

Pope Leo XIV

Maps of
Hope

A COLLECTION OF THE HOLY FATHER'S REFLECTIONS
ON EDUCATION AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Foreword by Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça
Introduction by Professor Zlatko Skrbis

Produced by Australian Catholic University
in collaboration with the Dicastery for Culture and Education

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Taddeo di Bartolo

c.1362–1422, Italy

Annunciate Virgin, c.1405–10

tempera and gold leaf on panel

H 61.3 x W 39.4 cm

Australian Catholic University Art Collection

Acquired 2012

University prayer

God of all truth and goodness,
bless us as we gather here
at Australian Catholic University.
May we be strengthened
in mind and heart to pursue
what you inspire,
with insight and deliberation,
that our world may advance,
in true wisdom and justice for all:
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Foreword from the Prefect of the
Dicastery for Culture and Education

Foreword

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça

The philosopher Erich Fromm once wrote that to hope is to be ready at every moment for that which is not yet born. I have returned to these words often in recent times, and they come to mind again as I reflect on the book you now hold in your hands. *Maps of Hope* gathers the early reflections of Pope Leo XIV on education and artificial intelligence – two subjects that are intertwined, and that together define both the challenge and the promise of our time. The Holy Father approaches these themes not with fear but with luminous confidence. Drawing on the rich inheritance of Catholic social teaching, he reminds us that technological progress is part of God’s plan for Creation, but that it must always be guided by and ordered toward the dignity of the human person.

This volume is arranged in two separate yet interdependent parts. The reflections on education establish the foundation: that the human person, formed in community and oriented toward truth, is the measure of all our endeavours. The reflections on artificial intelligence which follow then pose the urgent question:

how do we defend and deepen that formation when powerful new technologies challenge our understanding of what it means to think, to create, and to be human?

I am particularly moved by the attention Pope Leo gives to children and young people throughout these texts. He speaks of them as protagonists of a future that is already unfolding. He trusts them, and he asks us – Catholic leaders, educators, pastors, and parents – to do the same.

In a world often marked by resignation and cynicism, the Catholic university and the Catholic school must be places where hope is nourished. These are spaces where the Church can learn about and engage with the world, especially in pluralistic societies where campuses and classrooms reflect the diversity of a broader society. In the Holy Father's vision, the institutions of Catholic education are not defences against the modern world. Instead, they are places where the light of the Gospel can meet the questions of our age. They are places where we gather the strength to look at the future with new eyes, forming people who are capable of renewing our society.

The Dicastery for Culture and Education has been glad to collaborate with Australian Catholic University in bringing this volume into being. It is an example of what becomes possible when institutions across the global Church work together in service of a shared mission. I am grateful to Professor Zlatko Skrbis and his colleagues for the care and rigour they have brought to this project, and for the spirit of dialogue that has characterised it from the very beginning.

Pope Leo's early reflections on education and artificial intelligence arrive at a moment when the Church and the world need them, and I believe they will continue to speak long after

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the occasions that first prompted them have passed. May this collection be received as an invitation to encounter the Holy Father's thought with open hearts and minds – and to draw, together, new maps of hope.

Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça has served as Prefect of the Dicastery for Culture and Education since September 2022.

Introduction from the
Vice-Chancellor and President

Introduction

Professor Zlatko Skrbis

In the Gospel of Luke (Lk 13:10-17), Jesus encounters a crippled woman who has been bent double for almost two decades. She cannot straighten herself. She cannot look up. Her world has been reduced to what lies immediately before her feet. When Jesus heals her, something more than physical restoration takes place. The woman can finally stand upright and look toward others, toward possibility, toward God. She receives what Pope Leo XIV, reflecting on this passage in a homily to students at St Peter's Basilica, calls "a new perspective, a broader vision". The act of healing the woman, Pope Leo suggests, mirrors what education should accomplish. It is not merely the correction of her posture; it is the achievement of a perspective that was previously unattainable to her. The activity of the teacher, the school, the university is therefore to lift people up, helping them to see beyond themselves toward the beauty and mystery of life.

