

Theological Anthropology of the Heart in *Dilexit Nos*: Its Relevance to the Contemporary Crisis of Empathy

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the theological anthropology of the heart in Pope Francis' Encyclical *Dilexit Nos* and its relevance to the contemporary crisis of empathy. Amid the growing influence of individualism, pragmatism, and the erosion of authentic human relationships, the study argues that this crisis is fundamentally anthropological, rooted in humanity's loss of orientation toward God as the source of love and communion. Employing qualitative library research within the framework of systematic dogmatic theology, the study analyzes Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Magisterium of the Church—particularly the Catechism of the Catholic Church—together with the Encyclical *Dilexit Nos*. The findings demonstrate that, according to Catholic teaching, the heart is the deepest center of the human person, where intellect, conscience, freedom, will, and love are integrated in communion with God. In continuity with Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, *Dilexit Nos* presents the Heart of Christ as the fullest revelation of divine love and as the anthropological paradigm for the renewal of the human person. Consequently, the transformation of the heart becomes the foundation of personal conversion, ecclesial communion, and social solidarity. This study concludes that *Dilexit Nos* represents the contemporary maturation of the Church's doctrinal reflection on the theological anthropology of the heart and offers a coherent dogmatic framework for responding to the crisis of empathy in the contemporary world.

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INTRODUCTION

Modern society has witnessed extraordinary progress in science, technology, communication, and numerous other dimensions of human life. These developments have created unprecedented opportunities for strengthening human relationships, expanding global cooperation, and improving the quality of life. At the same time, however, contemporary society is increasingly marked by individualism, pragmatism, consumerism, and digital cultures that weaken interpersonal relationships and diminish solidarity. The consequences of these developments are evident in the growing social polarization, declining sensitivity to the suffering of others, and the tendency to prioritize personal interests over the common good. From the perspective of the Christian faith, these phenomena indicate not merely a social or psychological crisis but a more fundamental anthropological crisis that concerns the human person's understanding of self, others, and God.

Within this context, the crisis of empathy cannot be understood merely as a psychological or ethical problem. Rather, it reveals a deeper anthropological crisis rooted in

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the loss of humanity's orientation toward God, who is the source of love, communion, and authentic human fulfillment. According to Catholic theological anthropology, the human heart is not simply the center of emotions but the deepest core of the person, where intellect, conscience, freedom, will, and love are integrated in relationship with God. When this orientation is obscured, the human person experiences an interior fragmentation that inevitably affects relationships with others and weakens the capacity for solidarity and responsibility toward the common good.

It is precisely within this anthropological context that Pope Francis' Encyclical *Dilexit Nos* acquires particular theological significance. Rather than presenting a merely devotional reflection on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the Encyclical proposes a comprehensive theological vision of the heart as the center of the human person and the privileged place of encounter with God's redeeming love. In continuity with Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Church's Magisterium, *Dilexit Nos* presents the Heart of Christ as the fullest revelation of divine love and as the anthropological paradigm for the renewal of humanity. Consequently, the renewal of the human person must begin with the transformation of the heart, through which communion with God gives rise to reconciliation, solidarity, and authentic human relationships.

Although several theological studies have explored the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Christological spirituality, and the pastoral significance of *Dilexit Nos*, relatively little attention has been given to the Encyclical as a systematic contribution to Catholic theological anthropology. Existing studies generally emphasize its devotional, pastoral, or spiritual dimensions, whereas its anthropological and dogmatic significance has not yet been examined comprehensively within the continuity of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Church's Magisterium. This article therefore seeks to analyse the theological anthropology of the heart articulated in *Dilexit Nos* and to examine its relevance to the contemporary crisis of empathy from the perspective of Catholic dogmatic theology. It argues that the Encyclical should be understood not merely as a renewed presentation of devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus but as a contemporary doctrinal synthesis that offers a coherent theological framework for understanding the human person, the transformative power of divine love, and the Church's mission in responding to the anthropological challenges of the contemporary world.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Human Heart in Catholic Theological Anthropology

Catholic theological anthropology understands the human person as created in the image and likeness of God (*imago Dei*), possessing an inherent dignity that is fulfilled through communion with God and with others. Within this anthropological vision, the heart occupies a unique theological significance because it designates the deepest center of the human person, where intellect, conscience, freedom, will, and love are integrated into a unified personal existence. Consequently, the heart cannot be reduced to the sphere of emotions alone; rather, it constitutes the interior principle through which the human person encounters God, discerns truth, and freely responds to divine grace.

