

Pope Francis' thinking on Peace

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In this paper, I will be taking you inside our Pope's thinking about peace. I will try to briefly review the practicalities of the Pope's approach to peace in this social encyclical. Peace is an important theme: it appears 103 times in this encyclical, justice 57 times, and violence 40 times. There is therefore every reason to also read this social encyclical as a peace encyclical.

1. Introduction: Three levels of peace

For an understanding of this encyclical, it is helpful to remember that Pope Francis in *Fratelli Tutti* speaks of peace on three levels. First of all, he talks about the spiritual level of peace, the spirit of brotherhood, solidarity and cooperation in the spirit of Saint Francis of Assisi and Blessed Charles de Foucauld. The second level is what the Pope in *Fratelli Tutti* calls social peace, which is peace within a state - the type of peace issue the Pope had to deal with in Argentina. The Pope recognizes two elements in social peace: an institutional element of agreements, regulations and treaties, and a cultural element, which consists of contributions by the population to memory and to a culture of hope (no. 54). His emphasis is on the second, culture; because Pope Francis also says in *Fratelli Tutti* that these (institutional peace actions) are not enough—even though according to *Fratelli Tutti*, they are indeed necessary and require maintenance and development (108). The third level is international political peace - peace between states. I note here that in our globalized society the traditional distinction between social peace and international peace has become blurred. Yet in general it can be said that most of the attention in *Fratelli Tutti* is on social peace.

2. Method: three-step model

In addition, it is helpful when reading *Fratelli Tutti* to consider that this social encyclical ties in with a tradition of the Church's Social Doctrine, which has been addressing these three elements since 1961. First, the question of what are the actual developments, trends and bottlenecks that people today need to find an answer to? What do we see? Second, what sources, principles and values do we have available when we look for normative-ethical starting points for our response to these developments? How should we judge? And third: how should we act, in terms of practice and in setting up programs?

3. Prophetic variant of the method

Pope Francis offers a special variant of this three-step model. It is close to Biblical prophecy. As for the first step, the facts outlined by the Pope - in Chapter 1, have the character of a prophetic charge of wrongdoing - typically prophetic. In his treatment of the second step, the sources, he places a lot of emphasis on the sources of hope for a better future: on the vision of the future that moves people to commit themselves to hastening the Kingdom of God and His justice - again typical prophetic. At the heart of this in *Fratelli Tutti* is his explanation of the parable of the Good Samaritan, which outlines an ideal pattern of compassion, commitment and action. The third step, action,

is dedicated to the conversion of each of us, which is necessary to reach the promised and hoped-for future. This third step therefore focuses on what people need to get to the promised and hoped-for future: they need a conversion that also influences action, including social and political action. So this is what the prophetic three-step model looks like.

4. Prophetic Content

Of course, this prophetic angle reveals itself not only in the method, but also and especially in the *content* of Fratelli Tutti. First of all, by the way in which the Pope fulfills the Biblical belief that peace is the fruit of righteousness (Isa. 32:17; a text which Pope Francis does not quote). The Pope constantly emphasized the consequences that our actions and practices have on the poorest, who are the measure of all action. In Fratelli Tutti he also points out that, although there is legal equality according to human rights in world society, realized equality lags behind, for example in the position of women. So we see the Pope standing up for one of the core values of the American and French Revolutions: all human beings were created equal. Regarding his idea of the second core value of those revolutions, freedom, he points out (no.13) that in postmodern culture with its deconstructionism, that freedom is misunderstood if it assumes that everything is to be redone from scratch. can be re-started. This freedom-in-connection is also expressed in dealing with the past of the Holocaust and Hiroshima, for example, which we must never forget and must therefore continue to remember. We must also take responsibility for the future, he recently says in his discussion of the splattered dreams in the first chapter. Humanity needs a vision of a "more human" future (no. 29). This dream for the future must look beyond our own borders and include migrants and refugees. (np. 37) Regarding the concept of freedom as an element of justice, Pope Francis puts into perspective the absolute definition of the free market economy throughout the encyclical Fratelli Tutti, and instead advocates a freedom that is not a right of claim (nos. 109 - 110), but in a 'shared narrative' (no. 163) is linked to responsibility, at all levels: socio-economic, political, cultural, religious). It is about a responsible freedom that shows solidarity with those who are now excluded from society (no. 110. We must therefore also promote the freedom that we have ourselves, for example religious freedom, for others as well (no. 283). The most prophetic element that points in the direction of peace as the fruit of justice in Fratelli Tutti, however, does not concern the concept of freedom and the interpretation of equality in itself, but the plea for universal brotherhood, the value of the French Revolution which is neglected in Europe. The Pope puts the connection, universal solidarity, high on the agenda, and insists that this solidarity is not to be interpreted as ethnocentric, nationalist and protectionist. The Pope is clearly committed to social cosmopolitanism - but one that takes the bonds of people in communities seriously.

