

DILEXI TE

« *I have loved you* » (Rev 3:9)

Apostolic Exhortation of Pope Leo XIV

Analysis, Summary and Extensions

A Re-reading in the Light of the Mahoukou Law

(Triad A2R: Call – Response – Resonance)

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PRESENTATION OF THE DOCUMENT

Origin and Publication

Pope Leo XIV signed this exhortation on October 4, 2025, the feast day of Saint Francis of Assisi. It was officially published on October 9, 2025.

In the final months of his life, Pope Francis had prepared this text in continuity with his encyclical *Dilexit nos*, imagining Christ addressing each of the poor: «You have little strength, little power, but I have loved you» (Rev 3:9). Leo XIV, having received this project as an inheritance, made it his own by adding some reflections, and proposes it at the beginning of his pontificate.

Structure and Central Theme

The 121 paragraphs of this text are devoted to the Church's preferential option for the poor. It is the first magisterial text of Leo XIV's pontificate, which stands in continuity with his predecessor.

The heart of the text lies in a simple but radical conviction: contact with the poor is a privileged place of encounter with God. The Pope writes that contact with those who have neither power nor greatness is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history.

Theological and Pastoral Content

The exhortation seeks to highlight the action of God who, moved by compassion for the poverty and weakness of all humanity, has a particular concern for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, asking the Church to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest.

The Pope denounces the economy that kills, inequality, violence against women, malnutrition and the education crisis. He calls on believers to raise their voice to denounce structures of injustice.

He also recalls the preferential option for the poor — an expression born in Latin America — which does not designate an exclusion or discrimination toward other groups, but the action of God moved by compassion for the weakness of humanity.

A Call to Mutual Evangelization

The Pope exhorts: «Let all of us be evangelized by the poor.» The Christian cannot consider them merely a social problem: they are a «family matter.» The relationship with them cannot be reduced to an activity or function of the Church.

PART ONE — Analysis and Summary of *Dilexi te*

Genesis and Status of the Document

Dilexi te is a text with dual authorship: begun by Pope Francis in the final months of his life, in continuity with his encyclical *Dilexit nos* on the Heart of Christ, it was taken up, enriched and promulgated by Leo XIV on October 4, 2025, the feast of Saint Francis of Assisi — an eminently symbolic choice. This dual signature is not an anecdotal curiosity: it signals a deliberate will of pontifical continuity. The new Pope fully assumes the inheritance and adds his own sensibility to it, described as more interior and spiritual, but equally demanding on the social level.

The text contains 121 paragraphs articulated in several chapters, the overall logic of which is as follows.

Structure and Movement of the Text

Prologue: The Founding Word (§§1-3)

The exhortation opens on a verse of the Apocalypse addressed to a community without resources or power: «I have loved you» (Rev 3:9). The Pope hears in it the voice of Christ addressing every poor person on earth. This is not a pietistic consolation — it is a theological declaration: God's love reveals itself precisely where human power is absent. This christological starting point anchors everything that follows.

Chapter I: The Reality of the Poor Today (§§4-15)

The text begins with a concrete evangelical gesture: the woman who pours perfume on Jesus. Leo XIV reads a lesson in it: no gesture of affection toward those who suffer is insignificant, for loving the poor and loving Christ is one and the same thing (Mt 25:40). Then the Pope unfolds a lucid picture of contemporary poverty in all its diversity: material poverty, social exclusion, cultural poverty, deprivation of rights, the particularly vulnerable condition of women. He points sharply to the ideologies that deny reality by manipulating statistics, and denounces the

meritocratic culture that makes the poor responsible for their own misery. This chapter has prophetic force: it names the sin of indifference.

Chapter II: The Theological Foundation — God Chooses the Poor (§§16-30)

This is the doctrinal heart of the text. The preferential option for the poor is not first an ethical or political option: it is rooted in the very nature of God. From the Exodus (the burning bush, the cry of the people), through the prophets Amos and Isaiah, to the Incarnation, the Pope shows that God has always placed himself on the side of the excluded. Jesus is presented as the poor Messiah — born in a stable, a refugee in Egypt, homeless in his public life, executed outside the city walls. His poverty is relational and kenotic: he empties himself of his power to enter into total solidarity with suffering humanity.

Chapter III: The Living Tradition of the Church (§§31-80)

Leo XIV surveys two millennia of lived Christian tradition: the Church Fathers (Ambrose, John Chrysostom, Basil, Gregory the Great), the great medieval witnesses (Francis of Assisi, Clare, Elizabeth of Hungary, Thomas Aquinas), the modern mystics (Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola), the contemporary saints (Vincent de Paul, Thérèse of Lisieux, Mother Teresa, Oscar Romero, Charles de Foucauld). This chapter shows that charity toward the poor is not a marginal option in the history of the Church — it is its backbone.