The Human Heart in Catholic Theological Anthropology

The biblical tradition consistently presents the heart as the center of human existence, where thought, intention, faith, conscience, and moral decision converge. In the Old Testament, the heart is understood as the interior locus where God enters into dialogue with humanity and calls His people to covenantal fidelity. This understanding reaches its fullest expression in the New Testament, where the Heart of Christ reveals the perfect unity of divine love and human obedience, culminating in His redemptive self-giving on the Cross. Consequently, the biblical concept of the heart transcends a merely psychological interpretation and becomes a theological category that expresses the human person's vocation to communion with God.

Building upon this biblical foundation, the Catholic theological tradition has consistently interpreted the heart as the principle of personal unity. Saint Augustine understands the human heart as restless until it finds its fulfillment in God, thereby affirming that every authentic human desire ultimately points toward the Creator. Likewise, Saint Thomas Aquinas maintains that the human person achieves perfection not through isolated intellectual activity but through the harmonious integration of intellect, will, and love under the guidance of divine grace. This doctrinal tradition provides the theological foundation upon which contemporary Magisterial teaching, including *Dilexit Nos*, develops a renewed understanding of the heart as the center of personal conversion and communion.

This doctrinal development demonstrates that the theological understanding of the heart has never been regarded merely as a devotional or psychological concept within the Catholic tradition. Rather, it has consistently been understood as a fundamental anthropological category that expresses the unity of the human person and the person's openness to divine grace. Consequently, the heart becomes the privileged place where God's self-revelation is received, human freedom is exercised, and the vocation to holiness is progressively realized. This doctrinal continuity provides the indispensable theological framework for interpreting Pope Francis' *Dilexit Nos*, which renews the Church's perennial teaching by presenting the Heart of Christ as the definitive revelation of divine love and the authentic model for the renewal of humanity.

The Church's Magisterium has progressively deepened the theological understanding of the heart by interpreting it within the broader mystery of God's revelation and the economy of salvation. Rather than introducing new doctrines, successive Magisterial documents have reaffirmed and developed the Church's perennial teaching in response to the pastoral and cultural challenges of their respective historical contexts. This doctrinal continuity is particularly evident in the Church's reflection on the Sacred Heart of Jesus, where biblical revelation, theological tradition, and ecclesial teaching converge to present the Heart of Christ as the supreme manifestation of God's redemptive love for humanity.

The Heart in the Development of the Church's Magisterium

A decisive stage in this doctrinal development is found in Pius XII's Encyclical *Haurietis Aquas*, which presents devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus as an authentic expression of the Church's faith rather than a merely private or sentimental devotion. The Encyclical emphasizes that the Heart of Christ symbolizes the inexhaustible love of the Incarnate Word, through which the mystery of the Redemption is revealed and made present to humanity. By integrating biblical testimony, patristic reflection, and theological tradition, *Haurietis Aquas*

established a doctrinal foundation that continues to shape the Church's understanding of the Sacred Heart in subsequent Magisterial teaching.

The Magisterium's reflection was further enriched by Pope Saint John Paul II, who consistently presented the mystery of the human person in the light of the mystery of Christ. In *Redemptor Hominis*, he affirms that Christ fully reveals both God to humanity and humanity to itself, thereby establishing Christological anthropology as the indispensable foundation for understanding human dignity and vocation. This Christ-centered vision profoundly influenced subsequent Magisterial teaching by demonstrating that authentic renewal of the human person is inseparable from an encounter with the redeeming love manifested in the Heart of Christ.

Benedict XVI further developed this theological perspective by placing divine love at the center of Christian revelation. In his Encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, he explains that God's love is not an abstract principle but a concrete reality revealed definitively in Jesus Christ, whose pierced Heart manifests the fullness of divine charity. Consequently, Christian existence is understood as a response to God's prior love, whereby communion with Christ transforms both the interior life of believers and their relationships with others. This theological synthesis provides an essential hermeneutical key for interpreting *Dilexit Nos*, which continues and deepens the Church's reflection on the mystery of the Heart of Christ within the contemporary context.

