

Material for World Day of the Poor 2025 webinar on Dilexi Te
Tuesday 18 November 2025

Discernment Process for Breakout Rooms

One person from each room is asked to report back to the wider group.

In your breakout room, use the paragraph that corresponds to your room number.

- Each person reads the paragraph with a short time to reflect on it in relation to the question.
- Each person takes a turn to offer a short response, with no interruptions.
- What did you notice in what others said? Each person now takes a turn to repeat a phrase or sentence that someone else offered.
- The group agrees on what will be reported back to the wider group.

Breakout One

Question for All Groups: *What does this paragraph from Dilexi Te reveal about what poverty is in our world today?*

ROOM ONE

9. The condition of the poor is a cry that, throughout human history, constantly challenges our lives, societies, political and economic systems, and, not least, the Church. On the wounded faces of the poor, we see the suffering of the innocent and, therefore, the suffering of Christ himself. At the same time, we should perhaps speak more correctly of the many faces of the poor and of poverty, since it is a multifaceted phenomenon. In fact, there are many forms of poverty: the poverty of those who lack material means of subsistence, the poverty of those who are socially marginalized and lack the means to give voice to their dignity and abilities, moral and spiritual poverty, cultural poverty, the poverty of those who find themselves in a condition of personal or social weakness or fragility, the poverty of those who have no rights, no space, no freedom.

ROOM TWO

10. In this sense, it can be said that the commitment to the poor and to removing the social and structural causes of poverty has gained importance in recent decades, but it remains insufficient. This is also the case because our societies often favor criteria for orienting life and politics that are marked by numerous inequalities. As a result, the old forms of poverty that we have become aware of and are trying to combat are being joined by new ones, sometimes more subtle and dangerous. From this point of view, it is to be welcomed that the United Nations has made the eradication of poverty one of its Millennium Goals.

ROOM THREE

12. We must not let our guard down when it comes to poverty. We should be particularly concerned about the serious conditions in which many people find themselves due to lack of food and water. In wealthy countries too, the growing numbers of the poor are equally a source of concern. In Europe, more and more families find themselves unable to make it to the end of the month. In general, we are witnessing an increase in different kinds of poverty, which is no longer a single, uniform reality but now involves multiple forms of economic and social impoverishment, reflecting the spread of inequality even in largely affluent contexts.

Breakout One (contd)

Question for All Groups: *What does this paragraph from Dilexi Te reveal about what poverty is in our world today?*

ROOM FOUR

13. Looking beyond the data — which is sometimes “interpreted” to convince us that the situation of the poor is not so serious — the overall reality is quite evident: “Some economic rules have proved effective for growth, but not for integral human development. Wealth has increased, but together with inequality, with the result that ‘new forms of poverty are emerging.’ The claim that the modern world has reduced poverty is made by measuring poverty with criteria from the past that do not correspond to present-day realities. In other times, for example, lack of access to electric energy was not considered a sign of poverty, nor was it a source of hardship. Poverty must always be understood and gauged in the context of the actual opportunities available in each concrete historical period.” [\[10\]](#) Looking beyond specific situations and contexts, however, a 1984 document of the European Community declared that “‘the poor’ shall be taken to mean persons, families and groups of persons whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member States in which they live.” [\[11\]](#) Yet if we acknowledge that all human beings have the same dignity, independent of their place of birth, the immense differences existing between countries and regions must not be ignored.

ROOM FIVE

14. The poor are not there by chance or by blind and cruel fate. Nor, for most of them, is poverty a choice. Yet, there are those who still presume to make this claim, thus revealing their own blindness and cruelty. Of course, among the poor there are also those who do not want to work, perhaps because their ancestors, who worked all their lives, died poor. However, there are so many others — men and women — who nonetheless work from dawn to dusk, perhaps collecting scraps or the like, even though they know that their hard work will only help them to scrape by, but never really improve their lives. Nor can it be said that most of the poor are such because they do not “deserve” otherwise, as maintained by that specious view of meritocracy that sees only the successful as “deserving.”

ROOM SIX

105. The dominant culture at the beginning of this millennium would have us abandon the poor to their fate and consider them unworthy of attention, much less our respect. [Pope Francis](#), in his Encyclical [Fratelli Tutti](#), challenged us to reflect on the parable of the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk* 10:25-37), which presents the different reactions of those confronted by the sight of a wounded man lying on the road. Only the Good Samaritan stops and cares for him. [Pope Francis](#) went on to ask each of us: “Which of these persons do you identify with? This question, blunt as it is, is direct and incisive. Which of these characters do you resemble? We need to acknowledge that we are constantly tempted to ignore others, especially the weak. Let us admit that, for all the progress we have made, we are still ‘illiterate’ when it comes to accompanying, caring for and supporting the most frail and vulnerable members of our developed societies. We have become accustomed to looking the other way, passing by, and ignoring situations until they affect us directly.” [\[115\]](#)

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Breakout Two

Question for All Groups: *Inspired by this paragraph from Dilexi Te, what are we called to do to address and end poverty?*