Chapter IV: The Church and the Poor Today — A Call to Action (§§81-121)

The text becomes more directly pastoral and exhortative. Several points structure this chapter:

- The poor are not objects of charity but subjects of the Gospel. They have something to say to the Church, a wisdom of their own. We must allow ourselves to be evangelized by them.
- Commitment is not optional. Faith without works is dead (Jas 2:26). Leo XIV refuses all dualism between spiritual life and social commitment.
- He calls for a double conversion: personal (changing one's gaze toward the poor) and structural (denouncing and transforming the systems that generate injustice).
- He mentions migrants, women victims of violence, and malnourished children as concrete faces of contemporary poverty.
- He finally recalls that the poor are at the center of the Church, not at its periphery.

Tonality and Style

Dilexi te is distinguished by several notable stylistic features. The text is simultaneously contemplative and analytical: it combines scriptural and patristic meditation with a critical reading of economic and political realities. It is deliberately rooted in the long history of the Catholic tradition, which gives it an uncommon historical density. It is also deliberately sober in its practical prescriptions — it does not draw up a political program, but invites a conversion of the gaze that necessarily calls for action.

PART TWO — Questions Posed to Our Societies and Our Church

Questions Posed to Our Societies

1. Is poverty still legible in our wealthy societies?

The text points to a collective anesthesia: the photo of a child dead on a Mediterranean beach moved the world for an evening, then was forgotten by the next day. In our hyper-information societies, are we still capable of sustained attention to the poor, or does the flow of images produce a structural indifference? How do our media, social networks and algorithms contribute to rendering misery invisible?

2. Meritocracy as an ideology of contempt

The Pope attacks frontally the meritocratic myth that blames the poor for their condition. In our liberal societies, where the dominant discourse valorizes individual success and personal responsibility, this critique is radical. The question is: do our educational systems, employment policies, and our collective imagination about merit and failure reproduce a culture of rejection that Leo XIV condemns?

3. Growing inequalities as a political and moral challenge

The text notes that global wealth has increased but with growing inequalities. Even in Europe, families can no longer make ends meet. The question posed to political and economic decision-makers is: can we continue to dissociate growth from distributive justice? Policies of austerity, fiscal deregulation, and the rolling back of social protections are implicitly challenged.

4. The condition of poor women as a revealing indicator

By emphasizing that women are doubly poor, the text points to an intersection between poverty and gender inequality that is too often ignored by public policies. The question is: do our societies truly measure the feminization of poverty, and do they respond to it with adequate policies?

5. Migration as a question of conscience

By citing the child dead on the beach, the Pope interpellates our migration policies. In a European context of hardening borders and criminalization of those who assist migrants, the question is: can one claim to belong to a Christian or humanist civilization and treat migrants as threats rather than human beings in distress?

6. Artificial intelligence and new forms of exclusion

Paradoxically, the exhortation, published at a moment when AI is reconfiguring the labor market, does not mention this reality. But it nonetheless raises the question indirectly: do technological revolutions create new forms of exclusion that our usual categories of poverty do not yet know how to name?

Questions Posed to Our Church

1. Is the Church truly a Church of the poor, or a Church for the poor?

This is the most demanding distinction in the text. For the poor means charity, assistance, service — always precious. Of the poor is something else: it is recognizing that the poor are subjects, bearers of a word, active and not passive members of the community. Our parishes, associations, diocesan structures — what real place do they give to the poor as actors rather than beneficiaries?

2. Is charity without structural transformation sufficient?

The text calls for denouncing and transforming the structures of injustice. This commits the Church to the prophetic and political field — which is uncomfortable. The question is: do our Christian communities dare to name the systemic causes of poverty (unjust taxation, corporate lobbying, food speculation) or do they content themselves with assistance that relieves without questioning?

3. The temptation of ideological contamination

Leo XIV warns that Christians allow themselves to be contaminated by worldly ideologies that render them indifferent to the poor. In a context of rising identitarian populisms that sometimes use Christian references to justify the rejection of migrants and the excluded, the question is crucial: how do we discern what belongs to the Gospel and what belongs to the political-cultural appropriation of faith?

4. Is worship without justice valid?

In the line of the prophets Amos and Isaiah that the text cites, Leo XIV recalls that one cannot pray and offer sacrifices while oppressing the weakest. This is a fundamental liturgical question: are our eucharistic celebrations coherent with our social practices? Is there a living continuity between the altar and the table of the poor?

5. Evangelization by the poor — a pastoral revolution

The affirmation that we must allow ourselves to be evangelized by the poor is perhaps the most revolutionary in the document. It reverses the ordinary logic in which the Church teaches and the poor receive. Concretely: do our seminaries form priests capable of receiving the wisdom of the poor? Do our parish councils, our local synods, truly make room for the voices of the most fragile?

6. The Church's credibility and the question of its wealth

Without being a treatise on the institutional poverty of the Church, *Dilexi te* inevitably raises the question of coherence. How can the Church advocate the preferential option for the poor while managing considerable real estate holdings, while maintaining ecclesiastical lifestyles far from evangelical simplicity? The figure of Francis of Assisi, invoked throughout the text, is there to recall that prophetic speech is credible only when carried by a life attuned to what it proclaims.

