

ENCYCLIQUE LETTER



Dilexit nos

FROM THE HOLY FRENCH FATHER

EXPLAINED TO YOUNG PEOPLE



**THE HUMAN
AND DIVINE LOVE
OF THE HEART
OF JESUS CHRIST**



OIEC

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Introduction

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After *Lumen fidei* (2013), *Laudato si'* (2015) and *Fratelli tutti* (2020), Pope Francis has published his 4th encyclical, ***Dilexit nos***, in which he makes the Sacred Heart the antidote to universal ills. In a world marked by individualism, indifference and growing injustice, **this new encyclical invites everyone to discover in the love of Christ an inexhaustible source of healing and transformation.**

Dilexit nos challenges us: how can you, the young people of today, incarnate this love in your lives and in your communities? Through this encyclical, Pope Francis calls us to enter into a profound relationship with the Sacred Heart, the symbol of an infinite love that transcends divisions, heals wounds and renews hope.



Le texte intégral de cette encyclique est disponible à l'adresse suivante :
<https://bit.ly/dilexitnos-en>

We have produced **a simplified summary here, specially adapted for you, the young people**, to make these teachings more accessible and concrete. This booklet summarises the essential points of Pope Francis' message, adding practical suggestions for living out this call to universal love in your everyday life.

The aim of this booklet is to help you discover the main teachings of *Dilexit nos*. It offers **reflections and concrete courses of action to help you live out, at your own level, this call to active and universal love.** You will also find tools to help you better understand how this love can enlighten your life and help you face the challenges of your time with faith, courage and solidarity.

Let's immerse ourselves together in this vibrant appeal from Pope Francis and discover how the Sacred Heart can transform our hearts and enlighten the world.





Importance of the Heart

Pope Francis begins by emphasising **the central role of the heart in our humanity**. It is the place where we find meaning in our lives, a synthesis of our emotions, thoughts and desires.

Pope Francis explains that **the heart is not just an organ, but the centre of what makes us human**: our thoughts, our emotions, our choices. It's where we find our strengths, our convictions and our capacity to love.

'In this liquid world, it is necessary to speak again of the heart, to point to the place where every person [...] finds the source and root of all their other strengths, convictions, passions and choices.' (9)

Even in an increasingly technological world, where algorithms influence our choices, the heart remains a place of freedom and authenticity:

*'Algorithms show that our thoughts, and what our will decides, are much more 'standard' than we thought. [...]
The same cannot be said for the heart.'* (14)

The Pope invites us to protect our hearts and make them the guide for our actions, far from superficial illusions: if our hearts are united to the Heart of Jesus, we can build true relationships, filled with peace, and transform the world into a more just and loving place.

Ask yourself these questions personally!

These questions are designed to help you reflect personally and move from theory to practice by embodying the teachings of the encyclical *Dilexit nos*.

- ♥ What **desires, thoughts or emotions** are occupying my heart today?
- ♥ How can I **protect my heart from superficial influences or external distractions** (such as social networks or algorithms)?
- ♥ How can **the Heart of Jesus become a model** to guide my decisions and my relationships?

Courses of action

1. Cultivating an inner life:

- o Take some time each day to reflect on your emotions and motivations, while asking yourself how you can be more attentive to the emotions of others... A simple practice might be to keep a diary, noting important thoughts or decisions, and trying to understand what guided them.
- o Meditate on Christ's words and pray to align your heart with his.

Be vigilant in the face of external influences:

- o Audit your recent choices (purchases, decisions, opinions). How many are influenced by social networks, advertising or algorithms? Commit to making freer, more considered choices.
- o Propose discussions with your friends or as a group on the impact of modern technologies on our ability to listen to our hearts.

Develop authentic relationships:

- o Seek to establish relationships based on listening and genuine love, far from superficialities. Take concrete steps to care for those around you. For example, listen attentively to a fellow student who is having difficulty or offer to support a friend who is going through a difficult time.
- o Take part in activities that encourage deep sharing, such as spiritual retreats or personal development workshops.

