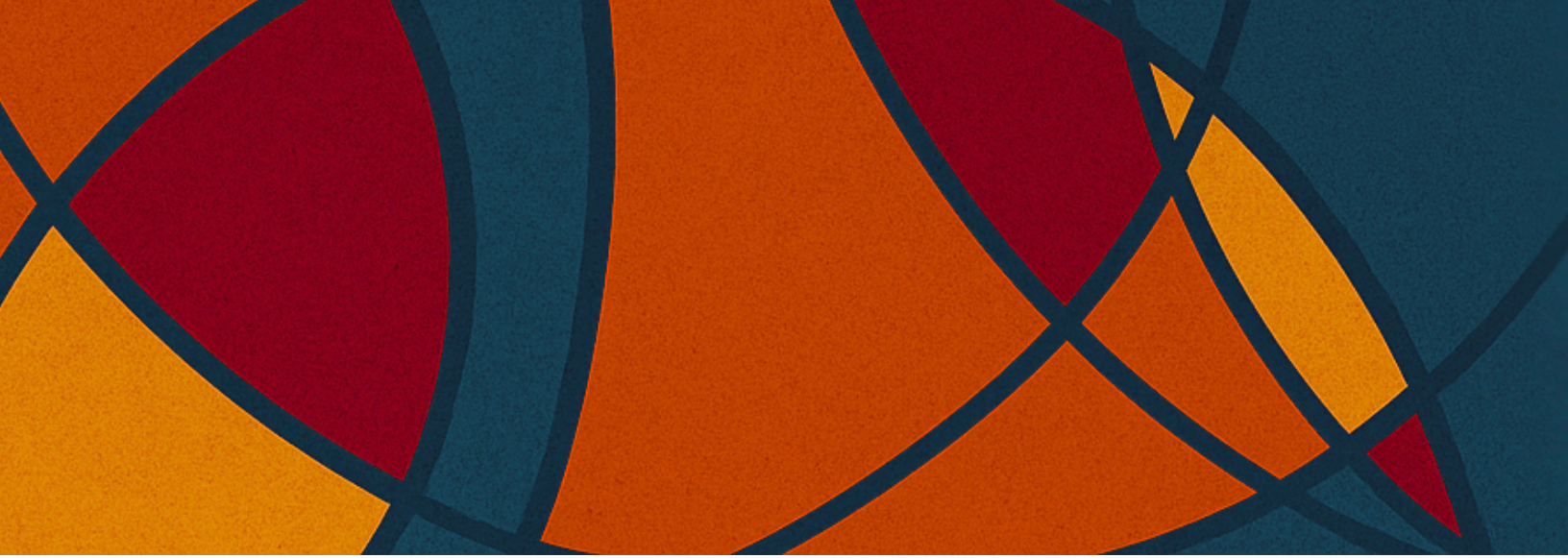




Dilexi Te **Reflection Guide**

On Pope Leo XIV's call to end poverty
and build a future where everyone thrives

Introduction

Dilexi Te (Latin for “I have loved you”), subtitled “on love for the poor,” is Pope Leo XIV’s first major teaching document. In it, the pope calls us to reject the “empire of money” and the corrupt system that creates poverty and join in loving solidarity to “honor the image of God and build a better society” (72). Pope Leo signed *Dilexi Te* on the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, 2025.

Dilexi Te came out less than three weeks after the world’s first possible trillionaire was announced — to which the pope responded, “[we’re in big trouble](#).” The document comes to us at a time when a small handful of billionaires are controlling more and more wealth, because of a system—and some lawmakers’ choices—that let the ultra-wealthy hoard resources that belong to all of us. As a result, [nearly 2 out of 3 Americans are living paycheck to paycheck](#). Across ages, races, and faiths, in our country’s cities, towns, and rural communities, our families and neighbors continue to struggle to pay rent, afford medical bills, and put food on the table.

Pope Leo’s message is clear: This situation is a moral failure. It is time to convert our hearts and energies to building a society where the gifts of God’s creation are shared among all for the thriving of all.

The pope calls this an “economy of solidarity.” At NETWORK, we call it **[An Economy for All](#)**. Both refer to a future marked by mutual care, not accumulation. It is a future where all of us have what we need to thrive, in accordance with our dignity: quality health care, food, and housing; clean air and water; good jobs with living wages; safe and welcoming neighborhoods; a say in the decisions that affect us; and more.

