

Caritas Australia welcomes Dilexi Te as a reminder of the priority of the excluded.

Caritas Australia welcomes the release of Pope Leo XIV's first major publication, the apostolic letter Dilexi Te. The title is taken from the book of revelation and means 'I have loved you.'

The letter is a forceful reminder of the priority of the excluded and those on the 'lowest ranks of society' in the theology and practice of the Church. Pope Leo XIV writes: '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.' (#7)

Caritas is delighted that Pope Leo XIV has completed a work that Pope Francis left unfinished, added some reflections and is 'happy to make this document my own.'

Pope Leo XIV shares the same intense urgency as Pope Francis to put those in need at the heart of the life of the church and of society. He says, 'contact with those who are lowly and powerless is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history. In the poor, he continues to speak to us.' (#5).

Caritas especially appreciates the eucharistic theology of the document. It turns to one of the church's pioneers, St John Chrysostom, to emphasise the inescapable connection between the Eucharist and justice:

He understood the Eucharist, therefore, as a sacramental expression of the charity and justice that both preceded and accompanied it. That same charity and justice should perpetuate the Eucharist through love and attention to the poor. (#41).

Pope Leo XIV condemns any kind of aggressive or 'warrior Christianity.' In concluding, he says: Love is above all a way of looking at life and a way of living it. 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)

Caritas Australia is grateful to recognise in Dilexi Te a much-appreciated endorsement of its work with some of the most excluded people of the world. It encourages us to be even more strident in reaching beyond borders and building bridges.

ENDS

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