5. Approach to conflicts

The prophetic three-step model used by Pope Francis in this peace encyclical may sound a bit too school-like when it comes to Pope Francis's typical contribution to the social teaching on peace. It has two other characteristics. First of all, it is colored by its Latin American context, including the experiences with the military junta in Argentina that waged a dirty war against its own population in the last century – which made

people disappear and threw people into the sea - and which made reconciliation difficult afterwards by to refusing to reveal the truth about the disappearances of opposition members. Think of the “foolish mothers” who spent years trying in vain to get that truth out. Logically, the Pope did not retain an affinity with armed forces or even a possible positive role for them from his Argentinian experience. But more importantly, a second characteristic of the papal approach to social doctrine emerges here. Already during his Argentine time, the Pope had been thinking a lot about how conflicts, especially social conflicts within a country, can be brought to an end. As pope, he immediately translated the most important insights from this into documents. His creative approach to conflict resolution can be found in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013), and it has even been repeated in the Encyclical *Laudato Si* (2015). This background is useful for reading *Fratelli Tutti*, because the Pope speaks about conflicts in no fewer than 70 places in *Fratelli Tutti*.

6. Four principles of social conflict

Thus, Pope Francis's view of conflict already contained four principles before *Fratelli Tutti*, which I mention here - too briefly - those same four principles for dealing with conflicts that the Pope brings up again and again. First, he says that "time" is above space: time stands for openness and limitlessness, and is therefore a condition for reflection on action; in his vision space is limited as a moment, in which action becomes concrete. Second, on conflict, the Pope says that unity is above conflict. This is one way of saying, for example, that after a conflict such as in Argentina, the population of a state should restore unity and thus pursue reconciliation. Above all, the conflict must be endured instead of looking at it as a spectator or conversely clinging to it. The third aspect of conflict in the Pope's approach is: reality is more important than ideas. Here the Pope reveals himself as a non-Platonic realist who, from a pastoral point of view, is concerned with making ideas function in a concrete social reality. In the polarity between idea and reality, reality must prevail. Finally, since his time as cardinal in Argentina, the Pope has often used the fourth principle: the whole is greater than the parts. This principle is already part of the idea of the *bonum commune* from social doctrine, but will be further elaborated here. According to our Pope, we must keep our eyes open to the bigger picture, not only thinking locally, but also not in an abstract universalism (*Evangelii Gaudium* 139-149).

7. Three questions

In the remainder of this contribution, I am looking for answers to three questions. First of all: (A) in *Fratelli Tutti*, what does the Pope understand by peace? Secondly (B) what does the Pope say in *Fratelli Tutti* about the roadmap to peace? Thirdly: (C) How does the Pope in *Fratelli Tutti* answer the questions related to legitimizing peace practices, war, violence and conflict?