Drawing on examples reaching from the Bible and Jesus of Nazareth to Christians throughout history, Pope Leo shows that compassionate action for justice has always been at the heart of Christian life. Today, that action continues in the growing movements of everyday people—including Catholics—to transform a dehumanizing system into an economy that serves all of us. Both in the past and now, God’s liberating love for us is the ultimate source of hope that enlivens and drives forward our efforts for freedom.

THIS RESOURCE

This guide offers brief summaries of and key quotations from *Dilexi Te*’s five chapters, with short reflections on how Pope Leo’s call guides and nourishes our work for *An Economy for All*. You can use it for your own reflection, or even better, with a group.

[The full text of *Dilexi Te* can be found at this link.](#)

Chapter 1: A Few Essential Words

SUMMARY

Pope Leo begins by affirming that love for God “is one with love for the poor” (5, 8). Yet, poverty is worsening. Today, new and “more dangerous” forms of poverty are emerging, and include the lack of material resources, land, rights, and freedom (9, 10). Poverty is created by unjust laws and systems that “favor the strongest,” allowing a handful of individuals to hoard resources from our communities (11). As a result, we are seeing billionaires grow wealthier while more and more people struggle to get by. Pope Leo calls for a conversion away from these structures and attitudes that are “centered on the accumulation of wealth” at all costs, “even at the expense of others” (11, 12).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“The condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church.” (9)

“In a world where the poor are increasingly numerous, we paradoxically see the growth of a wealthy elite, living in a bubble of comfort and luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people. This means that a culture still persists—sometimes well disguised—that discards others without even realizing it and tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings.” (11)

REFLECTION

In the United States today, a small group of billionaires hold more wealth than half of the country. On average, CEOs make 281 times the typical workers’ pay – accumulating wealth at the expense of others, as Pope Leo describes (11). Moreover, in the budget Congress passed in July 2025, many lawmakers chose to take away funding for our health care and food, all to pay for enormous tax giveaways to their billionaire backers. Americans across the country know that this is wrong and have long cried out for relief. Pope Leo affirms that God hears this cry and calls us to respond. All workers deserve quality health care, paid leave and time off to care for loved ones, safe working conditions, the right to unionize, and living wages that help us pay our bills, save for our dreams, and retire with dignity.

QUESTION

In what ways are you and your loved ones affected by the rising costs of health care, food, housing, education, etc.? How do you see people in your community struggling? Why is it that the ultra-rich are growing richer while regular folks have a harder and harder time?

Chapter 2: God Chooses the Poor

SUMMARY

Drawing on Biblical stories and insights developed in the church in Latin America, Pope Leo illuminates God as liberator of the oppressed and denouncer of injustices that impoverish and exploit human beings. The pope highlights how Jesus of Nazareth himself lived in poverty and addressed his words of hope and liberation first to struggling people (17, 18, 19).

Pope Leo emphasizes that we cannot love God without loving our neighbors, and that that love requires concrete action to right wrongs (25, 26). He cites the Letter of James: *"If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?"* (29). These calls are clear, and we cannot use convoluted interpretations to excuse ourselves from them. Early Christians understood this and regularly redistributed goods so as to care for all in their communities (32).

KEY QUOTATIONS

"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." (16)

"One cannot pray and offer sacrifice while oppressing the weakest and poorest." (17)

"Our relationship with the Lord, expressed in worship, also aims to free us from the risk of living our relationships according to a logic of calculation and self-interest. We are instead open to the gratuitousness that surrounds those who love one another and, therefore, share everything in common." (27)

"Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts." (James 5:3-5)(30)

REFLECTION

Working to transform the system that creates poverty is a way of participating in God's life-giving love. As Pope Leo makes clear, we love our neighbors by taking concrete action to promote the common good and to structure our society in a way that promotes thriving for all. God's love became incarnate on Earth, in the person of Jesus Christ and in his radically compassionate witness against empire, elitism, and exclusion. When we advance policies that deliver health care, food, housing, welcome for immigrants, care for people in prisons, clean air and water, and more, we join in making God's love incarnate.

QUESTION

What does it mean to you that God is a "liberator" of the impoverished, oppressed, and excluded? What does that mean for how Christians are to live out our faith?