Overall, this study argues that, these Magisterial documents demonstrate a remarkable doctrinal continuity in the Church's understanding of the heart as the center of the human person and the privileged place of encounter with God's salvific love. Rather than representing isolated theological reflections, they form a coherent and organic development that progressively deepens the Church's teaching from biblical revelation to its contemporary articulation in *Dilexit Nos*. Within this continuity, Pope Francis neither introduces a new doctrine nor merely reiterates previous teachings; instead, he offers a renewed theological synthesis that integrates Christology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, and pastoral mission into a unified vision of the human person transformed by the love revealed in the Heart of Christ. Consequently, *Dilexit Nos* should be understood as the contemporary maturation of the Church's doctrinal reflection on the theological anthropology of the heart, providing a solid theological foundation for responding to the contemporary crisis of empathy through the renewal of persons, communities, and society.

Contemporary Theological Perspectives on the Heart

Contemporary Catholic theology has increasingly emphasized the need to recover an integral understanding of the human person in response to the fragmentation characteristic of modern culture. Rather than reducing the human person to biological, psychological, or sociological dimensions, contemporary theologians reaffirm that authentic anthropology can only be understood in the light of God's revelation in Jesus Christ. This theological perspective provides an important interpretative framework for understanding *Dilexit Nos*, which likewise presents the heart as the integrating center of the human person, where divine grace restores the unity of intellect, freedom, conscience, and love.

Joseph Ratzinger consistently argues that the human person can never be adequately understood apart from Christ, because the mystery of humanity is fully disclosed only in the mystery of the Incarnate Word. Consequently, theological anthropology is fundamentally

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Christological, affirming that every authentic understanding of human dignity, freedom, and vocation originates from participation in the life of Christ. This Christological orientation resonates strongly with *Dilexit Nos*, where the Heart of Christ is presented not merely as an object of devotion but as the definitive revelation of God's love and the model of authentic humanity.

Similarly, Romano Guardini observes that one of the defining characteristics of modernity is the progressive fragmentation of the human person through technological domination, functional rationality, and the weakening of genuine interpersonal relationships. This diagnosis helps explain why the contemporary crisis of empathy cannot be addressed solely through ethical exhortation or psychological intervention but requires a deeper renewal of the human heart. In this respect, *Dilexit Nos* offers a significant theological response by proposing that authentic human renewal begins with an encounter with the redeeming love of Christ, which restores the integrity of the person and reorients human relationships toward communion and solidarity.

The foregoing analysis indicates that, these contemporary theological perspectives demonstrate that the renewal of the human person cannot be achieved through psychological adjustment, ethical reform, or social reconstruction alone. Rather, authentic human renewal requires a profound transformation of the heart through an encounter with the redeeming love of Christ, who reveals both the truth about God and the truth about the human person. In this respect, *Dilexit Nos* neither departs from nor merely repeats previous theological reflections; instead, it brings together biblical revelation, the Church's doctrinal tradition, and contemporary theological insights into a coherent anthropological synthesis capable of addressing the existential and cultural challenges of the present age. Consequently, the Encyclical offers not only a renewed understanding of the Heart of Christ but also a comprehensive theological vision in which Christology, theological anthropology, ecclesiology, and the Church's missionary mission converge into a coherent theological vision capable of renewing both the human person and contemporary society.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative library research design within the framework of Catholic dogmatic theology. Rather than collecting empirical data through observation or field investigation, the research analyses authoritative theological sources in order to examine the theological anthropology of the heart as articulated in Pope Francis' Encyclical *Dilexit Nos*. The study adopts a systematic theological approach that seeks to interpret the Encyclical within the continuity of Sacred Scripture, Sacred Tradition, the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Magisterium of the Church.

The primary source of this research is Pope Francis' Encyclical *Dilexit Nos*, which serves as the principal theological text for analysis. To ensure doctrinal continuity and theological coherence, the Encyclical is examined in dialogue with Sacred Scripture, the documents of the Second Vatican Council, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, and previous Magisterial documents concerning the Sacred Heart of Jesus, particularly *Haurietis Aquas* and *Deus Caritas Est*. Secondary sources include selected works in Catholic dogmatic theology and theological anthropology that contribute to a deeper understanding of the theological significance of the heart within the Christian tradition.