Involve your heart in actions for others:

- o Put your heart at the service of solidarity projects: help someone in need, get involved in your community, or support a cause close to your heart.
- o Organise or take part in times of reflection and community prayer to unite your hearts with Christ's and work together for a fairer world.

Shape your heart for justice and love:

- o Read inspirational texts or biblical passages on love and peace, and reflect on how to live them out in practice.
- o In your school, parish or youth group, propose initiatives to raise awareness of social justice issues, committing yourself sincerely and authentically.



Gestures and words of love

Through his actions and words, Jesus shows us what it means **to love with all our heart**. His actions, recounted in the Gospels, inspire us to live like him.

The Heart of Jesus is at the centre of his actions in the Gospels: **he shows a love that is close, concrete and full of tenderness**.

'Come to me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest'. (Mt 11, 28 ; 43)

Even in the challenges of modern life, this love remains a model. The Pope reminds us that Jesus never leaves anyone behind and always seeks to enlighten our lives.

'This same Jesus is waiting today for you to give him the opportunity to enlighten your existence, to lift you up, to fill you with his strength'. (38)

The Heart of Jesus is a place where everyone can draw peace and love, so that they in turn can love better.

Ask yourself these questions personally!

These questions are designed to help you reflect personally and move from theory to practice by embodying the teachings of the encyclical *Dilexit nos*.

- ♥ What **gestures of love or service** can I make today to reflect the example of Jesus?
- ♥ How can I **show more care and tenderness to the people around me**, even in the small everyday things?
- ♥ When have I felt **the need to console or be consoled**, and how can I find this peace in the Heart of Jesus?

Courses of action

1. Imitating the actions of Jesus in everyday life:

- o Follow Jesus' example by practising simple gestures of love and service, such as offering a comforting word or a gesture of mutual aid to those who seem isolated or sad, reaching out to a comrade in difficulty, listening attentively to someone, or giving service without expecting anything in return.
- o Get involved in a solidarity action, such as helping the most disadvantaged or taking part in a collection for those in need.

2. Respond to Christ's invitation:

- o Take time for prayer or adoration, entrusting your sorrows and doubts to Jesus. Let his love enlighten your choices and your actions.
- o Meditate on Matthew 11:28: 'Come to me, all you who labour...' and ask the Lord to offer you his peace in difficult times.

3. Express concrete and inclusive love:

- o Seek to include those who are often left out, as Jesus did in the Gospels. Invite an isolated student to join your group or offer encouraging words to someone in need.
- o Pay attention to small signs: a smile, a kind word or a helping gesture can transform someone's day.

4. Draw from the Heart of Jesus to love more:

- o Practice a daily 'examination of conscience': what gestures or words of love have I made today? At what moments could I have embodied love better by listening attentively or showing compassion towards someone in difficulty?
- o Take part in spiritual activities that strengthen your bond with the Heart of Jesus, such as group reflection or retreats.

5. Share this love in your community:

- o Organise collective initiatives in your parish, school or youth group to put this love into practice: visits to isolated people, ecological actions, or times of prayer for those who suffer.
- o Bear witness to how the Heart of Jesus enlightens your life, to inspire others to open up to this love.

By living according to Christ's gestures and words of love, we become reflections of his Heart in the world, instruments of peace and tenderness in a world that so desperately needs them.



The heart that loves without limits

The Heart of Jesus is not a simple image or symbol: **it represents the unity of his divine and human love, a source of transformation for our lives..**

'The heart is the symbol of that ardent charity which, infused in Christ, animates his human will'. (65)

This love is not limited by human emotions but reflects God's infinite love for each person and **shows us that to become fully human**, we must learn to step outside ourselves and love.

To adore the Heart of Jesus is to recognise that everything about him - his life, his suffering, his resurrection - speaks of **an infinite love that transforms us**.