PART THREE — Dilexi te Re-read in the Light of the A2R Triad

The Mahoukou Law — The Phenomenological Law of Interpellation

The Mahoukou Law states that every phenomenon of real or possible existence obeys an irreducible triadic structure: Call – Response – Resonance. This law is not empirical but eidetic: it expresses the conditions of possibility of every phenomenon of interpellation.

It applies to the full spectrum of existence — from interpersonal encounter to ecology, from art to spirituality, from the political to intercultural ethics. Its heuristic power lies in its capacity to reveal the hidden dialogal structure of realities that first seemed opaque or solitary.

Preliminary Remark: A Triad That Structures the Text from Within

What is striking is that Dilexi te does not apply the A2R triad from outside — it lives it from within. The text itself is structured by three movements that correspond exactly to the three moments of the Mahoukou Law. This is not a hermeneutical overlay, but a genuine structural homology.

1. THE CALL — «I Have Loved You» (Rev 3:9)

The Structure of Address

The Call, in the Mahoukou Law, is not information or an injunction: it is an event that names its addressee before they have been able to choose to respond. Dilexi te opens precisely on this act of address. The word of the Apocalypse is addressed to a community without resources, without power, without importance — and it is to this community, precisely to it, that the Lord says: I have loved you. The dissymmetry is total: the one who calls is the Lord of history, the one called is the excluded of society.

The Call in Dilexi te is three-dimensional:

a) God's Call to the Poor

The entire Chapter II unfolds it: from the burning bush (I have heard the cry of my people, Ex 3:7), through the prophets, to the Incarnation. God does not content himself with sending a message: he descends, he makes himself poor. This is a Call that takes the form of radical solidarity — kenosis. In the vocabulary of the Mahoukou Law, this is the strongest Call possible: the one that does not aim from outside but comes to inhabit the very condition of the one it calls.

b) The Call of the Poor to the Church

The text formulates this with troubling precision: the cry of the poor. This cry is not a simple distress signal — it is, in the logic of the exhortation, an authentic Call in the full sense of the Mahoukou Law: it names the Church as its singular addressee, it creates in the Church the necessity of a response, it interpellates the Church in its very vocation. To remain deaf to this cry is, says the Pope, to distance oneself from the very heart of God.

c) The Church's Call to the World

Dilexi te is itself an act of Call: it interpellates societies, economic systems, believers and non-believers alike. This Call is prophetic — it interrupts the ordinary course of indifference and creates a dissymmetry where the comfort of good conscience reigned.

What Makes This Call an Authentic Call

The Mahoukou Law distinguishes the authentic Call from a simple solicitation by its power of interpellation: its capacity to put me under obligation to exist differently. Dilexi te does not solicit — it interpellates. It does not propose — it puts under obligation. The phrase that summarizes this is from §5: We are not in the domain of philanthropy, but in that of Revelation. Here is a Call that does not leave the addressee tranquil in their prior identity.

2. THE RESPONSE — The Committed Freedom and the Exposed Vulnerability

Responding and Not Merely Reacting

The Mahoukou Law is decisive here: the authentic Response commits the one who responds, puts them at stake, reveals what they are or wish to be. It has a structure of vulnerability. Dilexi te is traversed from end to end by this requirement.

The text identifies three forms of non-response — or dialogal obstacles — that are so many retreats from the Call:

- Indifference: tolerating with detachment that millions of people die of hunger, relegating misery to the rank of marginal information after a momentary emotion.
- Ideological contamination: allowing political or economic logics to invade Christian consciousness to the point of justifying the abandonment of the poor.
- Charity without structural conversion: helping the poor without questioning the systems that produce them. This is a partial response, formally present but existentially limited.

The Authentic Responses in the Text

Chapter III of Dilexi te is a gallery of authentic Responses: Francis of Assisi embracing the leper (total exposure, chosen vulnerability), Clare refusing pontifical privileges, Vincent de Paul creating durable structures of solidarity, Oscar Romero giving his life for the peasants of El Salvador. In each of these cases, the structure of vulnerability is evident: responding cost them something, exposed them, revealed what they truly were.

The Response that the text requires of the Church today has two inseparable levels:

- Conversion of the gaze: to cease seeing the poor as a problem to be solved and to begin seeing them as bearers of revelation. This is an interior, existential Response.
- Transformation of structures: denouncing and dismantling the systems that generate injustice. This is a public, prophetic Response that commits collective freedom.

The Refusal to Respond Is Itself a Response

The Mahoukou Law states that the absence of Response does not annul the triad — it defers it. Dilexi te says the same thing with a striking formula: the poor would cry out to the Lord

against us if we remained indifferent to this cry, and a sin would be upon us (§8, cf. Dt 15:9). Silence in the face of the Call is a position — and a culpable one.

