

## **New Papal Encyclical Resource.**

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2024-10/dilexit-nos-pope-francis-fourth-encyclical-world-lost-its-heart.html>

### **Dilexit nos': Pope to publish encyclical on Sacred Heart of Jesus**

On Thursday October 24<sup>th</sup> next, Pope Francis will publish a new encyclical focusing on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in the context of a world "which seems to have lost its heart."

By Salvatore Cernuzio

"Dilexit nos" (He Loved Us) will be Pope Francis' fourth encyclical, and it comes at a time of profound global challenges.

The world today is scarred by war, social and economic imbalances, rampant consumerism, and technologies that threaten to undermine human nature.

With this document, Pope Francis will call for a change of perspective, urging humanity to rediscover what is most essential: the heart.

### **The Pope's Announcement.**

The full title of the encyclical, "Dilexit Nos - Encyclical Letter on the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ," was confirmed today by the Vatican Press Office, with its release set for October 24.

The Pope had previously shared his intent to publish the document at his June 5 general audience in St. Peter's Square, during the month traditionally dedicated to the Sacred Heart.

At the time, Pope Francis expressed his hope that the text would invite reflection on aspects of the Lord's love that could illuminate the path of ecclesial renewal and resonate meaningfully with "a world that seems to have lost its heart."

He also noted that the encyclical would incorporate reflections from previous magisterial teachings and the rich tradition of Scripture, reintroducing the Church to this spiritually profound devotion.

### **The 1673 Apparitions.**

The encyclical's release coincides with ongoing celebrations commemorating the 350th anniversary of the first appearance of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque in 1673.

On December 27 of that year, Jesus appeared to the young 26-year-old French Visitation nun, entrusting her with the mission of spreading His love, particularly toward sinners. These apparitions, which took place at the convent of Paray-le-Monial in Burgundy, continued for 17 years.

Christ showed His heart surrounded by flames and encircled by a crown of thorns—symbolizing the wounds inflicted by human sin. He requested that the Friday following the Feast of Corpus Christi be dedicated to the Sacred Heart. Though initially misunderstood by many, including her fellow nuns, St. Margaret Mary remained steadfast in her mission to reveal Christ's love to the world.

### **Pope Pius XII's Haurietis Aquas.**

In 1956, Pope Pius XII issued *Haurietis Aquas*, an encyclical aimed at reviving the devotion during a time when it was in decline. Pope Pius emphasized the devotion's importance for the Church's needs and its potential as a “banner of salvation” for the modern world.

Pope Benedict XVI, in a letter commemorating the 50th anniversary of *Haurietis Aquas*, reinforced this sentiment, saying, “This mystery of God's love for us is not only the content of devotion to the Heart of Jesus; it is also at the heart of all true Christian spirituality.”

### **Pope Francis' Devotion.**

Pope Francis has consistently demonstrated a deep devotion to the Sacred Heart, often relating it to the priestly mission. In 2016, he concluded the Jubilee of Priests on the Solemnity of the Sacred Heart, urging priests to orient their hearts like the Good Shepherd towards the lost and the distant.

During the same Jubilee, in his first Meditations on Mercy, Francis recommended that bishops and priests revisit Haurietis Aquas, noting that “the heart of Christ is the centre of mercy. This is the nature of mercy: it gets its hands dirty, it touches, it engages, and it involves itself with others.”

### **The Pope's Fourth Encyclical.**

Dilexit nos will be Pope Francis' fourth encyclical, following Lumen fidei (June 29, 2013), co-written with Benedict XVI; Laudato si' (May 24, 2015), on the environmental crisis and the need for care for creation; and Fratelli tutti (October 3, 2020), which calls for global fraternity and social friendship in a world fractured by a pandemic and conflicts, including wars fought in the name of God.

Dilexit nos will be presented at the Vatican Press Office on October 24 by Monsignor Bruno Forte, theologian, and Archbishop of Chieti-Vasto, alongside Sister Antonella Fraccaro, General Superior of the Disciples of the Gospel.