8. Definitions of peace

First of all (A.): what does the pope understand by peace? To begin with, the Pope indicates what peace is not. He writes: “A real and lasting peace is not possible based on a strategy of sowing fear and distrust in the face of outside threats. Also in No. 26 he states that the world is caught in a contradiction, namely that we can "ensure

stability and peace through a false sense of security backed by a mindset of fear and distrust." (No. 26) In Europe, he says, the promotion of peace seems to be in decline, writes the Pope (nos. 10-11). The realization that we belong to a human family is waning, and the dream of justice and peace seems like a dated utopia (no.30). Humanity must relearn to live in harmony and peace without us all having to be the same. (100) Of course, the Pope also discusses what peace is. On the positive side, he exemplifies the spirituality of Francis who "sowed seeds of peace". Saint Francis who was a war veteran by the way, had been a prisoner of war in Perugia, and he knew what he was talking about - he was not a romantic utopian. Just like Charles de Foucauld, who in the last phase of his life fulfilled a role as chaplain for Muslims, while he was also in close contact with the French armed forces. By this I mean to say that the fact that these two radical prophetic role models put forward by Pope Francis lived their spirituality in the full realization that the reality around them did not always correspond to this. And incidentally, both role models illustrate that interfaith cooperation, also with Islam, is an integral part of a contemporary Christian peace practice. The Pope now mentions the goal of peace work: to spread a culture of tolerance and coexistence in peace (no. 192) True and lasting peace, says Pope Francis, will only be possible on the basis of a global ethic of solidarity and cooperation in the service of a future shaped by interdependence and shared responsibility across the human family. " (127). In Fratelli Tutti, the Pope repeatedly speaks of social peace and, to a lesser extent, international political peace. Regarding the latter, the Pope says: peace is not merely the absence of war, but a commitment to the recognition, protection and restoration of people's dignity, so that they themselves can become protagonists of the destiny of their country (233). The poorest must be included in this process and inequality and limitations in the integral development of people must be overcome (234). In order to properly understand peace, we must study the meaning of forgiveness. It is also important, the Pope says, to understand that social conflicts can have a right to exist. (240).

9. "Legitimate conflicts,"

According to Pope Francis there are legitimate conflicts - to which Fratelli Tutti devotes a paragraph (starting at no. 241). Legitimate conflicts - the Pope's expression - revolve around the dignity of the human person (241). People who suffer injustice in this regard may defend themselves. Criminal law also has significance in protecting the dignity of victims of crime. Conflicts should not be covered up or buried in the past, according to Pope Francis. That would also prevent authentic post-conflict reconciliation, says the Pope. (244).

10. What does the Pope say about the roadmap to peace?

The true path to peace (question B), Pope Francis says, assumes the "great principle that there are rights that follow from our inherent human dignity" (no. 127); a classic theme of the social doctrine of the Church. Allocating land, work and housing, the Pope says, is a better basis than sowing fear and distrust in the face of outside threats (no. 127). In line with the whole social teaching of the Church, the Pope also points out the importance of treaty observance as a way to peace (no. 174). Moreover, he has a preference for multilateral agreements over bilateral ones (174). Social peace requires

a policy, argues Pope Francis, which cannot be instrumentalized by the economy. (176-177). In this light, the Pope also poses questions that politicians can ask themselves, such as: "How much social peace have I sown?" (No. 197). This social peace also requires a lot of craftsmanship. It requires a culture of meeting and learning to deal with differences. This social peace is not achieved by falling back on a small group to work for peace, or by denying social bottlenecks, or even limiting peace to a small group (no. 217). An important path to peace is healing wounds (no. 225), says Pope Francis. This requires peacemakers who are able to make new beginnings with encounters that can lead to the healing of wounds. An honest and truthful investigation of history is an important condition for this. In this way one can also do justice to the memory of victims (no. 226). Peace processes require long-term commitment (226), in which victims are listened to, truth and justice are sought, victims' memories are taken seriously, and a pathway to shared hope is opened that is stronger than the desire for revenge. The pursuit of justice and mercy needs the truth, the three balance each other, says the Pope (no. 227). Peace is an art and requires architecture, says Pope Francis (228ff). Justice, says the Pope, can only be achieved through dialogue, the pursuit of reconciliation and reciprocal development (229). There is, says the Pope, an architecture of peace based on institutions, but there is also the art of peace, which transcends the path of negotiation beyond negotiating tables and in which everyone can participate. (231). This element is necessary for peace so that communities that are often neglected in negotiations can contribute to collective memories (no. 231). In other words, negotiated peace cannot exist without a culture of peace that is also supported by communities. Social peace in a country has an open end; commitment remains necessary. For example, it must be ensured that demonstrations are not used for improper purposes (232).