3. THE RESONANCE — The Ontologically New Moment

Resonance as the Criterion of Authenticity

The Mahoukou Law stipulates that the Resonance is the criterion of dialogal authenticity: a Call may have been launched, a Response formulated, and yet the triad may remain formally accomplished and really empty if the Resonance does not come to be. This is exactly what Dilexi te names when it says that one cannot pray and offer sacrifices while oppressing the weakest (§17, cf. Amos, Isaiah).

What True Resonance Produces in the Text

Dilexi te describes Resonance in several forms, all characterized by this fundamental trait: something new emerges that did not exist before the encounter.

a) Mutual Transformation

The text affirms that allowing oneself to be evangelized by the poor produces a particular spiritual and human intelligence, indispensable to the Church and to humanity (§102). This knowledge does not pre-exist the encounter — it is its fruit. This is Resonance in its purest form.

b) Extraordinary Renewal

The Pope says explicitly at §7: the priority choice in favor of the poor generates an extraordinary renewal, both in the Church and in society. This renewal is the acoustic sign of Resonance: an amplification that surpasses what each of the two parties could have produced alone.

c) The Figure of Francis of Assisi as a Paradigm of Resonance

The Poverello is described as having changed history. His Call (the radical Gospel), his Response (the embrace of the leper, the chosen poverty), produced a Resonance that has traversed eight centuries and continues to animate the hearts of believers and many non-believers. This is Resonance at its maximum amplitude: it transcends the boundaries of faith.

d) Eschatological Resonance

The phrase from §4 is the most mysterious and beautiful: No gesture of affection, even the smallest, will be forgotten. This is the promise that every authentic Resonance, however tiny, is inscribed in a memory that surpasses history. In the vocabulary of the Mahoukou Law, this is the affirmation that Resonance has an ontological duration — it does not disappear with the initial vibrations.

The Impediment of Resonance

If Resonance is the criterion of authenticity, its absence is the sign of a dialogal failure. Dilexi te identifies its principal cause: self-referentiality (§7). A Church centered on itself — on its

institutions, its prestige, its survival — a Church that responds to the Call of the poor with devices that do not transform it — cannot produce Resonance.

Synthesis — The A2R Triad as a Pastoral Discernment Grid

Moment	In Dilexi te	In the Mahoukou Law
Call	The cry of the poor, the kenosis of Christ, prophetic interpellation	Event that creates a dissymmetry and puts under obligation to exist differently
Response	Conversion of gaze + transformation of structures; the saints as paradigms	Free and vulnerable engagement of the subject; refusal is also a response
Resonance	Renewal of the Church, mutual evangelization, new wisdom, historical transformation	Ontologically new moment that surpasses the sum of the Call and the Response

The Mahoukou Law allows us to understand why Dilexi te is more than a social or ethical text: it is a dialogal and ontological text. It does not ask the Church to do more for the poor — it says that the authentic encounter with the poor transforms the Church itself, produces in it something that can come from nowhere else. This is Resonance as the place of grace.

PART FOUR — The Conditions of a True Response from the Church

Preliminary Remark: The Question of the Truth of the Response

The distinction is crucial between a formally present Response (the Church says it responds, it produces gestures, discourses, assistance structures) and a true Response (a Response that genuinely commits the one who responds, transforms them, makes Resonance possible). The Mahoukou Law allows us to name what lies between the two: the dialogal obstacle — when the triad is formally accomplished but really empty.

I. The Phenomenological Conditions

1. Receiving the Call as Call, and Not as Information

The first condition is the most fundamental and the most difficult: the Call must be received as Call — as an event that aims at me, in my irreplaceable singularity — and not as one piece of data among others in the flow of world information. Our societies and our Churches are saturated with information about poverty. The primary condition is therefore a conversion of receptivity: learning to receive the face of the poor, their cry, their presence, as a singular address that names me. This requires physical proximity — what Dilexi te calls, in the line of Francis of Assisi and Charles de Foucauld, making oneself near, making oneself equal, even making oneself lesser.

2. Accepting the Initial Dissymmetry of the Call

The Call creates a dissymmetry: it comes from someone or something that is not me, that precedes me, that surprises me. An essential condition of the true Response is to accept this dissymmetry rather than absorbing it. The Church, like any institution, has a natural temptation to master the Call — to reformulate it in its own categories, to domesticate it within its own programs. The true Response requires, on the contrary, allowing the Call to remain dissymmetric.

II. The Ecclesial Conditions

3. Moving from a Church for the Poor to a Church with and of the Poor

This is the most demanding structural condition posed by *Dilexi te*. A Church for the poor can remain within the logic of beneficence: it gives, assists, serves — without allowing itself to be transformed. A Church with the poor begins to enter the logic of Resonance: it walks alongside, shares the condition, learns. A Church of the poor means that the poor are at the center, not at the periphery — that they are not the beneficiaries of ecclesial ministry but active subjects of the life of the Church.

