



*MAGNIFICENT HUMANITY
in need of evangelization*

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The human being is the sum of many dimensions: historical, biological, religious, sexual, economic, political, recreational, familial, social, psychological, ecological, and so on. Each of these dimensions is expressed in diverse ways throughout the life of each human being. Social institutions foster the development of these dimensions and their various manifestations in each person by providing the necessary social spaces and structures over time.

Therefore, the progress of a given society is measured by the greater or lesser degree of harmonious growth that each citizen achieves in the development of most of their dimensions.

Among social institutions (economic, political, cultural, etc.), many sociologists regard religion as the “guiding institution” or “leading institution” because it enjoys the greatest prestige, provides the prevailing interpretation of reality for the entire culture, and, consequently, establishes the criteria by which values are judged. (Cf. González Anleo, Juan, *Understanding Sociology [Para comprender la Sociología]*, EVD, p. 182).

In our Western societies, and especially in Latin America, it is the Catholic Church that, as a guiding and leading institution, “*has stamped its imprint upon the soul of Latin America, marking its essential historical identity and constituting itself as the cultural matrix of the continent...*” (DP 445).

Thus, if “*the joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the men of this age ... are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ ... (and therefore the Church) realizes that it is truly linked with mankind and its history*” (GS 1), then it can be affirmed that the strengths and weaknesses, the successes and failures, the goodness and evil present in our societies are directly related to the role of the Catholic Church and to its successes and shortcomings in its evangelizing mission—that is, in its task of permeating the lives of individuals and social institutions with the values and criteria of the Gospel.

Yet if the work has been done well, if the sowing of the Gospel has been successful, then the Catholic Church should face the harvest with confidence rather than apprehension or fear, trusting that abundant and good fruits will be borne in the societies it has guided.

One of the most important instruments and documents available to a Pope in his pastoral ministry and Petrine evangelization is the Encyclical. They are epistolary documents intended to instruct the Catholic faithful on issues of faith and morals and society as a whole, regarding present global challenges, while at the same time guiding the social action of the Church, unifying criteria, and promoting the ongoing task of the new evangelization demanded by each historical juncture.

Pope Leo XIV, on May 15 of this year, coinciding with the 135th anniversary of the promulgation of his predecessor Leo XIII's Encyclical "Rerum Novarum" on social issues, signed and published his first Encyclical, entitled **MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS**, after the first two words with which it begins in Latin, and which in English mean: MAGNIFICENT HUMANITY. The Encyclical concerns **THE SAFEGUARDING OF THE HUMAN PERSON IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** and consists of an Introduction, five chapters, and a conclusion. I invite you to a relaxed reading, in detail and depth, of the content of this Encyclical, in which Leo XIV reminds us of fundamental principles of the Gospel and of the Social Doctrine of the Church, and emphasizes the following themes:

- The human person is – and must be – at the center of all scientific and technological progress, including the development of so-called “artificial intelligence.”
- The life of every man is illuminated and clarified when confronted with the mystery of Jesus Christ, the revelation of God the Father. (Cf. GS 22)
- The central dilemma and enormous challenge of our time is whether we are building humanity as a “Tower of Babel” or as a “Civilization of love.”
- All social and scientific development must be at the service of the common good, of the well-being of all.
- Human frailty is not an error to be corrected, but a richness and an opportunity that enables the experience of love and fraternal service.
- No machine, no invention, can or should replace the human experience of the amorous encounter.
- Truth is a human and common good that must be defended and protected from all manipulation.
- Technological development must seek the good of people and not the other way around.
We must give primacy to man over work and the worker over machines.
- Human freedom, like truth, is being threatened by algorithmic manipulation.
- In the face of violence, armaments, war, and the culture of death, the Pope, like his immediate predecessors, once again exhorts us to build a culture and civilization based on love, on respect for life, and for the human person.
- **MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS** offers technologists and rulers an ethical framework that prioritizes the human being and the common good over the cold metric of optimization and efficiency.

- It denounces “digital colonialism,” conducted through technological tools and systems sustained by resource extraction and precarious labor in the Global South.

In this way, MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS joins a select group of great Encyclicals on the Social Doctrine of the Church, assuming the challenge of guiding everyone in the complexity of our historical conjuncture: a time of exponential growth in artificial intelligence and mass automation.

In this way, Leo XIV situates the Catholic Church as a leading religious institution, not alien to our times, and as an active and dialoguing voice, evangelizing *“not in a purely decorative way, as it were, by applying a thin veneer, but in a vital way, in depth and right to their very roots—the relationships of people among themselves and with God.”* EN 20

The capacity of contemporary human beings, moral agents capable of both good and evil, to make use of, rather than condemn or demonize, the progress of science and technology will always depend on the guiding role fulfilled in our societies by the religious institution, in its urgent and non-negotiable mission of timely engagement, accompaniment, and formation in ethical principles and moral foundations drawn from the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which are ultimately expressed in the new commandment of love.

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