



## Hearing the cry of the poor and responding

*„I want a Church which is poor and for the poor“. The option for the poor was a central concern for the Church in Latin America. Yet too often bishops and priests have stood on the side of the rich and the privileged. For Pope Francis a concern for the poor is the trade mark of the mission of the Church and of all who want to follow Christ. These texts from Evangelii Gaudium could make us question what unnecessary luxury is keeping us away from the poor and who are the poor and the weak that need our attention.*

- ✿ We incarnate the duty of **hearing the cry of the poor** when we are deeply moved by the suffering of others. (193)... Sometimes it is a matter of **hearing the cry of entire peoples, the poorest peoples of the earth**, since “peace is founded not only on respect for human rights, but also on respect for the rights of peoples”. (Evangelii Gaudium 190)
- ✿ If we, who are God’s means of hearing the poor, turn deaf ears to this plea, we oppose the Father’s will and his plan... **A lack of solidarity towards his or her needs will directly affect our relationship with God.** (187)
- ✿ Each individual Christian and every community is called to be an **instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor**, and for enabling them to be fully a part of society. This demands that we be docile and attentive to the cry of the poor and to come to their aid. (187)
- ✿ Our commitment does **not consist exclusively in activities** or programmes of promotion and assistance; what the Holy Spirit mobilizes is not an unruly activism, **but above all an attentiveness** which considers the other “in a certain sense as one with ourselves”. This loving attentiveness is the beginning of a true concern for their person which inspires me effectively to seek their good. This entails appreciating the poor in their goodness, in their experience of life, in their culture, and in their ways of living the faith... The poor person, when loved, “is esteemed as of great value”, and this is what makes the authentic option for the poor differ from any other ideology, from any attempt to exploit the poor for one’s own personal or political interest. (199) The worst discrimination which the poor suffer is the lack of spiritual care. (200)
- ✿ It is essential to draw near to **new forms of poverty and vulnerability**, in which we are called to recognize the suffering Christ, even if this appears to bring us no tangible and immediate benefits. I think of the homeless, the addicted, refugees, indigenous peoples, the elderly who are increasingly isolated and abandoned, and many others. (210)
- ✿ Jesus’ command to his disciples: “You yourselves give them something to eat!” (Mk 6:37): it means working to **eliminate the structural causes of poverty** and to promote the integral development of the poor, as well as **small daily acts of solidarity** in meeting the real needs which we encounter. (188)



- Who are the poor and the weak in my world that need my loving attention?
- How do I use my opportunities to change „the structural causes of poverty“? By participating in elections, through my consumer choices or by supporting initiatives and campaigns?