This is one of the many insights that animate the texts in *Maps of Hope*, a collection of the Holy Father's early reflections on education and artificial intelligence – two forces

whose intersection is increasingly shaping our moment. The texts, written and delivered within the first months of his pontificate, quickly began to form something coherent and compelling. It was Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça who first suggested that Australian Catholic University might bring these reflections together in one volume, and the timeliness of the idea was immediately apparent. This volume is the fruit of that conversation and the collaborative spirit behind it. But it is above all a book about what education means – and what it is for – at a moment of profound disruption and uncertainty, when those questions feel more urgent than they have in generations.

Pope Leo came to the papacy as a former teacher of mathematics and physics. His warmth toward students is palpable throughout the speeches reproduced in this volume, as is his instinct for the concrete. He does not speak of education in abstract terms; he speaks of classrooms, of encounters between students and teachers, of the restless searching that characterises youth. Beneath this groundedness runs a constant and powerful insistence: that education must be understood as something deeper than the acquisition of credentials. In a world that seems to prize what can be measured and optimised, Pope Leo returns us to something more fundamental. Education, in his eyes, is not a transaction. It is a transformation. It does not simply inform; it lifts the gaze.

The image of the healed woman speaks powerfully to what it means to look beyond the horizon, upward and outward. In our search for truth, most of us need to open our hearts and minds to the world, travelling physically and spiritually to appreciate the complexities that characterise it. Kant was one of those rare people who achieved true wisdom while remaining

– his unmissable daily walks notwithstanding – almost entirely rooted in his hometown of Königsberg. He famously wrote that the two things that fill the mind with “ever new and increasing admiration and awe” are the starry heavens above and the moral law within. Education, at its finest, holds these two things together: the outward gaze toward the vast world beyond us, and the interior compass that orients our engagement with it.

For those of us who lead Catholic universities, this notion carries particular weight. The aspiration to hold together the outward and inward – knowledge of the world and formation of the person – is threatened by a modern educational culture shaped increasingly by instrumental demands. This is a tension we navigate daily: between those demands and the deeper human and spiritual vocation that gives our institutions their meaning. Universities are at a crossroads. We are profoundly disrupted by technology, by financial and geopolitical forces, by rapid innovation that is changing our institutions as we have known them. In his early reflections on education and artificial intelligence, Pope Leo touches on the nexus between two forces that exert a constant magnetic push and pull: the notion of a Catholic education that puts the whole person at the centre of its endeavour, and the great disruptions that threaten that notion.

Pope Leo does not dismiss the practical dimensions of education. But he insists that practicality alone is not enough. We have become, he observes, “experts in the smallest details of reality”, yet we risk losing the capability for an overarching vision, one that integrates knowledge through a deeper and greater meaning. This resonates deeply with the vision set out by Saint John Paul II in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, where the university born from the heart of the Church was called to pursue an integration of knowledge, a dialogue between faith and reason, and an

ethical concern that serves the human person in community. As Pope Leo affirms, faith and reason do not oppose each other; rather, they complete one another as “complementary paths for understanding reality, forming character, and cultivating intelligence”. This renewed emphasis on the dialogue between faith and reason is exactly the kind of discussion we need at this moment of disruption.

In his Apostolic Letter *Drawing New Maps of Hope*, reproduced within this volume, Pope Leo offers his most luminous articulation of his educational vision. This is a text of remarkable scope, at once historical and forward-looking, pastoral and intellectually rigorous. It traces the genealogy of Catholic education from the Desert Fathers to the founding of medieval universities, from the *Ratio Studiorum* to the courageous women who opened doors for girls and the marginalised.

Pope Leo speaks of Catholic education as a constellation – a living network of schools, universities, communities and movements, each with its own brightness, but together charting a course through complexity and darkness. This can, in a sense, be taken as his answer to the starry heavens that so moved Kant: not random points of light but a pattern that helps travellers navigate, pointing to something beyond themselves. As stewards of Catholic institutions, we must understand ourselves as part of this constellation – rooted firmly within our tradition, yet reaching outward toward the wider culture; to those, as Leo puts it, “who desire a truly human education”. Our tradition, the pope insists, is a living inheritance, offering “an inspiring image of how tradition and future can intertwine without contradiction”.

The Holy Father is equally clear-eyed about the forces that press upon this vision. Chief among them is the intersection between education and technology, and what it means for our

understanding of what is distinctly human. Several texts in both parts of this collection address the rise of artificial intelligence – not as a standalone technological question, but as a profoundly educational one. That Pope Leo has chosen to make AI a defining theme of his early pontificate tells us something crucial about the current moment. He has opted not to focus on the perennial questions of faith and evangelisation, as important as those questions are. Instead, he has turned to the great unknown, the significant disruptor, the paradigm shifter, framing AI and its impact on education as a new social question that demands a human-centred response. Yet the pope’s response is not one of fear or retreat. The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, he suggests, but rather “to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature”.