Chapter 3: A Church for the Poor

SUMMARY

In this chapter, Pope Leo surveys the history of the Catholic Church to show how denouncing wealth-hoarding and caring for struggling people has always been at the heart of the Christian tradition. He looks to early figures like St. John Chrysostom and St. Augustine, the ministries of women religious in health care, and the long history of the church in “working for and with migrants” and those in prisons, detention centers, and refugee reception centers (75). In particular, the pope highlights Benedictine monasteries as examples of an “economy of solidarity,” centered on cooperation and sharing instead of accumulation — showing us that alternatives are possible (56)! Pope Leo concludes by writing about popular movements today, calling us to organize to transform the system that creates poverty — for the health of our economy, our democracy, and our church.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“What you give to the poor is not your property, but theirs. Why have you appropriated what was given for common use?” (Citing St. Ambrose, 43)

“Our response to the challenges posed by contemporary migration can be summed up in four verbs: welcome, protect, promote, and integrate. Yet these verbs do not apply only to migrants and refugees. They describe the Church’s mission to all those living in the existential peripheries, who need to be welcomed, protected, promoted and integrated.” (Citing Pope Francis, 75)

“[Leaders of popular movements] know that solidarity ‘also means fighting against the structural causes of poverty and inequality; of the lack of work, land and housing; and of the denial of social and labor rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money.’” (Citing Pope St. Paul VI, 81)

REFLECTION

As Pope Leo illustrates, for two thousand years being a “church of the poor” has meant working to ensure that all of us have not only our most basic needs met—food, water, clothing, and shelter—but also good health care, legal rights, freedom from enslavement and exploitation, and dignified treatment, especially for immigrants and refugees (61). These are all elements of an “economy of solidarity,” or *An Economy for All*, and they cannot be fully achieved without changing laws and policies. It is core to who we are as a church to work together to take care of our communities — including through policy advocacy.

QUESTION

Where do you see mini “economies of solidarity” that put mutual care over accumulation in your community? *Some examples: a local mutual aid network, a free health clinic, a “buy nothing” group, a labor union, or a legal clinic that helps immigrants prepare documents.* What policies could move us toward an “economy of solidarity” on a larger scale?

Chapter 4: A History that Continues

SUMMARY

Pope Leo explores the Church's social teachings, including on "the universal destination of earthly goods." This refers to God's will that all created things be "shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice," and that no one may accumulate "surplus goods solely for his [or her] own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life" (86)! On this basis, the pope denounces the system that allows a small few to hoard resources meant for all, and affirms, "We need to be increasingly committed to resolving the structural causes of poverty" (94). That means rejecting worship of the marketplace (a "tyranny!") and an economy that serves only the powerful, wrecks the planet, and leaves everyone else with "a few 'drops' that trickle down." It means developing policies that align with the "universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity" of God's kingdom (92, 93, 97).

KEY QUOTATIONS

"Therefore, everyone has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth's goods for themselves and their family... Persons in extreme necessity are entitled to take what they need from the riches of others..." (86)

"We must continue, then, to denounce the 'dictatorship of an economy that kills'... This imbalance is the result of ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation.... A new tyranny is being born..." (Citing Pope Francis, 92)

"The dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow." (92)

"Unless we stop and take this matter seriously, we will continue, openly or surreptitiously, 'to legitimize the present model of distribution, where a minority believes that it has the right to consume in a way which can never be universalized, since the planet could not even contain the waste products of such consumption.'" (Citing Pope Francis, 95)

REFLECTION

It is immoral that many ultra-wealthy individuals and corporations pay less in taxes than schoolteachers or bus drivers – sometimes even no taxes at all. The Catholic Church teaches that when wealth hoarding becomes as extreme as it is today, governments have a responsibility to justly redistribute resources. One way we can achieve this is by ensuring that billionaires pay their fair share in taxes. When that happens, we will be able to end poverty; fund universal health care; ensure housing, education, free childcare, and a dignified retirement for all of us; and much more. That's *An Economy for All!*

QUESTION

How is it that, as Pope Leo writes, the economy today "kills" (92)? In contrast, how does an economy of solidarity lead to better outcomes for everyone? What will it look and feel like—for you, your family and friends, and your town or city—when we all have what we need to thrive?

Chapter 5: A Constant Challenge

SUMMARY

Pope Leo closes *Dilexi Te* urging us to model the compassionate solidarity of the Good Samaritan, who responds to each person as “a human being with a dignity identical to my own ...an image of God. That is what it is to be a Christian!” (106). The pope reminds us that Christians “cannot be limited to the private sphere” and must participate in our shared public life to alleviate suffering and its structural causes (112). With both direct assistance (charity) and organizing to transform systems (justice), we cooperate with God’s life-giving love. This is our call as followers of Christ, and as human beings.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Any Church community, if it thinks it can comfortably go its own way without creative concern and effective cooperation in helping the poor to live with dignity and reaching out to everyone, will also risk breaking down, however much it may talk about social issues or criticize governments. It will easily drift into a spiritual worldliness camouflaged by religious practices, unproductive meetings, and empty talk.” (113)

