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Message of the Holy Father Francis on the occasion of the opening of the Fraternity Campaign in Brazil

The following is the text of the message sent by the Holy Father Francis to Brazilian faithful on the occasion of the opening of the *Fraternity Campaign 2019*, whose theme this year is “Fraternity and public policy”, with the motto “You will be delivered with justice and righteousness” (*Isaiah 1: 27*):

Message of the Holy Father

Dear brothers and sisters of Brazil!

With the beginning of Lent, we are invited to prepare ourselves, through the penitential practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer, for the celebration of the Lord Jesus’ victory over sin and death. To inspire, enlighten and integrate these practices as components of a personal and community journey towards the Pasch of Christ, the Fraternity Campaign proposes to Brazilian Christians the prospect of “public policies”.

Although what is understood by public policy is primarily a responsibility of the State, whose purpose is to guarantee the common good of citizens, all persons and institutions should be protagonists of initiatives and actions that promote “the sum of those conditions of the social life whereby men, families and associations more adequately and readily may attain their own perfection” (*Gaudium et Spes*, 74).

Aware of this, Christians – inspired by the motto of this Fraternity Campaign, “You will be delivered with justice and righteousness” (*Is 1: 27*) and following the example of the divine Master who “came not to be served but to serve” (*Mt 20: 28*) – should seek more active participation in society as a concrete form of love for their neighbour, enabling the construction of a fraternal culture based on law and justice. In fact, as the Aparecida Document recalls, “it is the lay people of our continent, conscious of their call to holiness by virtue of their baptismal vocation, who have to act in the manner of a leaven in the mass to build a temporal city according to God’s plan” (505).

In a special way, those who are formally dedicated to politics – to which the Pontiffs, ever since Pius XII, have referred to as a “noble form of charity” (see Pope Francis, *Message to the Congress organized by CAL-CELAM*, XII/2017) – are required to live “with passion their service to the peoples, vibrating with the intimate fabric of their ethos and their culture, in solidarity with their sufferings and hopes; politicians who put the common good before their private interests, who are not intimidated by the great financial and media powers, competent and patient in the face of complex problems, open to listening and learning in democratic dialogue, combining the search for justice with mercy and reconciliation” (*ibid.*).

Reflecting and praying on public policy with the grace of the Holy Spirit, I hope, dear brothers and sisters, that this year’s Lenten journey, in the light of the Fraternity Campaign proposals, will help all Christians to keep their eyes and heart open to that they may see in their brothers most in need the “flesh of Christ” Who hopes “to be acknowledged, touched, and cared for by us” (Bull *Misericordiae vultus*, 15). Thus the renewing and transforming force of the Resurrection may reach everyone by making Brazil a more fraternal and just nation. And to confirm you in these intentions, entrusted to the intercession of Our Lady Aparecida, I cordially send to each and every one of you my Apostolic Blessing, as I ask you to pray tirelessly for me.

Vatican City, 11 February 2019.
