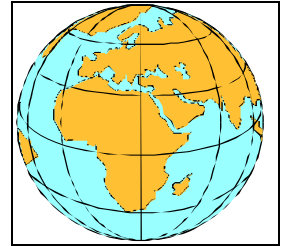




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“Liberate work by removing its tax burden and finance social security by taxing the consumption of goods, which most often are produced by machine.”

ELECTRONIC VIVANT- EUROPE

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EDITORIAL

We have published this text about brotherhood in July 2004. It is still current and applies to a social and brotherly Europe.

FRATERNITY

CONFERENCE OF CHIARA LUBICH'S
(edited extracts)

The idea of universal brotherhood is not new, Chiara Lubich points out. Great personalities have always defended it.

Gandhi said: **“The golden rule is to be the friend of the world and to regard the human family as one.”**

Martin Luther King said in a celebrated speech : **“I have a dream: that one day men ... will realise that they have been created to be brothers ... and brotherhood will figure on the agenda of the man of business and become the motto of him who governs.”**

After the events of 11 September 2001, the Dalai Lama wrote to his disciples: **“For us the cause of these events is clear ... We have forgotten the most basic truths ... We are all one.** This message has

been completely neglected by the human race. Failure to remember this truth is the sole cause of hate and of warfare.”

As for Jesus of Nazareth ... he **pulled down the walls** set up between those who are “equal” and those who are “different” - **between friends and enemies**. (...)

So it is that the idea of fraternity began to make its mark on history. It makes its call to everyone, including **politicians**. This was the message of the French Revolution, which, by its motto “**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity**”, summarised the great political project of modern times - although it ascribed to these three principles a somewhat restricted meaning. And if Liberty and Equality have, up to a point, been secured in the democratic institutions of numerous countries, Fraternity remains a **dead letter**.

One author has affirmed that: “The lesson of the 20th century is that the future lies in the acceptance of the three words ... Liberty, Equality, Fraternity, **purified of ideological interpretations**.” (...)

Today, the world **tends towards unity**. Unity is the sign of the times, as numerous religious, social and political factors show. This unity toward which the world is moving is a universal, global unity, to meet the situations, demands and principal characteristics of the reality of our times.

Means of communication bring together people who are geographically remote. Choices made by a young European may well be influenced by what is happening in Asia or Africa. Nothing is really foreign any more, since we look at, and are informed about, each others’ lives.

Furthermore, economic and financial globalisation renders **all of us interdependent**: for what occurs in one place has immediate material repercussions in numerous other places.

Certain problems can be addressed only by humanity as a whole: no nation can address them on its own. Just think of the major issues facing the international community: environment, ecology, development and food, genetic engineering problems.

The era of individual rights, of the rights of a single category, is over. We have entered the era of the rights and obligations of peoples and of humanity as a whole.

Our world has really become a village - **a new and complex village**, but still a village. Today, humanity lives as a group, a small group. But unlike the small groups of the past, the world has not developed categories of thought that support respect for its diversity, even though its fundamental unity has come to pass. Traditional concepts of race, religion and culture, and the State, can not deal with the complexity of the situation. (...)

The category of thought that can recognise both the unity and the diversity towards which humanity is moving today is Fraternity. (...)

Fraternity is hence the ideal for today. It is the only factor that will bring about that spiritual unity which alone will guarantee political and economic unity. But how is it to be revived? The tools exist for bringing fraternity into the world; it is only necessary to recognise them.

One such **tool** is provided by the appearance during the 20th century of dozens of **movements** within civil society: religious, humanitarian, for solidarity. (...) Their full potential has not been fully explored; but it soon will be. This phenomenon is not purely European, but worldwide; it creates networks across nations and cultures, while respecting their diversity. It is like a premonition or preview of what this world, beginning with our continent, could become: the home of nations (or of regions).

Like all processes that one day will explode, this development has matured silently. These movements **affect** the civil domain and propose **political and economic** paths. (...) They **encourage dialogue** between people of different religions - Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Jew, Muslim, Sikh...

Such dialogue is facilitated by the “**Golden Rule**”, found in the great world religions, which may be expressed: “**do unto others as you would like them to do unto you**” (Luke 6:31), which ultimately means “love your neighbour.” (...)

It is in Fraternity that this Golden Rule may now find its expression and become the foundation, the cement of European society and its economy. (...)

This dialogue has already succeeded in bringing about fraternal relations **beyond** our continent: relations, to take the Focolare movement as an example, with lay movements that share the humanist ideal; or with the members of a modern Buddhist movement, 6 million strong, in Tokyo; or with a Muslim Afro-American movement with 2 million members. In this last case, the dialogue was characterised by opening up 40-odd mosques in the USA and inviting everybody to express their convictions and experiences and to present examples of fraternity in practice, such as the pilot cities built on the concept of “Economy of Communion”, much praised by Mr Prodi. (...)

A person who sees himself, or herself, as Fraternal and takes up **politics**, does so in **response** to a social need, to a local problem, to the sufferings of his or her fellows, to the requirements of the time - and FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

The job of such a person is one of listening and entering into dialogue, (...) of looking on others with respect, trying to understand their commitment and seeking solutions that benefit all; respecting not only those who vote the same way or are members of the same party, but also the others, the adversaries. (...) Open to the reality of all persons, one may leave particularisms behind and discover a true political reality.

The politician who sees himself, or herself, as Fraternal will not remain impassive in the face of the often bitter conflicts that divide politician and citizen, but will take the first step to re-establish communication. (...)

Creating personal relations where they did not exist or had been ruptured may serve to unfreeze the political process. (...) Such initiatives may become an **authentic innovative policy** to help overcome prejudices and party constraints which so often paralyse politicians by locking them into sterile adversarial positions. (...)

However, **the path to Fraternity is a stony one.** (...) How often does political action not cause suffering: solitude, abandonment, misunderstanding, sometimes even among those who are close to us? Which person who is engaged in politics has never felt bitterness, marginalisation or betrayal to the point of being tempted to give the whole thing up?

Yet Fraternity in politics is not impossible to achieve: consider the life of Joseph LUX, former vice-premier of the Czech Republic, who knew how to earn the admiration of political friend and foe alike; or Domenico MANGANO, whose political career called him to serve his fellow-citizens as a local administrator in Viterbe (Italy); (...) and there are many others. (...)

THE EUROPE OF FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL CAPITAL

Through the construction of Europe, war has been avoided and peace secured for more than 50 years. Alas! this is not the case in other continents - even in the age of globalisation.

The emergence of a Europe endowed with strong social security and a dynamic economy may serve as a model for globalisation.

To enable this to happen, and to avoid becoming the victims of commerce, it is urgent to build a SOCIAL EUROPE.

Fraternity must become the basis of European exchanges of all kinds, and be upheld and encouraged by fair and effective institutions.

VIVANT's socio-economic model, which **relieves work of the burden of taxation**, proposes to create the conditions for a further **flowering of mankind**. Not only does it guarantee a basic income for everyone; it also ensures a **structural (and fraternal) recognition** of every human being.

It is the **Fraternity in these exchanges** that must be upheld as the founding value for Europe and source of Social Capital, so that life is really worth living in Europe - and, we should hope, elsewhere.

The Editor