Ask yourself these questions personally!

These questions are designed to help you reflect personally and move from theory to practice by embodying the teachings of the encyclical *Dilexit nos*.

- ♥ How can I **overcome my human limitations to love more authentically and generously?**
- ♥ What are **the wounds in my life or in the lives of others that I can help to heal** through my love and presence?
- ♥ How can I **draw inspiration from the infinite love of the Heart of Jesus** to transform my life and my relationships?

By welcoming the infinite love of the Heart of Jesus, we learn to love without reserve and to live a life full of meaning, in the image of the one who loved us to the end. This love, received and given, becomes a light that illuminates our relationships and our world.

Courses of action

1. Adoring the Heart of Jesus:

- o Make time for Eucharistic adoration or specific prayers to the Sacred Heart. These moments will help you contemplate the infinite love of Jesus and make it a source of strength for your own actions.
- o Read and meditate on the passages in the Gospels where Jesus shows this boundless love, such as the parable of the prodigal son (Lk 15:11-32) or the washing of the feet (Jn 13:1-17).

2. Stepping outside yourself to love:

- o Identify times when you could go beyond your own interests to help or support someone around you, whether it's a friend, a family member or someone in need.
- o Get involved in activities that encourage you to reach out to others, such as volunteering, solidarity missions or community projects.

3. Let the love of Jesus transform your life:

- o Do a daily self-examination by asking yourself: where have I shown authentic love today? Where could I better reflect the love of the Heart of Jesus tomorrow?
- o Develop a habit of forgiveness and reconciliation, even towards those who have hurt you, in the image of Christ's unconditional love.

4. Show this love through concrete actions:

- o Organise times of mutual aid or support in your surroundings, for example by offering shared meals, visiting isolated people or supporting local initiatives for the needy.
- o In your community, offer times for reflection on the meaning of Christ's infinite love and how each of us can live it out in our daily lives.

5. Become a witness to the boundless love of Jesus:

- o Be an example of authentic love by being attentive, generous and kind in your words and actions.
- o Bear witness, through simple gestures and encouraging words, that the love of Christ can transform our lives and the lives of others.



A love that quenches thirst

In this section, the Pope speaks of the pierced side of Jesus on the cross, from which flows **a source of love that never stops.**

- ▶ This wound shows how far Jesus went to love us. He gave his life for us, and **that love lives on today.**
- ▶ By looking at the Heart of Jesus, **we learn to love, forgive and console.** When we suffer, Jesus suffers with us, and **helps us to find peace.**

Many saints, such as Saint Theresa and Saint John Eudes, have found incredible strength in the Heart of Jesus to love God and others better.

This contemplation invites us to **a personal encounter with Jesus**, to draw from his Heart the strength to transform our lives..

Ask yourself these questions personally!

These questions are designed to help you reflect personally and move from theory to practice by embodying the teachings of the encyclical Dilexit nos.

- ♥ When have I felt **the need to draw on a source of love and peace to keep going?**
- ♥ How can I, in turn, **become a source of consolation and strength for others**, as Jesus is for me?
- ♥ What examples of the saints, such as Saint Theresa or Saint John Eudes, can inspire me to **love God and my neighbour better?**

In contemplating the pierced Heart of Jesus, we discover a love that quenches our souls and invites us to transform our lives. This love is not static: it works within us to make us capable of consoling, forgiving and loving, in the image of Christ. Let us draw from this inexhaustible source to become bearers of love and peace in the world.

Courses of action

1. Contemplating the love of Christ:

- o Take time to pray before a representation of the Sacred Heart or Christ on the Cross. Reflect on the love that Jesus shows through his pierced wound.
- o Read spiritual texts by saints who have meditated on the Heart of Jesus, such as the writings of Saint Margaret Mary Alacoque or Saint John Eudes, to deepen your understanding of this thirst-quenching love.