In Part I of this volume, ACU’s Reverend Associate Professor Ormond Rush provides an illuminating guide to Pope Leo’s six texts on education. He traces the rich web of metaphors – constellation, compass, map, journey, star, light – through which the pope articulates his vision, showing how each image extends and reinforces the others. Associate Professor Rush draws attention to Leo’s Augustinian heritage, particularly the spirituality of the heart that underpins his insistence that education and formation are inseparable. He situates the texts within the Jubilee of the World of Education and the 60th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s *Gravissimum educationis*, revealing how Pope Leo reads that foundational document not as a fixed monument but as a living compass, one whose meaning unfolds as each generation of educators receives it anew.

In Part II, ACU’s Associate Professor Xavier Symons reads Pope Leo’s early reflections on AI through three themes that illuminate their depth and coherence: the dignity of the

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human person as the criterion by which AI must be judged; the Augustinian ideal of *tranquillitas ordinis* – the tranquillity of order – as a challenge to the logic of disruption; and the promotion of responsibility alongside the goods of human work, culture and education.

Associate Professor Symons’ analysis shows how Leo frames the problem of AI as “not technological, but anthropological” – a question not of what machines can do, but of whether we will allow them to eclipse our sense of what it means to be human. By choosing the name Leo, the pope consciously placed himself in the lineage of Leo XIII, whose *Rerum Novarum* addressed the social upheaval of the first industrial revolution. Symons traces that inheritance with care, revealing a pope who is building on the accumulated wisdom of his predecessors – from Leo XIII through to John Paul II, Benedict and Francis – drawing their insights into a synthesis that speaks to a technological moment none of them could have fully foreseen. This is exactly the kind of process that knowledge undertakes: you grow the knowledge that came before you. That Pope Leo has taken this approach fills me with hope.

Hope is indeed the word that holds this collection together. It is present in the title of the Apostolic Letter, in the Jubilee Year within which most of these texts were written, and in the conviction beneath every reflection gathered here: that education is an act of hope – a declaration of faith in those before us and their capacity to grow, to serve, and to become more fully themselves. I commend these reflections to you with deep gratitude – to the Holy Father for the richness of his words, and to all those who have brought *Maps of Hope* into being.

In closing this introduction, I encourage you to read these texts slowly. Let them challenge and encourage you. May they

help you to lift your gaze, as they have lifted mine, toward the broader horizons of hope that education makes visible.

Professor Zlatko Skrbis is the fourth Vice-Chancellor and President of Australian Catholic University, a position he has held since January 2021.

PART I EDUCATION



Introducing Pope Leo XIV's reflections on education

Reverend Associate Professor Ormond Rush

The teachings of Pope Leo XIV on Catholic education in this collection are presented in various genres: homily, address, letter, video text. They come from the first six months of the pope's pontificate. Nevertheless, in these early teachings, we can sense convictions regarding Catholic education that are deeply integrated in Pope Leo and, indeed, will be long-lasting emphases throughout his pontificate.

There are several contexts out of which we should interpret these texts. The first is the fact that Pope Leo inherited the program already set up for Pope Francis' calendar. In Jewish tradition, years of Jubilee were celebrated every 50 years; however, in recent times, Jubilee years in the Catholic Church have normally been celebrated every 25 years. Accordingly, Pope Francis, on 9 May 2024, announced that "Jubilee 2025" would focus on the theme "Pilgrims of Hope"; he called on Catholics to embrace the theological virtue of hope in the face of the crises and challenges of today's world.¹ The year of Jubilee began with the pope opening the Holy Door at the entrance to St Peter's

Basilica on 24 December 2024. Pope Francis died four months later, on Easter Monday, 21 April 2025. Cardinal Robert Prevost was elected as his successor on 8 May 2025, taking the name Leo XIV. With the Jubilee Year due to end on 6 January 2026, much of the new pope's program would revolve around regular events related to the Jubilee Year and welcoming the thousands and thousands of pilgrims who would come to Rome to walk through the Holy Door. Pope Leo embraced his program with alacrity.

