



APOSTOLIC EXHORTATION
DILEXI TE
OF POPE LEO XIV
ON LOVE FOR THE POOR

The Apostolic Exhortation ***Dilexi te*** "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9), focused on love for the poor, was signed by Pope Leo XIV on October 4, 2025, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and published on October 9.

"I am happy to make this document my own – adding some reflections – and to issue it at the beginning of my own pontificate, since I share the desire of my beloved predecessor that **all Christians come to appreciate the close connection between Christ's love and his summons to care for the poor**. I too consider it essential to insist on this path to holiness, for "in this call to **recognize him in the poor and the suffering, we see revealed the very heart of Christ**, his deepest feelings and choices, which every saint seeks to imitate", writes Pope Leo XIV.

Preferential choice for the poor

In the **Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te***, the Holy Father affirms: "I am convinced that the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry" (DT 7) but he points out that "this 'preference' never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups, which would be impossible for God. It is meant to emphasize God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity. Wanting to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity, God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest" (DT 16).

Dilexi te also highlights the importance of being "a Church for the poor" and emphasizes that "**this is not a matter of mere human kindness but a revelation**" (DT 5). It is in this perspective that "we can understand the numerous pages of the Old Testament in which God is presented as the **friend and liberator of the poor**... « God's heart has a special place for the poor [...] The entire history of our redemption is marked by the presence of the poor »" (DT 17).

Teachers of the Gospel

The Holy Father highlights that "**no Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem**; they are part of our 'family'. They are 'one of us'. Nor can our relationship to the poor be reduced to merely another ecclesial activity or function" (DT 104) and recalls the teaching on work of Saint John Paul II to reflect on "the active role that the poor ought to play in the renewal of the Church and society, thus **leaving behind a certain 'paternalism'** that limited itself to satisfying only the immediate needs of the poor" (DT 87).

Furthermore, ***Dilexi te*** explains that "the poorest are not only objects of our compassion, but **teachers of the Gospel**. It is not a question of "bringing" God to them, but of encountering him among them" (DT 79) because "while it is true that the rich care for the poor, the opposite is no less true. This is a remarkable fact confirmed by the entire Christian tradition. Lives can actually be turned around by the realization that **the poor have much to teach us about the Gospel** and its demands" (DT 109).

The above was published by the **Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development**.

https://www.humandevlopment.va/en/news/2025/dilexi_te_esortazione_apostolica_di_papa_leone_xiv_sull_amore_ve_rso_i_poveri.html

You can find the Apostolic Exhortation in its entirety at:

https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/apost_exhortations/documents/20251004-dilexi-te.html