
Pope Francis: “Our world is losing its heart”

“Living as we do in an age of superficiality, rushing frenetically from one thing to another without really knowing why, and ending up as insatiable consumers and slaves to the mechanisms of a market unconcerned about the deeper meaning of our lives, all of us need to rediscover the importance of the heart”, writes **Pope Francis** in his fourth encyclical “Dilexit nos” on the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ, in which the Holy Father denounces that “our world is losing its heart” as a result of “an unhealthy individualism.”

“Our heart is the ultimate judge,”

the Pope’s theses, “in societies of serial consumers who live from day to day, dominated by the hectic pace and bombarded by technology.” The algorithms are “uniform”, the heart is not. Drawing on Homer and Plato and quoting Heidegger and Dostoevsky, among others, Bergoglio states: “It could be said that I am my heart”, the sole “capable of unifying and harmonizing our personal history, which may seem hopelessly fragmented, yet is the place where everything can make sense”. Conversely, “a society dominated by narcissism and self-centredness will increasingly become ‘heartless’”. “In this age of artificial intelligence, we cannot forget that poetry and love are necessary to save our humanity”, Francis writes, recalling actions of everyday life we learned during childhood, like when we first used a fork “to seal the edges of the pies that we helped our mothers or grandmothers to make at home.”

“When we witness the outbreak of new wars, with the complicity, tolerance or indifference of other countries, or petty power struggles over partisan interests, we may be tempted to conclude that our world is losing its heart”,

the statement at the heart of the document: “We need only to see and listen to the elderly women – from both sides – who are at the mercy of these devastating conflicts. It is heart-breaking to see them mourning for their murdered grandchildren, or longing to die themselves after losing the homes where they spent their entire lives. Casting the blame on others does not resolve these shameful and tragic situations. To see these elderly women weep, and not feel that this is something intolerable, is a sign of a world that has grown heartless.” “Taking the heart seriously, has consequences for society as a whole”, the Pope writes mentioning the position of the Council in the face of the tragedies afflicting our world, asking the Lord “to have mercy on this suffering world, so that our world, which presses forward despite wars, socio-economic disparities and uses of technology that threaten our humanity,

may regain the most important and necessary thing of all: its heart.” **“Devotion to Christ’s heart is essential for our Christian life to the extent that we can once more affirm that the Sacred Heart is a**

synthesis of the Gospel”, is Francis’ recommendation. “Amid the frenetic pace of today’s world and our obsession with free time, consumption and diversion – the Pope notes - cell phones and social media, we forget to nourish our lives with the strength of the Eucharist.” Secularization “seeks to build a world free of God”, Francis denounces: “We are also seeing a proliferation of varied forms of religiosity that have nothing to do with a personal relationship with the God of love, but are new manifestations of a disembodied spirituality.” Hence the Pope’s invitation to renew our devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which “frees us from another kind of dualism found in communities and pastors excessively caught up in external activities, structural reforms that have little to do with the Gospel, obsessive reorganization plans, worldly projects, secular ways of thinking

and mandatory programmes.” The ideal example we should follow is that of **Saint Therese of the Child Jesus**, whose prayer to the Heart of Christ can be encapsulated in three words: “I trust in you”. Moreover, devotion to the Sacred Heart includes personal and communal commitment. Mission requires “missionaries who are themselves in love”, but with no proselytism: “If we turn aside from the community, we will be turning aside from Jesus. If we turn our back on the community, our friendship with Jesus will grow cold.” “Love for the brothers and sisters of our communities – religious, parochial, diocesan and others – is a kind of fuel that feeds our friendship with Jesus”, explains the Holy Father: “Our acts of love for our brothers and sisters in community may well be the best and, at times, the only way that we can witness to others our love for Jesus Christ”, “in every one of our brothers and sisters, and especially in the poor, the despised and the abandoned members of society.” Each one of us has been entrusted with a mission to be carried out in this world “confidently, generously, freely and fearlessly”, reads the Encyclical Letter. “If you stay trapped in your own comfort zone, you will never really find security; doubts and fears, sorrow and anxiety will always loom on the horizon. Those who do not carry out their mission on this earth will find not happiness, but disappointment.” “The present document can help us see that the teaching of the social Encyclicals *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti* is not unrelated to our encounter with the love of Jesus Christ. For it is by drinking of that same love that we become capable of forging bonds of fraternity, of recognizing the dignity of each human being, and of working together to care for our common home.” With these words Bergoglio summarizes the “fil rouge” that is connected to his magisterium. “In a world where everything is bought and sold, people’s sense of their worth appears increasingly to depend on what they can accumulate with the power of money”, Francis denounces in the document’s concluding paragraphs: “The love of Christ has no place in this perverse mechanism, yet only that love can set us free from a mad pursuit that no longer has room for a gratuitous love”, Francis assures: “Christ’s love can give a heart to our world and revive love wherever we think that the ability to love has been definitively lost. “The Church also needs that love”.

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