A wide range of different groupings of people throughout the Catholic world had been officially invited to come on pilgrimage. For example, there was the Jubilee of Migrants, the Jubilee of Synodal Teams and Participatory Bodies, the Jubilee of Justice, the Jubilee of Catechists, and so on.² There were around 40 of such invited groups. Their visits were spaced throughout the year, with events organised over a day or several days.

Among these was the “Jubilee of the World of Education”. It was scheduled for six days, from 27 October to 1 November 2025. Official events involving Pope Leo throughout that week included his different masses and audiences with Catholic students, families, educators, and representatives from elementary, secondary, and tertiary educational institutions around the globe. Importantly, being commemorated that week was the 60th anniversary on 28 October of the promulgation by the Second Vatican Council of its “Declaration on Christian Education”, known also by its opening words in Latin, “*Gravissimum educationis*” (hereafter, *GE*). The night before that anniversary, Pope Leo released an Apostolic Letter to mark the occasion of this significant anniversary. He calls *GE* the “compass” for Catholic educators into the future. A related occasion was Pope Leo's “relaunch” on 28 October of a project initiated in 2019 by Pope Francis, the “Global Compact on

Education”. He calls the Compact the “lodestar” for Catholic educators into the future (text 5, see page 77). It had sought to build an international alliance among world educators for the sake of unity among humanity. It called for seven commitments from students, educators, families, and educational institutions: put the human person at the centre; listen to children and young people; promote the dignity and full participation of women; recognise the family as the first educator; open oneself to welcome and inclusion; renew the economy and politics in the service of humanity; and, care for humanity’s common home. In “relaunching” the Global Compact on Education, Pope Leo said he wanted to add to the seven goals of Pope Francis three further commitments: the development of the interior life; the humanisation of digital technology; and education for peace.

Other events organised for that week included a one-day International Congress on 30 October focusing on the topic “Educational Constellations: A Pact with the Future” (likewise focusing on the 60th anniversary), as well as other gatherings, such as a prayer and cultural meeting entitled “The School of the Heart”, on 31 October. The Jubilee of the World of Education ended with the celebration of Eucharist in St Peter’s Square on 1 November, at which the pope presided and preached. During the Mass, the pope declared the great philosopher and theologian of education, Saint John Henry Newman, a Doctor of the Church, as well as naming him, alongside Saint Thomas Aquinas, “co-patron of the Church’s educational mission” (text 4, see page 55).

In this concentrated week of events involving Pope Leo at the end of 2025, we can see several indicators of the priorities the pope hopes will fashion Catholic education into the future. In this collection of his teachings, we hear references or allusions to the themes from the events that were happening throughout

that week of the Jubilee of the World of Education. However, underlying his allusions on these occasions, there is a deeper voice to be heard. In what amounts to ‘a spirituality of Catholic education’, the pope brings his own perspective to metaphors and themes such as “constellations” and “hope”. As the history of the Church demonstrates, each pope brings to their pontificate their own “*sensus fidei*” (“sense of the faith”) – their own particular vision of how the Gospel could be interpreted and lived out in this particular time of human history. Pope Leo XIV is no different.

We don’t have space here to explore the trajectory of Robert Prevost’s life journey in the faith. But there are elements of his story that can be sensed in-between the lines in the chapters which follow. Before becoming pope, Robert Prevost was an educator himself, at high school, seminary, and university level. He taught at Mendel Catholic High School in Chicago, at St Augustine Seminary in Holland, Michigan, and at San Carlos University in Peru. Moreover, in choosing to become an Augustinian priest, he found in the figure and teachings of Saint Augustine a life-long inspiration, teacher and model. Along that Augustinian journey, we could note his global role as twice-elected Prior General of the Augustinian order (requiring him to journey regularly around the globe to quite different places where the Augustinians were ministering). After his time as Prior General, he was sent as a missionary among the poor in Peru, and later appointed as the bishop of the Peruvian diocese of Chiclayo. He was then appointed by Pope Francis to the Roman Curia as the Prefect of the Dicastery of Bishops, where his experience of the global Church’s unity and diversity was further enhanced. Accordingly, at the Conclave electing a successor to Pope Francis, the cardinals were electing a man with a broad vision of the word

“Catholic”. The breadth of that vision is apparent in his thoughts on “Catholic” education expressed here in these writings.

