

A Hearty Note
By: Hung Dao

On Oct. 24, Pope Francis released an encyclical entitled *Dilexit nos*—"He loved us." It is his fourth encyclical after *Fratelli tutti* in 2020.

An encyclical is a letter addressed to bishops and is considered the most authoritative of all papal literature. Encyclicals are named after their incipit, and in calling this one "He loved us," Pope Francis intended to speak about the love from the heart of Jesus as prescribed in the subtitle, "On the Human and Divine Love of the Heart of Jesus Christ."

In the first encyclical dedicated to the Sacred Heart since 1956, Pope Francis uses the image of the heart to describe how the world can come together in times of fractures. The Pope spends the first chapter of the encyclical going through the importance of the heart, drawing material from Homer, the Bible, popes and saints. At the same time, Pope Francis observes how digital algorithms have contributed to humans leading fractious lives, leaving no space for the heart. He exhorts people to return to the heart as the source of the very human love, something that algorithms cannot forge.

As Pope Francis describes it, the heart is a mending force in this asunder world. He exhorts devotion to the Sacred Heart so that people can connect the holiness of the heart with its contemporary relevance. In achieving this, Pope Francis believes that humanity can build a "civilization of love" based upon the love of Jesus.

Sources: *Dilexit nos*, Catholic News Agency and New York Times