2. Draw from the Heart of Jesus to find peace :

- o In your moments of suffering or doubt, turn to Jesus in prayer. Entrust your sorrows to him and ask him for the strength and peace you need to move forward.
- o Organise or take part in times of meditation or Eucharistic adoration, asking Jesus to fill your heart with his love and consolation.

3. Imitate Jesus' love and forgiveness :


- o Take the initiative to forgive someone who has hurt you, even if it seems difficult. Let Jesus' example inspire you in this journey of reconciliation.
- o Make concrete gestures of consolation to those around you who are suffering: visit someone who is ill, listen to someone who is going through a difficult time, or take part in initiatives for marginalised people.

4. Let this love transform your life:

- o Pray a daily prayer to ask Jesus to teach you to love as he does: with an open, generous and unconditional heart.
- o Identify a habit or attitude that distances you from true love (selfishness, anger, indifference) and commit to transforming it with the help of Christ's grace.

5. Follow the example of the saints:

- o Be inspired by the saints who found in the Heart of Jesus the strength to live an extraordinary love. For example, adopt the simplicity and trust of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux or the missionary spirit of Saint John Eudes.
- o Read a biography or story about a saint who moves you, and think about how you could incorporate their devotion to the Heart of Jesus into your own life.



Love like Jesus

The Pope invites us to respond to the love of Jesus by loving our brothers and sisters. **The Heart of Jesus urges us to act to make the world a better place.**

- ▶ *'The civilisation of the Heart of Christ can be built on the ruins accumulated by hatred and violence'. (182)*
- ▶ The Heart of Jesus thus becomes a model for building a 'civilisation of love', even in the midst of the challenges of the contemporary world.
- ▶ 'Building a world of love and peace is what Jesus expects of us. We can repair the wounds caused by evil by loving, forgiving and acting generously.'

Each person has **a mission: to proclaim the love of Jesus**, not necessarily with grand speeches, but by living this love every day.

Ask yourself these questions personally!

These questions are designed to help you reflect personally and move from theory to practice by embodying the teachings of the encyclical *Dilexit nos*.

- ♥ What **concrete actions** can I take **to build a 'civilisation of love'** in my environment?
- ♥ Who do I need **to forgive** or **love more**, in the image of Jesus?
- ♥ How can I **proclaim the love of Jesus** in my daily life, **through my actions rather than my words**?

By following the example of the Heart of Jesus, we can transform our hearts and the world around us. This call to love like Jesus is a universal mission, carried out through daily gestures that, put together, build the civilisation of love that Pope Francis is calling for. Together, we can make a difference and build a future where love and peace reign.

Courses of action

1. Building a 'civilisation of love':

- o Get involved in projects or actions that contribute to peace and justice, such as visiting isolated elderly people, organising a collection for people in distress, listening to and accompanying refugees as they integrate, or carrying out ecological initiatives to care for creation.
- o In your school, parish or youth group, propose times for reflection on what a 'civilisation of love' could be and how each of us can make a concrete contribution to it.

2. Act with love and generosity :

- o Identify a situation in which you can act to ease tensions or repair injustices, whether by defending someone or reaching out to someone who is alone.
- o Every day, perform a concrete act of generosity: giving a service without expecting anything in return, offering a smile, or simply taking the time to listen to someone in need.

3. Forgive to heal :

- o Make a point of practising forgiveness, even for the little wounds of everyday life. By forgiving, you are helping to repair relationships and build peace.
- o Organise a time of reconciliation in your community or family to restore bonds damaged by misunderstanding or conflict.

4. Proclaim the love of Jesus through your actions:

- o Adopt an attitude of kindness in all your dealings, trying to reflect Christ's love in the way you speak, listen and behave.
- o Share with others what the love of Jesus means to you, not by imposing words, but by simple and authentic testimonies.