A compass for the journey

As already noted, a prominent feature of the Jubilee of the World of Education was the commemoration on the 28 October of the 60th anniversary of Vatican II’s “Declaration on Christian Education” (*Gravissimum educationis*). The pope’s Apostolic Letter marking the occasion was entitled *Drawing New Maps of Hope*. In it, he interprets *Gravissimum educationis* from the particular perspective of the third decade of the third millennium, employing the lens of the Jubilee’s guiding theme of “hope”, and emphasising the role of education in the Church’s mission: “With that text, the Second Vatican Council reminded the Church that education is not an ancillary activity, but forms the very fabric of evangelisation: it is the concrete way in which the Gospel becomes an educational gesture, a relationship, a culture.” (text 5, see page 63). While highlighting the advances made in the 1965 Declaration, Pope Leo nevertheless notes the importance of, what he calls, “its reception” after the council (text 5, see page 64). This reception period is part of ‘the meaning’ of *GE*. In those 60 years, the Declaration has evoked new discoveries in its receivers, as the document has been creatively re-interpreted and applied from the perspective of different contexts from those of the 1960s. This reception history constitutes “a living tradition” (text 5, see page 67); its creative fidelity should embolden educators today with hope, as they similarly face the challenges that are theirs in today’s world.

The word “new” and its cognates appear nearly 50 times in the texts that follow. Vatican II could not have envisaged the new questions and challenges that would emerge into the

future. Hence, as another council document urged, the Church must be forever alert to the new “signs of the times” (*Gaudium et spes*, 4). The pope writes: “On the 60th anniversary of *Gravissimum educationis*, the Church celebrates a fruitful educational history, but also faces the imperative of updating her offerings in light of the signs of the times.” (text 5, see page 80). The pope is here alluding to another Vatican II document, the “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today” (*Gaudium et spes*, 4). This reference by the pope to another Vatican II document is instructive. *GE* must not be read in an isolated way, but must be read inter-textually, that is, in the light of the other 15 texts of the council. This approach has characterised the Declaration’s reception history over the last 60 years: *GE* has been interpreted and applied *in the light of the whole vision of Vatican II*, albeit from the perspectives of new emerging contexts. Pope Leo speaks of “the *grace of an overarching vision*, a perspective capable of grasping the horizon, of looking beyond” (text 1, see page 35). And indeed, *echoes* of other central teachings of Vatican II’s overall vision can be heard throughout the pope’s texts that follow in this book. For example: God continues to reach out to all humanity, in the present and into the future, seeking loving friendship and assuring accompaniment and support; the mission of the Church is to promote the Kingdom of God by bringing God’s justice, peace and love to all peoples; the Church exists to engage with and to serve the world and to learn from it; through baptism, all the baptised (lay and ordained) are called to participate in the mission of the Church; the human person has an inherent dignity; the universal call to holiness is a call to intimate relationship with God; dialogue should characterise the Church’s inner life, its relationships with other Christians,

adherents of other religions, and unbelievers; and so on. Reception of the council's teaching on Catholic education must take all its documents into account and the total vision that emerges from them when taken together. Shaped by such teachings, in the Church's mission to promote and embody the Gospel of Jesus Christ, "education is not an ancillary activity, but forms the very fabric of evangelisation" (text 5, see page 63).

Regarding *GE* in particular, the pope writes: "This heritage [of *GE*] is not set in stone: it is *a compass* that continues to point the way and speak of the beauty of *the journey*. Expectations today are no less than those the Church faced 60 years ago. Indeed, they have expanded and become more complex" (text 5, see page 64). The two words "compass" and "journey" here are important. Throughout this collection of texts, Pope Leo uses the word "journey" 14 times. Receiving *GE* over the last 60 years has been a journey, he says, with *GE* as the "compass" for the journey. Pope Francis too had often employed the 'journey' metaphor, particularly in reference to the notion of synodality, with the Greek word *synodos* evoking an image of pilgrims on a path together with other pilgrims, not all of whom are Christians, nor even believers in God. The word *hodos* in Greek means 'way', 'journey', 'road', 'path'; the word *syn* means 'together' or 'with'. Pope Leo does not use that word "synodal", but there are echoes of it here.