ROOM ONE

11. A concrete commitment to the poor must also be accompanied by a change in mentality that can have an impact at the cultural level. In fact, the illusion of happiness derived from a comfortable life pushes many people towards a vision of life centered on the accumulation of wealth and social success at all costs, even at the expense of others and by taking advantage of unjust social ideals and political economic systems that favor the strongest. Thus, in a world where the poor are increasingly numerous, we paradoxically see the growth of a wealthy elite, living in a bubble of comfort and luxury, almost in another world compared to ordinary people. This means that a culture still persists — sometimes well disguised — that discards others without even realizing it and tolerates with indifference that millions of people die of hunger or survive in conditions unfit for human beings. A few years ago, the photo of a lifeless child lying on a Mediterranean beach caused an uproar; unfortunately, apart from some momentary outcry, similar events are becoming increasingly irrelevant and seen as marginal news items.

ROOM TWO

29. In the early Christian community, acts of charity were performed on the basis not of preliminary studies or advance planning, but directly following Jesus' example as presented in the Gospel. The Letter of James deals at length with the problem of relations between rich and poor, and asks the faithful two questions in order to examine the authenticity of their faith: "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if you say you have faith but do not have works? Can faith save you? If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill,' and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that? So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead" (2:14-17).

ROOM THREE

41. Among the Eastern Fathers, perhaps the most ardent preacher on social justice was Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople from the late 300s to the early 400s. In his homilies, he exhorted the faithful to recognize Christ in the needy: "Do you wish to honor the body of Christ? Do not allow it to be despised in its members, that is, in the poor, who have no clothes to cover themselves. Do not honor Christ's body here in church with silk fabrics, while outside you neglect it when it suffers from cold and nakedness... [The body of Christ on the altar] does not need cloaks, but pure souls; while the one outside needs much care. Let us therefore learn to think of and honor Christ as he wishes. For the most pleasing honor we can give to the one we want to venerate is that of doing what he himself desires, not what we devise... So you too, give him the honor he has commanded, and let the poor benefit from your riches. God does not need golden vessels, but golden souls." [30] Affirming with crystal clarity that, if the faithful do not encounter Christ in the poor who stand at the door, they will not be able to worship him even at the altar, he continues: "What advantage does Christ gain if the sacrificial table is laden with golden vessels, while he himself dies of hunger in the person of the poor? Feed the hungry first, and only afterward adorn the altar with what remains." [31] 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.

Breakout Two (contd)

Question for All Groups: *Inspired by this paragraph from Dilexi Te, what are we called to do to address and end poverty?*

ROOM FOUR

86. The Pastoral Constitution [*Gaudium et Spes*](#), building on the teachings of the Church Fathers, forcefully reaffirms the universal destination of earthly goods and the social function of property that derives from it. The Constitution states that “God destined the earth and all it contains for all people and nations so that all created things would be shared fairly by all humankind under the guidance of justice tempered by charity... In their use of things people should regard the external goods they lawfully possess as not just their own but common to others as well, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as themselves. Therefore, everyone has the right to possess a sufficient amount of the earth’s goods for themselves and their family... Persons in extreme necessity are entitled to take what they need from the riches of others... By its nature, private property has a social dimension that is based on the law of the common destination of earthly goods. Whenever the social aspect is forgotten, ownership can often become the object of greed and a source of serious disorder.” [82] This conviction was reiterated by Saint [Paul VI](#) in his Encyclical [*Populorum Progressio*](#). There we read that no one can feel authorized to “appropriate surplus goods solely for his [or her] own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life.” [83] In his address to the United Nations, Pope [Paul VI](#) spoke as the advocate of poor peoples [84] and urged the international community to build a world of solidarity.

ROOM FIVE

92. We must continue, then, to denounce the “dictatorship of an economy that kills,” and to recognize that “while the earnings of a minority are growing exponentially, so too is the gap separating the majority from the prosperity enjoyed by those happy few. This imbalance is the result of ideologies that defend the absolute autonomy of the marketplace and financial speculation. Consequently, they reject the right of states, charged with vigilance for the common good, to exercise any form of control. A new tyranny is being born, invisible and often virtual, which unilaterally and relentlessly imposes its own laws and rules.” [94] There is no shortage of theories attempting to justify the present state of affairs or to explain that economic thinking requires us to wait for invisible market forces to resolve everything. Nevertheless, the dignity of every human person must be respected today, not tomorrow, and the extreme poverty of all those to whom this dignity is denied should constantly weigh upon our consciences.

ROOM SIX

97. All the members of the People of God have a duty to make their voices heard, albeit in different ways, in order to point out and denounce such structural issues, even at the cost of appearing foolish or naïve. Unjust structures need to be recognized and eradicated by the force of good, by changing mindsets but also, with the help of science and technology, by developing effective policies for societal change. It must never be forgotten that the Gospel message has to do not only with an individual’s personal relationship with the Lord, but also with something greater: “the Kingdom of God (cf. Lk 4:43); it is about loving God who reigns in our world. To the extent that he reigns within us, the life of society will be a setting for universal fraternity, justice, peace and dignity. Both Christian preaching and life, then, are meant to have an impact on society. We are seeking God’s Kingdom.” [105]