4. Coherence as a Condition of Credibility

A Response that does not commit the one who responds, that does not put them at stake, is not yet a true Response. For the institutional Church, this raises the question of coherence between word and life. *Dilexi te* invokes Francis of Assisi not as a decorative figure but as a paradigm of coherence: he chose to live what he preached, with a radicality that made his word irresistible.

5. Leaving Self-Referentiality

Dilexi te names self-referentiality as the principal obstacle to Resonance (§7). A Church that looks at itself — that measures its action by the yardstick of its own survival, influence, and social visibility — cannot truly hear the Call of the other.

III. The Spiritual Conditions

6. Contemplation as the Condition of Receiving the Call

One can hear a Call only if one is inwardly available to be interpellated. This availability is not natural — it is cultivated, worked at, and has a name in the Christian tradition: contemplation. Contemplating the face of the poor Christ — in the manger, in the flight to Egypt, on the cross — is preparing in oneself the receptivity to the Call. Contemplation is not a spiritual luxury reserved for contemplatives — it is the condition of the duration and depth of every Response.

7. The Conversion of the Gaze — Learning to See

Seeing in the poor not a problem, not an assisted person, not a social category, but a face — singular, irreplaceable, bearing an absolute dignity and a word I have not yet heard. This conversion is not decreed. It comes about through frequentation — through time spent with the poor, not to help them but simply to be there, to listen, to receive.

8. Consented Vulnerability

Allowing oneself to be touched by the poor — not managing their situation but being moved, being shaken, allowing one's own existence to be questioned by theirs — is a form of vulnerability that our institutional structures tend to protect against. The condition of the true Response is therefore to accept being transformed by the Call — not to seek to control its effects on oneself.

9. Memory as a Condition of Fidelity

Dilexi te summons two millennia of witnesses — not to reassure oneself within a comfortable tradition, but to nourish fidelity to the Call over time. In the logic of the Mahoukou Law, the memory of past Resonances is what prepares receptivity to present Calls. The memory of authentic Resonances forms in us the disposition to new Resonance.

Synthesis — The Nine Conditions in Three Levels

Level	Condition	What It Concretely Requires
Phenomenological	1. Receive the Call as Call	Physical proximity; leaving abstraction
Phenomenological	2. Accept the dissymmetry	Not domesticating the Call in one's own categories
Ecclesial	3. Move to the Church with and of the poor	Giving the poor real authority in the Church
Ecclesial	4. Coherence between word and life	Aligning institutional style with the proclaimed Response
Ecclesial	5. Leave self-referentiality	Defining oneself by the Call received, not the institution managed
Spiritual	6. Contemplation	Nurturing receptivity to the Call in the interior life
Spiritual	7. Conversion of the gaze	Learning to see the singular face, not the category
Spiritual	8. Consented vulnerability	Accepting to be transformed by what one responds to
Spiritual	9. Memory	Nourishing oneself on past Resonances to be disposed toward those to come

A Final Question — The Call of the Other or of God Himself?

The question formulated with precision — the Call of the other or of God himself — poses an 'or' that may not be one. Dilexi te — like all the prophetic tradition it invokes — affirms that these two Calls are not simply parallel: they are co-extensive. The Call of the poor is the Call of God, not metaphorically but ontologically: Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me (Mt 25:40).

In the framework of the Mahoukou Law, this means something vertiginous: the Resonance produced by the authentic encounter with the poor is not merely a human

and social transformation — it is a place where God himself enters into vibration with human existence. The Resonance, at its ultimate depth, is theological.

PART FIVE — Extensions, Prolongations, Dialogues — and Their Limits

I. Ecumenical Christian Dialogue — The Common House to Be Rebuilt

The Natural Opening

Dilexi te is, by its very structure, an ecumenically open text. It does not rely on disputed doctrinal definitions between Christian confessions. It is anchored in shared Scripture — the Exodus, the prophets, the Gospels, Paul — and in a tradition of charity that crosses all Churches. The preferential option for the poor is not a Catholic property: it is at the heart of the social Protestant tradition since Walter Rauschenbusch, of Black American theology since Martin Luther King, of the Orthodox tradition since John Chrysostom.

In the logic of the Mahoukou Law, one could even say that the Call of the poor is the most authentic ecumenical terrain possible — because it precedes and transcends confessional divisions. When Christians of different traditions respond together to the same Call, a Resonance is produced that surpasses what each could have produced alone.

The Real Obstacles

Three obstacles exist. The first is institutional: the Christian Churches have histories of rivalry, mistrust, and pastoral competition. The second is theological: charity without explicit proclamation of the Gospel — is it sufficient? Evangelical and Pentecostal Churches often answer no. The third is ecclesiological: can one act together without prior doctrinal communion?

The fundamental limit is that Dilexi te, despite its openness of tone, remains a Roman Catholic text in its structure of authority. True ecumenical dialogue would require co-elaboration of the text, not merely cordial reception by others.