Navigating by the stars

Having been an educator himself, Pope Leo knows the power of metaphors to convey meaning – and to inspire the reception of a particular vision. Recurring throughout the following texts is a group of multivalent metaphors – journey, bridge, navigation, map, compass, star, constellation, light, shining. I

say ‘multivalent’ because Pope Leo takes each of these metaphors listed above and extends them in creative ways.

For example, taking his cue from the one-day International Congress on 30 October focusing on the topic “Educational Constellations: A Pact with the Future”, the pope regularly refers to the metaphors of “stars” and “constellations”. Like the conference, the pope here speaks of the global network of educational communities and institutions as constellations. But he then plays with the imagery of “constellation” as a configuration of stars in the night sky in which human viewers perceive a pattern. While viewers at different points around the globe might well see the pattern of a particular constellation in the night sky in a different way, that very difference in perceived patterns is what enables sailors to navigate their journey forward. This further metaphor of ‘navigation’ and ‘navigating’ is a golden thread we also see in the texts that follow. It speaks of journeying towards a destination, knowing that the sky will show us the way. Looking to the heavens for guidance into the future graces educators and students with “the ability to navigate challenges with hope, but also with courageous revision, without losing fidelity to the Gospel” (text 5, see page 80).

Pope Leo also uses the metaphor of a map. While he does not explicitly refer to physical maps that might guide travellers on a journey on land, he does explore the image of a map for travellers on the high seas. But it is a map that is evident from above: “Travellers have always found their way by the stars. Sailors followed the North Star; Polynesians crossed the ocean by memorising star maps. According to the farmers of the Andes, whom I knew as a missionary in Peru, the sky is an open book that marks the seasons of sowing, shearing, and the cycles of life. Even the Magi followed a star to reach Bethlehem and worship

the Baby Jesus” (text 2, see page 43). While *GE* is “the compass”, the Apostolic Letter sees the Global Compact on Education as “the lodestar” for Christian education today (text 5, see page 77).

The metaphor of a “star” is likewise important for Pope Leo in his vision of Catholic education, applying it to both educators and the educated, whether they be young or old in their lifelong education and formation. Moreover, education happens not just in “the school”, but also importantly in family life, liturgical and personal prayer life, in relating with others in community life, in engaging in ways that serve others, and in reflection on daily experience. For Leo, the Church shines in the world especially in its education of the poor. Earlier in the month (on 4 October), Pope Leo had promulgated an Apostolic Exhortation, *Dilexi te*, entitled “On Love for the Poor”. It includes a section “The Church and the education of the poor” (68 – 72), which he refers to four times in the texts below. “I reiterate what I clearly stated in *Dilexi te*: ‘For the Christian faith, the education of the poor is not a favour but a duty’. This genealogy of practical action testifies that, in the Church, pedagogy is never disembodied theory, but flesh, passion and history” (text 5, see page 67, quoting *Dilexi te*, 72).

The pope twice quotes the text from Saint Paul: “... shine like stars in the world” (Phil 2:15), an injunction especially addressed to young students. But to that, he adds an encouragement to their teachers, the passage from the Book of Daniel: “Those who lead many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever.” (Dan 12:3). But the pope goes wider, addressing various audiences in these talks, and calling on them to be “stars” that radiate the joy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ: parents, their children, adults in ongoing formation, educators, and those institutions enabling processes of education. He does give a caveat, emphasising the communal dimension of constellations of education at the

local and global level: “... a single star on its own remains just a point of light. When it joins with others, however, it forms a constellation, like the Southern Cross” (text 2, see page 43).

Formation of the heart

Pope Leo sees a necessary interrelationship between “education” and “formation”, lest the former be seen as a mere transfer of knowledge or data or technological skills. One of the ways he explains this interrelationship between education and formation is through the metaphor of “the heart”. He uses the word 27 times throughout these texts. Once again, the pope’s Augustinian heritage is evident here, particularly his appeal to Augustine’s spirituality of the heart. The importance for the pope of this Augustinian theme is apparent in Pope Leo’s papal coat of arms. There we see a symbolic depiction of a heart pierced by an arrow over an image of a book (the Christian Bible). The official explanation states that this evokes Saint Augustine’s description of his conversion: “You have pierced my heart with your Word” (*The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, Book X, Chapter 6, para. 8). Accordingly, for Pope Leo, “formation”, in close parallel with “education”, must involve a formation of the heart. He speaks of an “authentic” education: “Authentic education, therefore, promotes the integration of faith and reason. They are not opposing poles, but complementary paths for understanding reality, forming character, and cultivating intelligence.” (text 6, see page 84). Among Leo’s additions to the goals of the Global Compact on Education, he called for attention to the interior life. He elsewhere notes: “In regard to the aspect of interiority, Saint Augustine says that ‘the sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within’” (text 3, see page 49). And, of course, in Christian education, “[Jesus] is the Master *par excellence*.

