



## Presentation of the Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*

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### **1. The face of the poor as an epiphany of the Kingdom of God (8-12)**

In the healing of wounds, whether physical, social or spiritual, the Church proclaims that the Kingdom of God embraces the vulnerable. In every act of care such as visiting the sick (Mt 25:36), the Christian community experiences **salvation as a concrete relationship** with those who bear the marks of the Cross in their flesh.

Poverty, a huge social problem, is also a **theological** theme: through the poor, God speaks to the Church ("*Dilexi te*, I have loved you"<sup>1</sup>), faith becomes real in mercy and service that break down barriers, and God's people experience the beatitude of "the poor in spirit."<sup>2</sup>

### **2. From structures of sin to the conversion of social structures (90-98)**

Recent Church teaching understands that **poverty results from structures of sin**. Selfishness and indifference solidify in economic and cultural systems. The "economy that kills"<sup>3</sup> measures human value in terms of productivity, consumption and profit. This "dominant mentality" makes it acceptable to discard the weak and unproductive, and thus deserves the label "social sin".

Beyond donations and other assistance, the Church's response denounces the false impartiality of the market, proposes models of development, promotes justice, aims for the **conversion of structures**. This fosters a form of communal or **social repentance** that restores dignity to the invisible and helps them to develop more fully.

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<sup>1</sup> Addressed to Philadelphia, a poor and powerless Christian community, unimportant but faithful, treated instead with violence and contempt: "You have but little power... and they will realize that I have loved you" (Revelation 3:8-9).

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 5:3.

<sup>3</sup> *Evangelii Gaudium*, 92-93.

### 3. Poverty as active subjectivity and principle of evangelisation (99-102)

St John Paul II urged the poor to **become protagonists of ecclesial and social transformation. Popular movements (80-81)** with their “moral energy,”<sup>4</sup> demonstrate that justice arises from including the excluded. Besides suffering privation, the poor can be “bearers of hope” and “builders of a common destiny.”<sup>5</sup> Let the Church assist them, **be evangelised by them**, recognise the Spirit at work in them, and together proclaim the Gospel.

### 4. Education, Eucharist and Service: promoting integral development (68-72, 108-114)

Promoting integral human development, according to the Social Teaching of the Church, intertwines **education, Eucharist and service**.

- **Education** is the first act of justice, because it frees people from spiritual poverty and prepares them for social responsibility.
- **The Eucharist** brings diverse people together, **nourishes the community and missions it** to charity and solidarity.
- **Service** is social love in concrete form: care for the poor and for our common home.

Thus, the Church offers mercy to the world, promoting a civilisation in which every person is recognised as the image of God.

### 5. Charity generates peace and universal fraternity (108-114)

In *Dilexi te*, Pope Leo joins Pope Francis in declaring: there will be **no peace as long as the poor and the planet are neglected and abused**.

Christian peace is **reconciling and reconciled justice**. The poor, Mother Teresa said, “do not need our pity but our respectful love.”<sup>6</sup> Treating them with dignity is the first act of peace. Only a society with the discarded at its centre can be truly peaceful, and only a world of such societies can be at peace.

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements, 28 October 2014.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the Participants in the World Meeting of Popular Movements, 28 October 2014.

<sup>6</sup> *Dilexi te*, 77.