The analysis is carried out through a dogmatic-theological method that combines textual interpretation, doctrinal analysis, and theological synthesis. Each theological proposition presented in *Dilexit Nos* is examined in relation to the Church's doctrinal tradition in order to identify its anthropological foundations, Christological orientation, ecclesiological implications, and pastoral significance. This analytical process enables the study to evaluate the theological coherence of the Encyclical while situating it within the broader development of Catholic doctrine.

Accordingly, this methodological framework does not approach *Dilexit Nos* merely as a pastoral document issued for the Jubilee Year but as an authoritative Magisterial text that contributes to the ongoing development of Catholic theological anthropology. By integrating doctrinal continuity with contemporary theological reflection, the study seeks to demonstrate that the Encyclical provides a coherent theological framework for understanding the human heart as the center of personal transformation and the foundation for responding to the contemporary crisis of empathy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Heart as the Center of the Human Person

The analysis of *Dilexit Nos* demonstrates that the concept of the heart occupies a central position in Pope Francis' theological anthropology. Rather than identifying the heart merely with human emotions or subjective experience, the Encyclical presents it as the deepest center of the human person, where intellect, conscience, freedom, memory, and love are integrated into the unity of personal existence. This understanding reflects the continuity of the Church's doctrinal tradition, which consistently affirms that authentic human identity is formed through communion with God rather than through autonomous self-determination. Consequently, the heart becomes the privileged place where the human person encounters divine grace and responds freely to God's invitation to communion.

This theological understanding challenges contemporary anthropological models that reduce the human person to biological processes, psychological functions, or social constructions. While these perspectives contribute valuable insights into particular dimensions of human existence, they remain insufficient to explain the profound unity of the person or the human capacity for self-transcendence and communion with God. In contrast, *Dilexit Nos* proposes an integral anthropology in which the heart functions as the interior principle that unifies every dimension of human existence under the transforming action of divine love.

From a dogmatic perspective, this anthropological vision cannot be separated from the doctrine of creation. The human person possesses inherent dignity not because of intellectual ability, moral achievement, or social recognition, but because every person is created in the image and likeness of God and called to participate in divine life. Accordingly, the heart represents the interior capacity through which this vocation is received, nurtured, and progressively fulfilled in communion with Christ. The theological anthropology presented in *Dilexit Nos* therefore reaffirms that personal identity is fundamentally relational, grounded in God's creative and redemptive love rather than in autonomous self-definition.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that, these findings indicate that the theological anthropology presented in *Dilexit Nos* offers a comprehensive vision of the human person by

restoring the heart to its proper place within Catholic doctrine. Rather than functioning merely as the seat of emotions, the heart is understood as the deepest center of personal identity, where human freedom, conscience, reason, and love are integrated through communion with God. This anthropological vision demonstrates that the contemporary crisis of empathy ultimately reflects a deeper crisis of the heart, in which the loss of communion with God leads to fragmentation within the human person and the deterioration of authentic relationships with others. Consequently, the renewal of empathy cannot be achieved solely through moral exhortation or social reform but requires the transformation of the heart by divine grace, revealed definitively in the Heart of Jesus Christ.

The Heart of Christ as the Fullness of Divine Love

The theological anthropology proposed in *Dilexit Nos* reaches its fullest meaning in the mystery of the Heart of Jesus Christ. Pope Francis presents the Heart of Christ not merely as a symbol of religious devotion but as the living manifestation of God's incarnate love, through which the mystery of salvation is revealed and communicated to humanity. Because the eternal Son truly assumed human nature in the Incarnation, the Heart of Christ signifies the inseparable unity of His divine and human love, making visible the Father's salvific will within human history. Consequently, contemplation of the Heart of Christ leads believers beyond emotional piety toward a deeper participation in the mystery of God's redemptive love revealed in the Paschal Mystery.

From a Christological perspective, the Heart of Christ reveals the definitive unity between divine revelation and human existence. In Jesus Christ, God's self-giving love is no longer expressed merely through prophetic words or symbolic actions but through the complete gift of His life in obedience to the Father's saving will. The pierced Heart of Christ on the Cross therefore becomes the supreme manifestation of divine mercy, where justice and love are perfectly reconciled in the work of redemption. Through this mystery, humanity encounters not only the revelation of God's love but also the true meaning of human existence, which is fulfilled through self-giving communion with God and with others.