11. How does the Pope answer the questions related to legitimacy of peace practices, war, violence and conflict?

Then I turn to the third main question. The Pope devotes a separate consideration to the sword power of the government. He discusses war and the death penalty, which are two sub-domains of the government's monopoly on violence. With regard to war he states that the chance of war is increasing again. That is worrisome, he says, because wars are an attack on human rights and on the natural environment. He points out that we must "avoid" war (257). That is also possible, because the UN Charter provides an international legal framework for dealing better with conflicts. Then the Pope discusses a number of alibis for going to war (258), such as humanitarian, defensive and preventive motives. He points out in this context that the possibility of legitimate defense referred to in the World Catechism should not be interpreted too broadly. In this context he rejects ABC weapons (atomic, biological, chemical). He goes on to point out that the consequences of wars are widespread and long-term, as well as the current seemingly fragmented regional conflicts that are in fact parts of a fragmented world war. (259). The Pope then comes to the statement of Pope John XXIII that war can no longer be regarded as an instrument to redress violations of law (260). Every war leaves the world worse than it was (261). Here is a capitulation. We need to look at the consequences for victims such as refugees and listen to them. Then perhaps deterrence is the answer to the horror of war? After all, you can see it as a

strategy to prevent war. No, says the Pope, fear and threat are not appropriate answers to the current threats of terrorism, asymmetric conflict and cyber warfare. Trust must be built. The response to the nuclear threat must remain focused on the common good, the common good, which -- in my explanation - includes the rights, needs and interests of the opposing party. Next, the Pope discusses the death penalty as inadequate and not necessarily from a criminal justice point of view. In fact, it is inadmissible and the Church is calling for its worldwide abolition. This actually means that here, just as when thinking about war, the Pope limits the sword power of the government, the moral legitimacy of the monopoly the states have in the use of violence. He references Is. 2: 4 and Mt. 22:56, on the basis of which he asks Christians to be restrained in killing fellow humans. (No. 270). In the rest of the encyclical, the Pope explains his view that brotherhood and interfaith dialogue and cooperation are necessary elements of peace.

12. Some theological reflection

I hope to have shown that Pope Francis's thinking about peace is layered. In terms of the morality of peace, this social encyclical is mainly about social peace. The role of states and the associated sword power of the government are really only portrayed in his discussion of two sub-domains: the use of the power of the sword by secular governments, namely in the moral objections (he points out) to war and the death penalty. Yet, historically speaking, it is precisely the monopoly of violence of sovereign states that has also fulfilled a force-limiting role in a positive sense, since the Westphalian peace of 1648 and still as a safeguard against self-direction and the erosion of public order, as well as against external aggression aggressive war. States are, if all goes well, a paradoxical form of institutional restriction of violence by monopolizing that unwanted violence. In political ethics, this paradox requires distinguishing between types of violence, in particular the legal use of force by the armed forces, the police and executioners in the death penalty, and the non-legal violence, criminal violence. That distinction is missing in this encyclical. It is not difficult to explain this: it is precisely the specific position and role of the institution of the state that remains somewhat underexplained. Incidentally, the Pope does say that we need states (no. 108), notes the weakening of the nation-state (no. 172), and indicates limitations of the state in opening up borders (no. 121). But the paradoxical moral significance of the monopoly of violence remains not part of the picture in this encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*. The Pope says nothing about the police. However, about the armed forces, in No. 262, the Pope proposes that the money now spent on armaments should be spent on fighting hunger and development. And in 258 he says: The Catechism of the Catholic Church speaks of the possibility of legitimate defense by means of military force, which involves demonstrating that certain "rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy" [239] have been met. Yet it is easy to fall into an overly broad interpretation of this potential right. Therefore, the Pope here argues that the legitimate defense is easily interpreted too broadly. Moreover, he does not speak of the right of defense but of the "potential right", the possible right. This is striking in the light of international law. In *Fratelli Tutti*, however, the Pope tries above all to take the elimination of the war a step further. He does this by saying that he has no affinity with the tradition of the just war. I will now briefly discuss this. *Fratelli Tutti* rightly confronts us with the fact that this ethic of conflict escalation - for example in the context of self-defense or R2P