II. Interreligious Dialogue — Fertile and Mined Terrain

The Call of the Poor as a Trans-Religious Universal

Every great religious tradition carries within it a constitutive relationship with the poor and the excluded. In the Islamic tradition, zakat — the legal almsgiving — is one of the five pillars of Islam: it is not optional, it is structural. In the Jewish tradition, tzedakah — often translated as charity but literally meaning justice — is an obligation of justice rooted in the Torah. The tikkun olam — the repair of the world — is a cosmic and communal vocation that resonates with what Dilexi te calls the transformation of structures. In Buddhist traditions, karuna — compassion — is one of the cardinal virtues of the bodhisattva. In African and indigenous traditions, communal solidarity — ubuntu in southern Africa: I am because we are — constitutes a pre-theoretical form of Resonance.

The Possible Resonance — and Its Conditions

In the logic of the Mahoukou Law, an interreligious dialogue centered on the common response to the Call of the poor could produce a trans-religious Resonance — something new that belongs to no particular tradition but that emerges from their encounter in the common act.

The condition of this Resonance is, however, demanding: each tradition must respond from its own depth — not by diluting its convictions to find the lowest common denominator, but by deepening them to the point of finding, in their foundation, a resonance with the depth of the other. True interreligious dialogue is not a dialogue of surfaces — it is a dialogue of roots.

Obstacles and Limits

The first obstacle is theological and irreducible: the foundations of the obligation toward the poor are different according to traditions. In Christianity, Christ's identification with the poor (Mt 25) gives the encounter with them a unique sacramental dimension. In Islam, zakat is a right of the poor upon the rich, not an encounter with the divine in the face of the poor. In Buddhism, compassion is anchored in the recognition of universal suffering and interdependence.

The second obstacle is historical and political: in many contexts, religions are participants in the structures of inequality they claim to combat. The credibility of interreligious dialogue on poverty passes through a repentance and critical memory that not all traditions have yet fully accomplished.

The solidarity in practice can be shared, but the meaning of this solidarity remains irreducibly proper to each tradition. Authentic interreligious Resonance is not unison — it is polyphony.

III. Extensions into Other Fields

Ecology and Poverty — The Call of the Earth

Dilexi te is centered on the humanly poor. But it leaves ajar a door that Laudato si' and Laudate Deum had pushed further: the poor and the earth suffer from the same system. The ecological crisis is a crisis of justice — its first victims are the poorest, those who lack the means to flee climatic catastrophes.

In the logic of the Mahoukou Law, the earth itself could be heard as an emitter of a Call — not metaphorically but phenomenologically: deforestation, the disappearance of species, rising waters are events that interrupt the ordinary course of existence and create a dissymmetry. A natural extension of Dilexi te would be an integrated reflection in which the option for the poor and the option for the earth are recognized as two dimensions of the same Call.

Artificial Intelligence and New Forms of Exclusion

Dilexi te does not speak of artificial intelligence. This is perhaps the most notable lacuna for a text published in 2025. The ongoing transformations of the labor market, the concentration of technological power in the hands of a few actors, the algorithmic biases that reproduce and amplify existing discriminations, the digital divide that creates new forms of exclusion — all of this constitutes a new Call.

An urgent extension would be a theology of digital poverty — which would pose the question: who are the excluded from the new economies of attention, data, and automation?

The Spiritual Poverty of the Rich

Dilexi te is centered on the materially poor. But it opens, discreetly, another question: that of the poverty of the rich — their spiritual poverty, their relational impoverishment, their incapacity to receive the gift and to let themselves be touched. In the logic of the Mahoukou Law, this poverty may be the most serious: it is a deafness to the Call, an impermeability to Resonance.

An important pastoral extension would be to take seriously that the Church is also sent toward the rich — not to make them feel guilty but to offer them what only the encounter with the poor can give: a rediscovered humanity, a recognized vulnerability, an opening to Resonance.

IV. The Internal Limits of the Text Itself

A Text Still Too Clerical in Its Structure of Authority

Dilexi te speaks for the poor with great eloquence. But it was written without them — in the libraries of the Vatican, by clerics and theologians. This tension between the content of the message and the form of its production is real. It illustrates precisely the limit that the Mahoukou Law allows us to name: the text proclaims the necessity of allowing oneself to be evangelized by the poor, but its own genesis does not pass through this evangelization. It remains, structurally, a text about the poor more than a text with them.

An Unresolved Tension between Charity and Politics

The text denounces structures of injustice but remains cautious about concrete political remedies. This is both a wisdom — the Church is not called to endorse partisan programs — and a limit: by naming the problem without naming the precise causes, the text risks remaining in a prophetic generality that does not truly engage.

