

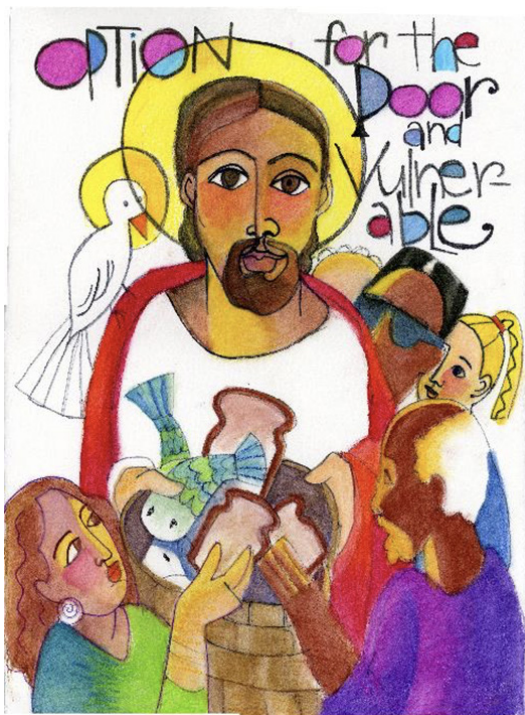
Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Social Action Commission will be focusing on one of the Seven Social Teaching Principles each month. For the month of November, the focus is on the Church's **Option for the Poor and Vulnerable**.

The United States Council of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) describes this principle:
A basic moral test is how our most vulnerable members are faring. In a society marred by deepening divisions between rich and poor, our tradition recalls the story of the Last Judgment (Mt 25:31-46) and instructs us to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable first."

The USCCB suggests:
*Commit to being more informed about one local policy issue (housing, education, healthcare). Write or call a local official at least once a year about that issue.*¹

Other local responses are on the back page.



The Apostolic Exhortation **Dilexi te** "I have loved you" (Rev 3:9), focused on love for the poor, was signed by Pope Leo XIV on October 4, 2025, the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, and published on October 9.

Preferential choice for the poor

In the Apostolic Exhortation **Dilexi Te**, the Holy Father affirms: "I am convinced that **the preferential choice for the poor is a source of extraordinary renewal both for the Church and for society**, if we can only set ourselves free of our self-centeredness and open our ears to their cry" (DT 7) but he points out that **"this 'preference' never indicates exclusivity or discrimination towards other groups**, which would be impossible for God. It is meant to emphasize God's actions, which are moved by compassion toward the poverty and weakness of all humanity. Wanting to inaugurate a kingdom of justice, fraternity and solidarity, God has a special place in his heart for those who are discriminated against and oppressed, and **he asks us, his Church, to make a decisive and radical choice in favor of the weakest**" (DT 16).²

¹ More information at: <https://www.usccb.org/>

² Full document can be found at [Dilexi te](#)

What can we do?

Prayer for the Poor

God of Justice,
open our eyes
to see you in the face of the poor.
Open our ears
to hear you in the cries of the exploited.
Open our mouths
to defend you in the public squares
as well as in private deeds.
Remind us that what we do
to the least ones,
we do to you.
Amen.



United States
Conference of
Catholic Bishops

Secretariat of
Justice and Peace

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This prayer can be said as part of your daily prayer practice, with your family perhaps at meal time, or with any group you meet with during November.

On October 21, **St. Mary's Youth Ministry and Faith Formation** groups put together 500 meals to be distributed to those in need in the community through the Pella Community Food Shelf during their Service Night.

"no Christian can regard the poor simply as a societal problem; they are part of our 'family'. They are 'one of us'. Nor can our relationship to the poor be reduced to merely another ecclesial activity or function" (Delexi te 104)

Discussion Guide

A Discussion Guide is available from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. It Includes:

- Opening Prayer
- YouTube Video
- Scripture Passage for Reflection
- Sharing on Scripture
- Passages from Catholic Tradition for Reflection
- Discussion of Passages
- Call to Action
- Sending Forth

This and other resources can be found at:
usccb.org/cst

Video on Preferential Option for the Poor

A video from the USCCB and CRF on this topic can be found on [YouTube](#). Scroll to video on Preferential Option for the Poor.

Blessed to be a Blessing

The Social Action Commission is working together with the **Pella Food Shelf** to fill their Thanksgiving boxes again this year! St. Mary Church is responsible for donating **400** 12-ounce cans of cranberry sauce for the boxes. Please bring your donations to the food shelf donation box in the hallway next to the kitchen by **Sunday, November 9.**



and

Meals for the Heartland Event:

When: November 15 7:30 am-12:30 pm
Where: Carol Laughlin Room at St Mary.
There will be 4 opportunities to serve:

7:30-9 set up,
9-10 packaging,
10-11 packaging,
11-12:30 tear down

For information contact Liz Vermeer:
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