[responsibility to protect] cannot be the starting point or end point of a peace theology and peace morality. Pope Francis himself has the courage to speak in this encyclical about "legitimate conflicts" to protect human dignity. Because of that, he raises the question that I am now going to develop.

13. Not theory but tradition

The "just war" that Pope Francis seems to reject in footnote No. 242 is not at all "theory" in a scientific sense. It is neither less nor more than a moral tradition that actually occurs in all philosophies of life and political movements. This moral tradition provides moral criteria for moral legitimacy of any conflict escalation on the eve of armed conflict. These criteria, in turn, have been developed from questions that thinking people ask themselves on the eve of a possible war. They were introduced into Christianity not by Augustine, but by the Church Father Ambrose of Milan, who used them to legitimize military conscription after Christianity had become the state religion, and Ambrose also used this tradition to condemn war crimes committed by Emperor Theodosius. The latter is therefore salient, because it was the same emperor Theodosius who had made Christianity the state religion in 383. Apparently this was accompanied by the possibility of strong criticism of the war actions of the emperor. Augustine: I would also like to point out that Augustine uses and reflects on this tradition, but does not develop it as a theory or as a political or military doctrine. Augustine was, of course, a connoisseur of spiritual introspection - as we know of him from his Confessions - but also a theologian who developed an interpretation of nothing less than the history of the entire world (in *De Civitate Dei*). Augustine has developed a beautiful peace ladder in which he distinguishes ten levels of peace in humans. But it is also true that in *De Civitate Dei* Augustine clarifies the role of war in world history as part of the history of salvation. And he lays a theological foundation under the reality of war in history in the form of his doctrine of sin. This doctrine of sin is the basis for why ultimate, definitive peace cannot be realized in world history. Augustine puts a theological foundation under the criteria of a just war, so to speak, but without elevating the tradition to any political or military doctrine. Augustine's work, including *De Civitate Dei* book 1, 21; book 4, par. 15; *Questions about the Heptateuch* quaestio 10) contains several criteria from the "just war". This state-ecclesiastical thinking church father was no more a pacifist than a doctrinal protagonist of a war doctrine. Augustine's context is precisely that just war is waged as a defense by the one who mourns the battle (*De Civitate Dei* book 19, Ch.7). It seems to me that the Church cannot easily break free from the impact of this view in political Augustinism and in contemporary neo-realist philosophy since Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679), which still prevails in international relations.

14. The concept of War in Fratelli Tutti

In my view, specifically in this encyclical it is quite clear that the Pope, when he mentions war, actually only means war in an international law sense, and not also 'armed conflicts other than war,' such as the action against genocide, hybrid warfare via civil institutions, and involvement of private security services for the dirtiest work in an armed conflict. In *Fratelli Tutti* the concept of war has a strictly legal meaning, that is, as an interstate conflict. The Holy See is indeed a party to the genocide treaty. So stopping genocides is morally justified. And Pope Benedict XVI spoke in a speech to

the UN in favor of the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), including the armed protection of vulnerable civilians and refugees in conflict areas. So the Pope's rejection of war when we look at the entirety of the Social doctrine on war and peace is still fully in line with the prohibition of violence in art 51 of the UN Charter, and more broadly: chapters V together with VII of the UN Charter. This is evident where Pope Francisco argues in Fratelli Tutti for international law as a framework for conflict resolution.