The Question of the Relationship between Individual Charity and Social Justice

Dilexi te attempts to hold both together — the personal gesture of love and the transformation of systems — but the tension between the two is not fully resolved. The Catholic tradition has oscillated for centuries between a priority given to personal charity and a priority given to structural justice. This text does not resolve the question — it affirms the necessity of both, which is right, but leaves open the question of the concrete articulation.

Final Synthesis — What the Mahoukou Law Reveals in the Last Instance

If one takes seriously the triadic structure of the Mahoukou Law, one can formulate thus the fundamental limit of Dilexi te and the opening it calls for:

The text is a remarkable Call. It formulates with force, with depth, with a beautiful doctrinal continuity, what the Church must hear and say. But a Call, however powerful, does not by itself produce the Response — and even less the Resonance.

The true Response remains to be built — in every community, in every relationship, in every concrete decision. And the Resonance — this ontologically new moment where something emerges that did not exist — cannot be programmed or guaranteed. It comes to be, or it does not come to be. It is, in the last instance, of the register of grace.

And this is perhaps the most profound and most fruitful limit of every magisterial text, however excellent: it can prepare the conditions, name the Call, orient the Response — but the Resonance escapes every institution. It arises where two freedoms — that of the poor and that of the one who responds — truly encounter each other, in mutual vulnerability and trust.

PART SIX — Toward a Mysticism of Personal Commitment before God and before Humanity

What follows is not an exterior extension of the text — it is its depth, finally named. It means moving from the how to the ultimate why, from pastoral action to the source, from action to being. No longer what the Church must do, but what it is called to become — and what every believer is called to become — through the grace of the Call received and the Response truly given.

A Mysticism of Face-to-Face

One must begin with the title itself, and linger there a moment longer than one ordinarily does. I have loved you — these three words are not first a consolation addressed to the poor, nor a programmatic motto for the Church. They are the words of a revelation of structure: they say something about the way God exists in relation to the creature. God does not love in general. He loves in particular — he says you, in your irreplaceable singularity, in your precise destitution, in your history that no one else has lived.

It is here that the Mahoukou Law and theology meet in their deepest common ground: the Call, by definition, is addressed. It names. It creates a dissymmetry that is precisely the form of love: I precede you, I aim at you, I reach you before you have been able to prepare to be reached. In the language of Christian mysticism, this is what Saint John of the Cross called divine prevenience — the prevenient grace that precedes. And what Meister Eckhart formulated thus: God loves the soul not because it is good, but because he is good.

The primary theological axis of *Dilexi te* is therefore this: the love of God is structurally dissymmetric, and this dissymmetry is the condition of possibility of every true encounter.

Kenosis as the Paradigm of Every Authentic Response

The second chapter of the exhortation unfolds a christology of poverty that is in reality a theology of kenosis — that Pauline term (Phil 2:7) that designates the movement by which the Son empties himself of his power to enter the human condition. Kenosis is not a suffered humiliation — it is a choice of love that takes the form of consented vulnerability. God, in

making himself poor, does not cease to be God — but he chooses to be God differently, in a way that makes encounter possible. For one truly encounters only what can be reached, wounded, touched. An invulnerable God would be a solitary God. Kenosis is the gesture by which God makes himself encounterable.

Here opens the deep mystical axis: every true Response to the Call of the poor has a kenotic structure. It requires from the one who responds a movement analogous to that of the Son — a consent to strip away, to make oneself vulnerable, to enter the condition of the other not from outside but from within. This is what Francis of Assisi accomplished with the leper, what Charles de Foucauld accomplished in the Tuareg desert, what Oscar Romero accomplished by speaking for the peasants of El Salvador until his death.

This is not moral heroism. It is christological participation — an entry into the very movement of the Son who, though rich, became poor so that we might be enriched through his poverty (2 Cor 8:9). The mysticism of commitment that *Dilexi te* proposes is therefore not a mysticism of performance or efficacy. It is a mysticism of conformation to the kenotic Christ — measured not by what one accomplishes but by what one consents to renounce so that encounter becomes possible.

The Face of the Poor as a Theophanic Site

There is in *Dilexi te* an affirmation that, taken seriously in all its theological density, is properly vertiginous: contact with those who have neither power nor greatness is a fundamental way of encountering the Lord of history (§5). This is not a pious metaphor. It is an onto-theological affirmation: the face of the poor is a place where God makes himself present in a way irreducible to any other presence. Not that the poor person is God — but that God has chosen the poor person as the privileged site of his manifestation in history.

In the Christian mystical tradition, this is called a theophany — a manifestation of the divine in the finite, in the sensible, in what is there. The great mystical tradition has identified several theophanic sites: Scripture, the sacraments, creation. *Dilexi te* — in the continuity of the great prophets and the Catholic social tradition — affirms a fourth, perhaps the most demanding: the face of the poor.

It is here that the mysticism of commitment is radically distinguished from every ethics of altruism or anthropology of solidarity: it is not motivated by the value of the other but by the presence of God in the other. This shift is decisive. It transforms commitment from a moral duty into an act of adoration — what the tradition called *caritas*, distinct from all philanthropy.

