

IN HIS DAYS JUSTICE WILL FLOURISH

PSALM 71(72)

A six-part reflection series inspired by the readings of Advent and Christmas Year A and “Dilexi Te”, Pope Leo XIV’s Apostolic Exhortation to all Christians on ‘Love for the Poor’.

ADVENT WEEK TWO



From The Scriptures

On him the spirit of the Lord rests,
a spirit of wisdom and insight,
a spirit of counsel and power,
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord ...
He does not judge by appearances,
he gives no verdict on hearsay,
but judges the wretched with integrity,
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of the land. *Isaiah 11:2-4*

In his days justice shall flourish and peace till the moon fails ...
For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.
He will have pity on the weak and save the lives of the poor.

Psalms 71(72):7,12-13

Gospel

**John the Baptist appeared ... this was his message:
'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'**

Matthew 3:1-2

From Pope Leo and other Wise Teachers

In hearing the cry of the poor, we are asked to enter into the heart of God, who is always concerned for the needs of his children, especially those in greatest need. If we remain unresponsive to that cry, the poor might well cry out to the Lord against us, and we would incur guilt (cf. Deut 15:9) and turn away from the very heart of God.

Pope Leo XIV on 'Love for the Poor' in "Dilexi Te", 8

... Caught up as we are with our own needs, the sight of a person who is suffering disturbs us. It makes us uneasy, since we have no time to waste on other people's

problems. These are symptoms of an unhealthy society. A society that seeks prosperity but turns its back on suffering.

Pope Leo XIV on 'Love for the Poor' in "Dilexi Te", 107

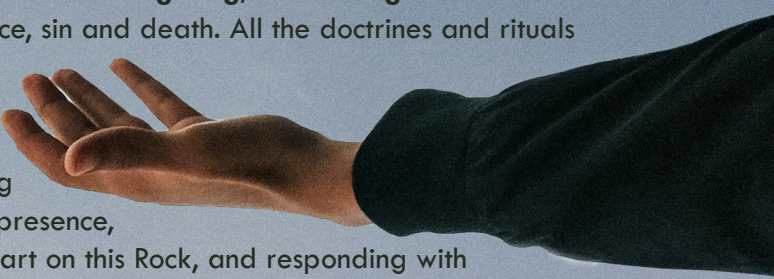
By her very nature the Church is in solidarity with the poor, the excluded, the marginalised and all those considered the outcasts of society.

Pope Leo XIV on 'Love for the Poor' in "Dilexi Te", 111

We fail to remember that it can be the highest form of justice to practise mercy. Until, that is, one day we need both ourselves. Until we examine our own lives and the lives of those we love, and find them bathed in mercy where many would have said justice was required. Then we understand God a little better. Then we understand both mercy and justice in a different way.

Joan Chittester, *Songs of the Heart*, 17

God surrounds us with forgiving, abounding kindness in the midst of our darkness, injustice, sin and death. All the doctrines and rituals aim to unpack this basic wonder. Faith means entrusting yourself to this presence, leaning your heart on this Rock, and responding with your life's energies.



Elizabeth Johnson, 'Passing on the Faith' in *Abounding in Kindness*

For Thinking and Praying

- **What is standing out for you from these readings and insights of 'fellow travellers'?**
- **What new intention and hope might you take with you?**

For Peace and Justice

Name one person who is wise, acts with integrity and responds with compassion to those who may be struggling or helpless. Follow this person's example whenever you can.

Prayer

Companion of people pushed to the edge,
let me stand with the least and the lost.
I will reach out my hand and welcome them.

Let me become one with these brothers and sisters.
I will approach each person as my teacher.

Let me accept their empty, outstretched arms.
I will receive the bounty of their inherent goodness.

Let me come vulnerably close to their distress.
I will try to comprehend the reality of their rejection.

Let me know the breadth of their daily poverty.
I will work for justice that tends to their human needs.

Let me enter their loneliness and isolation.
I will activate my empathy with compassionate presence.

Let me acknowledge that my privileged position
is part of the reason they live on the margins.
I will do my part so all may live in one large circle.

Companion of people pushed to the edge,
you walk among the ones easily forgotten,
those who are rejected, dismissed and violated.
Your heart aches for how they are treated
and goes to stand with them on the far borders. Amen

Adapted: Joyce Rupp, *Prayers of Boundless Compassion*, 45



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