades, further demonstrated the breadth and grandeur of his love, which sought to embrace everyone.

Unconcerned about the hardships and dangers involved, Francis went to meet the Sultan with the same attitude that he instilled in his disciples: if they found themselves "among the Saracens and other non-believers", without renouncing their own identity they were not to "engage in arguments or disputes, but to be subject to every human creature for God's sake". In the context of the times, this was an extraordinary recommendation.

We are impressed that some eight hundred years ago Saint Francis urged that all forms of hostility or conflict be avoided and that a humble and fraternal "subjection" be shown to those who did not share his faith. Francis did not wage a war of words aimed at imposing doctrines; he simply spread the love of God. He understood that "God is love and those who abide in love abide in God" (1 Jn 4:16). In this way, he became a father to all and inspired the vision of a fraternal society.

(Excerpts from encyclical letter "Fratelli Tutti" of The Holy Father Francis On Fraternity And Social Friendship)

Share your thoughts with your BEC members.

- What can you learn about the attitude of St. Francis?
- Are you able to treat others equally without discrimination in term of race, religion and language? In your own reflection, are you practising racism in your daily life?

DISCERNMENT

Ephesians 4:2-6

Source: Jerusalem Bible

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

REFLECTION:

- READ the text aloud and LISTEN with openness.
- READ it silently by yourself until a word or phrase touches or strikes you.
- What is the Holy Spirit saying to you through the word or phrase?
- What do you say to the Lord in response to his Word?
- Share in small groups (3-4 persons) the verse that has touched you.

DEEDS:

As BEC members, how can we promote peace and love with others without looking at one's background, race and religion especially in this current situation (Covid-19 pandemic), when we are aware that our movements are restricted in reaching out to one another? There are a few practical ways in which we can do this:

1. **Reflect on Goodness** — Reflect with gratitude on the sacrifices of the front-line workers and all those who are self-quarantining; working overtime to do research, carrying out tests on vaccines, and providing important, accurate and timely information. Notice the many ways you can divert your attention to the manner that people are caring for fellow human beings around the world.
2. **Stay Connected** — How does it feel to reflect with gratitude on the relationships in our lives and let people know we care about them? Keep in touch and liaise in whatever way that you can.
3. **Be Generous** — Extend compassion to those whose lives are impacted most by this crisis. Try being more patient, kinder, take a deep breath before responding, offer smiles and gratitude freely. Support local businesses struggling, as many of us stay at home.