Distinguished ethical starting questions:

So while I wonder if the 'just war' has not been put aside a little too quickly, after criticism of an overly broad interpretation of legitimate defense, it is only natural, in my opinion, that Pope Francis should not embrace this tradition of just war. After all, he is committed to letting Christianity and other world religions function peacefully. After all, the Pope's ethical starting question is not: what should people do in case of conflict escalation? His ethical starting question is: how can we promote peace, justice, mercy and reconciliation and in that context avoid escalation to war, and prevent the recurrence of armed conflicts? In seeking the answer to that question, Pope Francis primarily relies on the victims of violence as a reference group, and not, and certainly not primarily, on states as possible dialogue partners of the Church. He already did that in Argentina, where he calls on politicians to be less in dialogue with himself and more in dialogue with each other.

Universal questions:

Nevertheless, the choice for this starting question does not alter the fact that the questions that underlie the moral tradition that we call "just war" as human questions are actually universal. The so-called criteria from the tradition of the "just war" are no more and no less than operationalisations of the questions that reasonable people ask on the eve of armed conflict escalation - even if they regret it, and in fact precisely when they do regret it--just as Augustine already sketches in De Civitate Dei.

15 Convergences between law and ethics of peace

To understand the nuances in Fratelli Tutti, it is important to note that there has been a convergence between Art. 51 of the UN Charter and the "Just War" tradition in the Catechism. As far as I am concerned, Pope Francis rightly points out that this convergence should not be an alibi for an eternally unchanging status quo of security policy, that the legitimizations of contemporary wars and armed conflict are often alibis for self-interest, and that civilian victims are ethically a primary reference group. and that the victims of the Holocaust, of Hiroshima, and of more recent ethnic cleansing should be given a voice. The opposition to the weapons techniques of nuclear weapons, biological and chemical weapons that the Pope notes can also very well be conducted within the UN framework of legitimate defense and the right of retaliation. It also goes back to the principles of proportionality and double effect are also part of the 'just war' tradition, but do not depend on it for their ethical significance and validity.

"Legitimate Conflicts"?

Pope Francis' justified premise of prevention, reconciliation and dialogue alone is, in my opinion, no guarantee that the mere demand for an ethic of a potential conflict escalation in the protection of human dignity will not come through the back door. Because that is precisely the purpose of genocide prevention and the armed protection

of refugees. In those contexts, you cannot make it with the slow sanctions system of the UN. I therefore wonder whether a solid ethic of conflict escalation is not an inevitably necessary part of reflection on the possibility that the pursuit of just peace may fail in world history. For that, the phrase "just war" that many people hate is not at all necessary. Military organizations to which I advise abandoned the phrase "just war" and moved to "just peace" a decade ago. But the underlying matter, the question of an ethic of legitimate conflict escalation, remains topical and is in fact again posed by Pope Francis himself when he speaks in *Fratelli Tutti* about legitimate conflict and refers to the moral right to defend human dignity.

Lawful Defense of Dignity:

In my opinion, the framework of the 'just war' as understood in the World Catechism has traditionally been the subject of precisely this underlying matter. This world catechism does not canonize the tradition of the just war, but only refers to it in the applied form of acceptance of legitimate defense - Article 51 of the UN Charter. The World Catechism says, "These are the traditional elements enumerated (*italics by FvI*) in the teaching on the so-called" just war. "The assessment of these conditions for moral legitimacy is the prudent judgment of those responsible for the common good. " So this is a descriptive reference to an existing tradition, not a prescriptive binding one, it is about the criteria, not about the name. A further development of the morality of war and peace also in the World Catechism analogous to the ethical tabooing of the death penalty by the Church can certainly be worthwhile. . But, and here is my question to *Fratelli Tutti*:

"given her theology of sin and salvation, and given her theology of government as a servant of God, can the Church do without the ethics of conflict escalation, especially for situations where government containment of the power of sin is necessary?"

16. Conclusion

What fascinates *Fratelli Tutti* most of all in this text is the emphasis on social peace, which is already visible in *Evangelii Gaudium*. There, the Pope is appealing to responsible nonviolent citizenship that we can only applaud. Because any democratic peace also benefits from articulate and resilient, but nonviolent citizens and from respect for institutions (e.g. 76). That makes it clear to Pope Francis where, in *Fratelli Tutti*, he criticizes populism that makes people incapacitated and keeps them defenseless.