This Christological vision also safeguards Catholic theological anthropology from every form of reductionism. The human heart discovers its authentic identity only in relation to the Heart of Christ, because Christ is both the perfect image of the Father and the perfect realization of humanity. Accordingly, the transformation of the human person is not achieved through autonomous moral effort but through participation in the grace flowing from Christ's redemptive love. *Dilexit Nos* therefore presents the Heart of Christ as both the origin and the goal of Christian life, inviting believers to enter into an ever-deepening communion that restores personal integrity and renews the capacity for authentic love and empathy.

In light of these theological considerations, these theological findings demonstrate that the Heart of Christ occupies a central place in Catholic dogmatic theology because it manifests the fullness of God's self-giving love revealed in the mystery of the Incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, and the abiding communion between Christ and His Church. Consequently, the Heart of Christ is not merely an object of devotion but the definitive theological locus in which humanity encounters the transforming power of divine grace and discovers the true meaning of human existence. Within this Christological framework, *Dilexit Nos* renews the Church's perennial teaching by presenting the Heart of Christ as the source from which authentic human renewal, ecclesial communion, and missionary charity continually flow.

Therefore, every genuine transformation of the human heart begins not with human initiative alone but with participation in the redeeming love of Christ, whose Heart remains the inexhaustible source of life, reconciliation, and hope for the world.

The Transformation of the Human Heart through Divine Grace

The theological anthropology articulated in *Dilexit Nos* affirms that the renewal of the human heart is fundamentally the work of divine grace rather than the product of human effort alone. Human beings, wounded by sin and inclined toward self-centeredness, are incapable of restoring the fullness of their vocation through moral determination or psychological self-improvement apart from God's saving initiative. The Heart of Christ therefore becomes the inexhaustible source of grace through which the human person is healed, reconciled, and gradually transformed into the likeness of Christ. Consequently, the transformation of the heart is understood not as a merely ethical change of behaviour but as participation in the new life made possible through Christ's redemptive love.

Within this perspective, conversion is understood as the continual reorientation of the whole person toward God through the action of grace. It embraces not only external conduct but also the deepest dispositions of the heart, where human freedom responds to God's prior and gratuitous love. Such conversion restores the unity of intellect, will, conscience, and affection, enabling believers to grow in communion with Christ and to manifest His love in concrete relationships with others. Accordingly, *Dilexit Nos* presents conversion of the heart as the indispensable foundation for authentic Christian discipleship and the renewal of both personal and ecclesial life.

This transformation also possesses an intrinsically ecclesial dimension. Grace does not renew isolated individuals but incorporates believers more deeply into the communion of the Church, where the life of Christ is continually communicated through the Word, the sacraments, and the witness of Christian charity. Consequently, the renewal of the heart necessarily gives rise to reconciliation, solidarity, and a renewed commitment to the common good, thereby overcoming the individualism that characterizes much of contemporary culture. In this way, *Dilexit Nos* demonstrates that the transformation of the heart extends beyond personal spirituality and becomes the foundation of ecclesial communion and social renewal.

Accordingly, the present study concludes that, these findings demonstrate that the transformation of the human heart constitutes the indispensable foundation of Christian anthropology and the authentic response to the contemporary crisis of empathy. Rather than resulting merely from ethical education, emotional development, or social conditioning, genuine transformation is effected through divine grace, which heals the wounds of sin, restores communion with God, and renews the human person according to the image of Christ. Consequently, the renewal of the heart becomes the source of authentic empathy, not as a passing emotional reaction but as a stable disposition rooted in participation in God's own love. Within this theological framework, *Dilexit Nos* presents the Heart of Christ as the enduring source from which personal conversion, ecclesial communion, and missionary charity continually emerge, thereby revealing that the renewal of humanity ultimately begins with the renewal of the heart through divine grace.

Ecclesial and Social Implications for the Contemporary Crisis of Empathy

The theological anthropology presented in *Dilexit Nos* ultimately extends beyond doctrinal reflection to embrace the concrete mission of the Church in the contemporary world.

The renewal of the human heart through divine grace is never an exclusively private experience but always gives rise to a renewed commitment to communion, reconciliation, and solidarity within the ecclesial community and society at large. Consequently, the Church's mission of evangelization cannot be separated from the formation of hearts capable of reflecting the compassionate love of Christ in every sphere of human life. In this respect, the renewal of the heart becomes the indispensable foundation for rebuilding a culture marked by fraternity, justice, and peace.