Resonance as Sanctifying Grace

If the Call is theophanic and the Response is kenotic, the Resonance — in the Mahoukou Law — is this ontologically new moment that emerges from their encounter. In the theological register, this moment has a name: it is sanctifying grace, or more precisely, what the mystics called *transformatio* — the transformation of the one who responds by the Call to which they truly respond.

Dilexi te says at §7: the choice in favor of the poor generates an extraordinary renewal. But this renewal is not first sociological or ecclesial — it is personal and ontological. The one who truly responds to the Call of the poor does not emerge unchanged from this encounter. They are transformed — not because they have accomplished a good action, but because they have been traversed by a movement that is the very movement of God in history.

Commitment to the poor is therefore not, in this perspective, an application of the Gospel — it is a path of sanctification.

Before God and before Humanity — The Trinitarian Structure of Commitment

The formula before God and before humanity is not rhetorical. It designates a precise theological structure — that of the double relation that constitutes the Christian subject. The believing subject exists in a double face-to-face: facing God — creature before the Creator, loved before loving, called before responding. And facing humanity — brother, neighbor, witness. These two face-to-face encounters are not parallel or successive. They are simultaneous and constitutive of one another.

This double relation has a trinitarian structure that the text does not articulate explicitly but that underlies it entirely:

The Father is the one who Calls — from the origin, from the burning bush, from creation itself. He is the dissymmetric source of every Call, the one whose word creates before being heard.

The Son is the one who Responds — kenotically, in complete vulnerability, to the very end. He is the paradigm of every true Response: he responded to the Father's Call by entering the condition of the called, by making himself one of them, by dying their death.

The Spirit is the Resonance — this ontologically new moment that emerges from the encounter between the Father's Call and the Son's Response, and that unfolds in history as transformation, as renewal, as new life. What the Mahoukou Law calls Resonance, trinitarian theology calls *koinonia* — the communion that produces something surpassing the sum of its terms.

The A2R triad is theologically grounded: it reflects the very movement of trinitarian life unfolding in human history.

A Non-Dualist Mysticism — Against the Separation of the Contemplative and the Active

The most important theological axis that Dilexi te offers — and that the re-reading through the Mahoukou Law allows us to formulate clearly — is perhaps this: commitment to the poor is not the alternative to contemplation, it is its verification.

The great Christian mystical tradition has often been tempted by a dualism: on one side the contemplative life, turned toward God in silence and prayer; on the other the active life, turned toward the world in commitment and service. This dualism produced separate institutions, separate spiritualities, separate theologies. Dilexi te refuses it radically — in the line of John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola. Contemplation without commitment becomes a

flight from the real — a God without a face, a prayer without incarnation. Commitment without contemplation becomes an activism without a source — an action that exhausts itself because it does not nourish itself.

The mysticism that *Dilexi te* proposes is a mysticism of unity: the love of God and the love of neighbor are not two commandments but one, lived in two mutually nourishing modalities. Praying and committing are not two activities between which one divides one's time — they are two breaths of one and the same theological life.

In this perspective, the question that *Dilexi te* poses to every believer is not: Are you doing enough for the poor? — this is a moral question, and it remains at the surface. The theological and mystical question is deeper:

Are you allowing the poor to reveal to you who you are before God? For it is there that everything is at stake. It is there that commitment ceases to be a duty and becomes a vocation. It is there that the Response ceases to be a performance and becomes a participation in the kenotic movement of the Son. It is there that Resonance comes — not as the result of an effort but as the gift of grace.

Conclusion — The Option for the Poor as a Path of Deification

The Eastern theological tradition has a word to designate the purpose of Christian life: theosis — deification, the fact of becoming by grace what God is by nature. This tradition has always affirmed that deification passes through kenosis — that one rises toward God only by consenting to descend, to empty oneself, to make oneself poor.

Dilexi te — re-read in the light of the Mahoukou Law and its three moments — proposes in fine a path of deification that passes through the face of the poor. Not the poor as a pretext or as a means, but the poor as a theophanic and transforming site where something of the eternal kenosis of the Son is played out, in flesh and in history.

The Call that comes from the poor is the Call of the Father. The true Response we give is a participation in the Response of the Son. The Resonance that comes to be is the work of the Spirit.

And in this movement — if we consent to traverse it truly, in complete vulnerability, to the very end — we become, imperceptibly, what we were called to be since before the world existed: beings capable of loving in the manner of God.

This is the mysticism of commitment that *Dilexi te* carries in its heart — and that the Mahoukou Law allows us to formulate in its most profound structure: not doing for the poor, but being transformed by them, until something of the life of God shines through us in the world.

*Document elaborated from the official Vatican text and re-read in the light of the Mahoukou Law
(Triad A2R: Call – Response – Resonance).
Reference: Apostolic Exhortation Dilexi Te, Pope Leo XIV, October 4, 2025.*

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