5. Make each day a mission of love:

- o At the end of each day, examine your conscience: what loving actions have I taken today? Where could I have better embodied Christ's love?
- o Make a personal or collective commitment to make your environment more welcoming and fairer, with the aim of taking concrete, long-term action.



The Heart of Jesus in our school

Dear young people,

School is much more than a place where you learn maths, science or languages. It is a place where you have the opportunity to grow, not only in knowledge, but also in humanity. With this letter, Pope Francis invites us to embark on a unique journey: to transform our hearts and, by extension, the environment around us, especially the school, into a space of love, justice and peace.

1. Your heart, the driving force behind change

Every action you take, every word you say, every decision you make can influence the atmosphere in your school. If you choose to cultivate a heart filled with kindness, respect and compassion, you become a vector for positive change.

- ♥ **Ask yourself this question:** how can I help, starting today, to make my school more welcoming to everyone?
- ♥ **A simple gesture:** inviting a lonely classmate to join you in the canteen or taking the time to listen to a friend in need can brighten someone's day.

2. Relationships based on respect and listening

In a world sometimes marked by indifference, building authentic relationships is a strength. At school, this starts with respect: for your classmates, for your teachers, and for yourself.

- ♥ **Organise times to discuss subjects** that are important to you, in a spirit of dialogue.
- ♥ **Propose collective initiatives**, such as a charter of mutual respect or activities to help new pupils integrate.

3. A concrete commitment to the common good

School is also a springboard for developing your sense of solidarity and responsibility. As the Sacred Heart of Jesus inspires universal love, you are called to act for the common good.

- ♥ **Get involved in solidarity actions:** an ecological project, a collection for the most disadvantaged, intergenerational initiatives, or visits to isolated people to share a moment of human warmth can transform the collective energy of your establishment.
- ♥ **Take part in constructive debates** on important issues for your generation, such as ecology or inclusion..

4. A faith that inspires and enlightens

Your faith can be a source of light, even in difficult times. Don't hesitate to find time for prayer, reflection or spiritual sharing.

- ♥ **Invite your peers to discover the spiritual richness** you draw from Christ's message, not through speeches but through your actions.
- ♥ **Organise times of prayer or meditation** where everyone, believer or not, can come and seek peace and comfort.

To help you with this process, the OIEC has produced a booklet entitled:

I pray, you pray, we pray ...



Aimed at young people who are curious and in search of spirituality, the booklet 'I pray, you pray, we pray...' has been designed specifically to meet the needs of the very young, as part of their introduction to prayer and spirituality.

bit.ly/livretpriere-EN



Conclusion

In this encyclical, Pope Francis reminds us that, **even in the age of artificial intelligence, the heart remains irreplaceable.**

It is there that we find the tenderness, poetry and love that make our lives fully human.

By following the example of the Heart of Christ, we can face modern challenges with faith and hope.

You are the architects of a fairer and more caring world. By embodying the love of the Sacred Heart in your daily interactions and showing compassion and empathy towards your fellow students, you are showing that a school can be much more than a place of learning: it can become a true space of communion, where everyone finds their place and can flourish.

Pope Francis invites you to dream big, but to act on the basis of your daily realities. Let your hearts be open to this invitation, and together let us build a school that inspires, welcomes, and radiates the love of Christ.

The Pope concludes by praying that we may receive from the Heart of Jesus the strength to love and serve. **It invites us to move forward together, despite our differences, to build a more just, united and fraternal world.**



*'May the open
Heart of Jesus
guide us and
enlighten us
always'.*

*'I ask our Lord Jesus Christ
to grant that his Sacred Heart may continue
to pour forth the streams of living water
that can heal the hurt we have caused,
strengthen our ability to love and serve others,
and inspire us to journey together towards a just,
solidary and fraternal world.
Until that day when we will rejoice in celebrating
together the banquet of the heavenly kingdom
in the presence of the risen Lord, who harmonizes
all our differences in the light
that radiates perpetually from his open heart.
May he be blessed forever.'*

Pope Francis, 220.



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