“At times, pseudo-scientific data are invoked to support the claim that a free market economy will automatically solve the problem of poverty.” (114)

“Those inspired by true charity know full well that almsgiving does not absolve the competent authorities of their responsibilities, eliminate the duty of government institutions to care for the poor, or detract from rightful efforts to ensure justice.” (116)

“By its very nature, Christian love is prophetic... A Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love, is the Church that the world needs today.” (120)

REFLECTION

Pope St. Paul VI called political action for the common good “one of the highest forms of charity.” The Catholic Sisters who founded NETWORK in 1971 understood this. They saw that ministering with struggling communities required not only offering direct aid but also working for policies that could transform an exploitive system. That’s why they called their work a “political ministry.” We live our Gospel call to do justice and love our neighbors by participating in our shared public life and advancing policies that protect our Earth, strengthen democracy, and deliver health care, housing, food, and more for all of us – together healing and nourishing our communities in the example of Christ.

QUESTION

Call to mind past experiences of participating in direct service work (such as offering meals at a soup kitchen) and in justice work (such as joining a demonstration or contacting government officials about an issue). How do these experiences connect to your faith? How does God show up in your efforts to build a more loving world?

Prayer

From the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

Help Us Build Communities in God's Vision of Justice

Holy Spirit,
We praise and thank you!

You anoint us to
bring glad tidings to the poor
proclaim liberty to captives
recover sight for the blind
free the oppressed
and build communities in keeping
with God's vision of justice.

Show us how to be
light of the world
salt of the earth
seeds that sprout love
and leaven that infuses humanity
with the desire to promote
human dignity and solidarity.

Help us to listen so that
those in poverty can lead our
efforts to
proclaim a more hopeful vision
liberate captives from injustice
heal the blindness of the powerful
free us all from self-centeredness
and build community
to overcome poverty.

Amen.

Ayúdanos a construir comunidades en la visión de justicia de Dios

Espíritu Santo,
¡Te alabamos y te damos gracias!

Tú nos ungiste para
anunciar la buena nueva a los pobres
proclamar el perdón a los cautivos
recuperar la vista de los ciegos
poner en libertad a los oprimidos
y crear comunidades conforme
a la visión de justicia de Dios.

Muéstranos como ser
luz del mundo
sal de la tierra
semillas que brotan amor
y levadura que infunde a la humanidad
con el deseo de promover
la dignidad humana y solidaridad.

Ayúdanos a escuchar para que
los que viven en pobreza puedan dirigir
nuestros esfuerzos para
proclamar una visión
con más esperanza
liberar a los cautivos de la injusticia
sanar la ceguera de los poderosos
liberarnos a todos del egocentrismo
y construir comunidad
para vencer la pobreza.

Amén.

Building An Economy for All

Whether we are nurses or farm workers, welders or coders, students or retirees, we are made in God's image and we deserve to thrive. But time and time again, some politicians side with the ultra-wealthy—letting them influence our politics, pollute our neighborhoods, and get rich off our hard work—all while trying to take away our health care and food programs. This is immoral.

But it doesn't have to be this way. For decades, Catholic Sisters and faith-filled justice-seekers have chosen solidarity with workers and love of neighbor. When we live out these values together, we deliver what our communities need to thrive!



An 
Economy
For All
A justice agenda for all of us.

Learn more at
networkadvocates.org/economyforall



Connect, join, act!



Dilexi Te in Action

NETWORK Advocates for Catholic Social Justice is an inclusive, national, Catholic advocacy organization open to all who share our values. Together with thousands of justice-seekers across the U.S., we work to transform our society by shaping federal policies that serve the common good and honor the dignity of all.

NETWORK hosts events and workshops, coordinates advocacy visits, shares educational resources, sends action alerts, and more for Spirit-filled justice-seekers.

Scan the QR code to sign up for our emails, get involved with an Advocates Team in your state, or learn more about our Young Advocates Leadership Lab (Y.A.L.L.).

Use your smartphone camera to scan the QR code or visit networkadvocates.org/connect.



Visit networkadvocates.org/dilexi-te to download this guide and share it with your family, friends, and members of your faith community. Consider hosting a discussion group to reflect together on the questions in this guide.

Facebook: @NetworkLobby | **Instagram:** @network_lobby | **X/Twitter:** @NETWORKLobby

This guide is brought to you by NETWORK Advocates for Catholic Social Justice, a nonpartisan, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.