

July 28, 2025

Daily Reflections



LOST IN TRANSLATION

By Julie Mussché

A Quote

“Let us realize that as our minds and hearts narrow, the less capable we become of understanding the world around us. Without encountering and relating to differences, it is hard to achieve a clear and complete understanding even of ourselves.... Other cultures are not “enemies” from which we need to protect ourselves but differing reflections of the inexhaustible richness of human life. Seeing ourselves from the perspective of another, of one who is different, we can better recognize our own unique features and those of our culture: its richness, its possibilities and its limitations...”

POPE FRANCIS, FRATELLI TUTTI, 147

Reflection

For close to twenty years, I served in a capacity where I evaluated and investigated allegations of policy violations related to affirmative action. Cases varied from racial or ethnic bias to sexual harassment. Over a period of time, the truth of situations and circumstances surrounding complaints became clearer; and with the guidance of “persistent and pervasive” and “egregious” definitions of what distinguished a violation, discernment of right action, while never easy, became more impartial and objective for me. Now, just a quick comment, this was a challenge for me personally as my stepdad repeatedly told me that, even as a small child, I voiced and acted out to champion the “under-dog.” The fact is that two decades provided considerable experience, wisdom and discretion, and witness to the humanity we all share.

Although a few cases I investigated rose to the level of policy infringement, and in some cases a possible civil or criminal violation, most incidents seemed to be the result of cultural ignorance, breakdowns in communication, general disrespect, or generational or gender differences. Reconciling relationships could happen with conversation that included honest pursuit of understanding each individual’s (or, in some cases, a group’s) differing positions and perspectives, and apologies if called for. Sometimes these dialogues would go for hours, and on other occasions, relationships were mended in a split second. As my spiritual growth unfolded, I came to recognize the Holy Spirit’s presence in these moments of healing and grace.

Relationships rise and fall with words and dialogue. They carry the power to heal or destroy. In today’s world, in some cases, the consequences of individual or mob rhetoric, live or virtual, can be extreme. The gift of speech comes with the responsibility of listening to understand and with sacred intention. It opens us up to new horizons of kindness. “Seeing ourselves from the perspective of another, of one who is different, we can better recognize our own unique features and those of our culture: its richness, its possibilities and its limitations...” Pope Francis offers words of inspiration.



For Pondering

- Have you had an experience where your words got ahead of you and led to unanticipated consequences?
 - What was the wisdom that emerged? Where was God in that moment?
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For Prayer

A Prayer to the Creator

*Lord, Father of our human family,
you created all human beings equal in dignity:
pour forth into our hearts a fraternal spirit
and inspire in us a dream of renewed encounter,
dialogue, justice and peace.*

*Move us to create healthier societies
and a more dignified world,
a world without hunger, poverty, violence and war.
May our hearts be open*

*to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams.
Amen.*

POPE FRANCIS, FRATELLI TUTTI

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