The contemporary crisis of empathy demonstrates that technological advancement, economic progress, and social development alone are insufficient to restore authentic human relationships. Without an interior renewal rooted in God's love, these achievements frequently coexist with loneliness, indifference, violence, and the erosion of human dignity. *Dilexit Nos* therefore offers a profound theological response by affirming that the restoration of society begins with the restoration of the human heart, where divine grace reawakens the capacity to recognize the dignity of every person as created and loved by God. Consequently, authentic empathy emerges not merely as an emotional response to suffering but as a participation in Christ's own compassionate love, expressed through concrete acts of justice, mercy, and self-giving service.

From an ecclesiological perspective, the renewal of the heart also defines the Church's identity as the sacrament of Christ's saving presence in the world. The Church fulfils her mission not only through the proclamation of doctrine but also through the visible witness of communities transformed by the love flowing from the Heart of Christ. Such witness becomes particularly significant in societies marked by fragmentation, polarization, and the weakening of interpersonal trust, where the Church is called to embody reconciliation and communion as tangible signs of the Kingdom of God. Accordingly, *Dilexit Nos* challenges the Church continually to unite doctrinal fidelity with pastoral charity, ensuring that theological truth is always expressed through concrete acts of love toward every human person.

Viewed in their entirety, these findings reveal that, the findings of this study demonstrate that the contemporary crisis of empathy cannot be adequately addressed through ethical discourse, psychological intervention, or social reform alone, because its deepest roots lie in the fragmentation of the human heart and the loss of communion with God. The theological anthropology presented in *Dilexit Nos* offers a coherent doctrinal response by affirming that the renewal of humanity begins with the transformation of the heart through participation in the redeeming love of Christ. Consequently, authentic empathy is understood not merely as an emotional capacity but as a theological virtue shaped by divine grace, enabling believers to recognize the dignity of every human person and to participate actively in the Church's mission of reconciliation, communion, and charity. In this way, *Dilexit Nos* demonstrates that the renewal of the human heart constitutes not only the foundation of personal holiness but also the indispensable basis for ecclesial renewal and the transformation of contemporary society according to the values of the Gospel.

CONCLUSION

This study has demonstrated that Pope Pope Francis' *Dilexit Nos* offers a significant contribution to Catholic theological anthropology by presenting the heart as the deepest center of the human person, where intellect, conscience, freedom, and love are integrated

through communion with God. Rather than reducing the heart to the realm of emotions or subjective experience, the Encyclical reaffirms the Church's perennial teaching that the heart constitutes the privileged place where the human person encounters divine grace and responds to God's saving initiative. Consequently, the theological anthropology articulated in *Dilexit Nos* provides a coherent doctrinal framework for understanding both the dignity of the human person and the vocation to authentic communion with God and with others.

The study further argues that the theological significance of the heart reaches its fullest expression in the mystery of the Heart of Christ, who reveals the fullness of God's redemptive love through the Incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, and His abiding communion with the Church. From this Christological perspective, the renewal of the human heart is understood as the work of divine grace, which heals the wounds of sin, restores communion with God, and enables believers to participate in the new life of Christ. Accordingly, authentic empathy is interpreted not merely as a human emotion or ethical disposition but as a theological reality rooted in participation in God's own love.

This research therefore concludes that the contemporary crisis of empathy should be understood not merely as a social, psychological, or moral problem but as a profound anthropological and theological crisis rooted in the fragmentation of the human heart and the loss of communion with God. By integrating Sacred Scripture, the Church's doctrinal tradition, the Magisterium, and contemporary theological reflection, *Dilexit Nos* offers a coherent theological response that places the transformation of the heart at the center of personal renewal, ecclesial communion, and social responsibility. In this respect, the Encyclical demonstrates that the renewal of humanity begins with participation in the redeeming love of Christ, from which authentic solidarity, reconciliation, and missionary charity continually emerge.

Ultimately, this study demonstrates the contribution to contemporary Catholic dogmatic theology by interpreting *Dilexit Nos* not only as a pastoral reflection on devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus but also as a systematic theological synthesis that renews the Church's understanding of the human person in the light of Christ's redeeming love. Future research may further explore the implications of this theological anthropology for sacramental theology, moral theology, ecclesiology, and Christian formation in increasingly secular and pluralistic societies.

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