

The Grandeur of Humanity

A reflection from St Dominic's Parish



The Letter

Pope Leo XIV signed his [first encyclical letter](#), *Magnifica Humanitas – The Grandeur of Humanity, On Safeguarding the Human Person in the time of Artificial Intelligence*, on 15 May 2026. The letter was addressed as a 'heartfelt appeal' to 'all the Catholic faithful, to all Christians and to all men of women of goodwill.'

In the context of the 'pivotal choices' faced by humanity in this age of artificial intelligence, the Pope asks us all to 'join forces in building up the common good, so that humanity will never lose its beauty, and the world once again will come to recognise the human heart as the place where God desires to dwell'. (n16)

Responses to the Pope's call to humanity have been wide-ranging, an example of which is the series of articles from Fr Paul Rowse in [The Dominican](#).

To explore the document's implications for us, a small group from St Dominic's met over for four discussion sessions. This note is a report from that discussion group.

Key learnings

The Pope himself outlines a pathway for us all. He commends a spirituality for 'building the world for the common good':

Our rule must be the acceptance of human limitations as a natural and positive reality... We are called to play an active role, without taking refuge in spiritual sentimentality or retreating into our own little worlds. We must be faithful to the truth, invest in education, cultivate relationships, and love justice and peace. (n236)

He then goes on to expand on each of those last four instructions.

Remain faithful to the truth: this 'requires integrating the possibilities offered by technology within a framework marked by wisdom, which is capable of safeguarding both the dignity of each person and the future of our common home.' (n237)

Invest in education: we ourselves need to 'learn how to engage with the digital world in a human way, as an integral part of our education in the faith and in a life lived according to the Gospel... Teaching new generations that technological evolution does not follow a predetermined path, but can be guided by personal and collective responsibility, constitutes one of the most valuable services to the common good'. (n238)

Let us cultivate relationships! ‘the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness. I invite everyone to cherish places and times where physical presence remains crucial, such as shared meals, Christian community gatherings, time spent with the lonely and serving the poor. These are signs of a humanity that continues to believe that every person’s body is a dwelling place of God...’ (n239)

Let us love justice and peace! ‘The same technologies that facilitate communication and access to resources can also support models that exploit the most vulnerable, create new forms of slavery and derive profit from conflict. Every technical or economic decision should include spiritual discernment and be an opportunity for assessing whether the advances in AI are promoting justice and participation or concentrating wealth and power...’ (n240)

Faith, hope, love and prayer are the pillars of the ‘program for Christian life’ that is presented in the encyclical. In the closing section Pope Leo focused on the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), the song of Mary when ‘everything has changed within her, and this allows her to see what is invisible...God takes the part of the lowly...’ (243). He concludes:

245. With the same faith as Mary, let us become “weavers of hope” in our world, sharing who we are and what we have, so that the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape. In the humble fidelity of daily life, even the era of AI can become a time in which the Holy Spirit brings about the civilization of love in our lives. Indeed, the Lord continues to make all things new and offers every era the possibility of becoming part of salvation history in the light of the Incarnation. I entrust our desire to the Mother of Christ, to the Woman of the *Magnificat*, that she may guide our steps through this time of change and preserve in each of us true faith in the Gospel, so that we may bear witness to the grandeur of humanity, in which God has made his dwelling.

Several possible actions emerged from the parish discussions:

At the personal level:

- The calls to self-education around AI, to cultivate relationships, and to prayer each call us to a personal commitment. This might include a commitment to ourselves use AI wisely with an eye to the truth.
- These endeavours can then inform our discussions with our families and other close associations.

At the parish level:

- Reporting back on our discussions was highlighted – thence this note!
- Ensure that the Encyclical is available at the Parish Office and on the parish website
- Encourage other parish groups – Welcoming the Stranger, Fellowship, St Vincent de Paul Conference, Welcoming, etc – and parishioners generally to see the encyclical as a source of encouragement and guidance for their work.

- Promote relevant prayers and teachings of the encyclical as part of the liturgy and our Prayers of the Faithful
- Continue opportunities to focus on the encyclical, by inviting a speaker on some aspect of AI and the principles of *Magnifica Humanitas* – our Justice & Peace group will work to do this. Parishioners from neighbouring parishes, and from the Canterbury Council of Churches, etc, could be invited to join us.

Report periodically in *The Dominican* on further developments and ensure that our website includes access to the encyclical and related material. There are many other areas of action that are called for, particularly around supporting people who might be adversely affected by the new technology. Many of these actions require cooperation beyond the parish, within the Church and with other dimensions of society. For example, influencing business decisions on employment levels in light of AI can be beyond the capacity of an individual employee, but can be advanced through the work of business associations and unions, etc.

So, there is value in identifying who is working on these matters, within the Church and beyond, so that we, as individuals and, perhaps, collectively, can be part of a broader response. Again, as circumstances permit, our Justice & Peace group will try to do this.

Denis Fitzgerald, Geoff Lawler, Renville Wilson, Marianne Zabukosek, Angie Carter, Valerie Tang, Mary O'Connor, Bob Solly and others for the parish discussion group

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