Moreover, he is the Educator *par excellence*. We are his disciples and are in his ‘school!’” (text 4, see page 56). Pope Leo’s declaration on his coat of arms “In Him who is One, we are one” (*In illo uno unum*) is taken from one of the writings of Saint Augustine (*Exposition on Psalm*, 127, 3).

Therefore, for the pope, education and formation should be interrelated. “Christian formation embraces the entire person: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, physical” (text 5, see page 70). He recalls: “what Saint John Henry Newman summed up in the expression: *cor ad cor loquitur* (‘heart speaks unto heart’) and what Saint Augustine said: ‘Do not look without, return to yourself, for truth dwells within you’ (*De Vera Religione*, 39, 72). These words invite us to view formation as a path that teachers and pupils walk together (cf. Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 15 August 1990, 1)” (text 3, see page 50).

Nevertheless, Leo is not promoting a ‘fideism’, where *fides* (faith) and *ratio* (reason) are at odds, with *fides* presumed to have the exclusive inside running. In an “authentic” Catholic education (text 6, see page 84), the two always need to be seen in tandem. And so, Leo addresses the need for Catholic education to be inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary. He uses the word “dialogue” to describe this interactive dynamic. Moreover, he speaks of the need for Catholics “to build bridges of dialogue and peace, even within teaching communities” (text 3, see page 52), to be “open to dialogue and encounter among differences” (text 6, see page 86), to be “always gateways to a civilisation of dialogue and peace” (text 4, see page 57), and, to “engage in dialogue with society” (text 5, see page 70). Grounding all of these dialogues is what the pope calls a “dialogue with the heart... the method is that of listening that recognises the other as an asset, not a threat” (text 5, see page 68).

In these texts, as I noted above, Pope Leo does not use the words “synodality” or “synodal”. Yet, much of what he says about Catholic education might well be interpreted as *education for participation in a synodal church*, i.e., education in synodal conversion. Pope Leo has made it clear that he intends to continue Pope Francis’ vision regarding synodality. At the Consistory of Cardinals in Rome on 7 – 8 January 2026, Pope Leo asked the cardinals to discern with him what two priorities he should concentrate on in his pontificate moving forward. He presented them with four options from which to discern two. The cardinals ended up discerning: continue the focus on Pope Francis’ Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (On the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World); and continue Pope Francis’ emphasis on fashioning “a synodal Church... a Church which listens”.

The need for formation in a synodal way of thinking and relating was a major outcome of the worldwide discernment that took place around the Catholic world (2021–2024). For example, the Frascati document for the Continental Stage, “Enlarge the Space of Your Tent”, which summarised the reports from episcopal conferences around the world, states:

The overwhelming majority of reports indicated the need to provide for *formation in synodality*. Structures alone are not enough: there is a need for ongoing formation to support a widespread synodal culture. This formation must articulate itself in relationship to the local context so as to facilitate synodal conversion in the way participation, authority and leadership are exercised in view of more effectively fulfilling the common mission. It is not simply a matter of providing specific technical or methodological skills. Formation for synodality intersects all dimensions

of Christian life and can only be “an integral formation that includes personal, spiritual, theological, social and practical dimensions. For this, a community of reference is essential, because one principle of ‘walking together’ is the formation of the heart, which transcends concrete knowledge and embraces the whole of life.”³

The vision for Catholic education presented by Pope Leo XIV in the following pages will well serve the Church in its formation for a synodal Church into the future.

*

Jesus says: “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12), and he entrusts to his disciples the ongoing mission: “*You are the light of the world*” (Mt 5:14–16). As Pope Leo states: “The Lord Jesus is not just one of many teachers, he is the Master *par excellence*. Moreover, he is the Educator *par excellence*. We are his disciples and are in his ‘school’. We learn how to discover in his life, namely in the path he has travelled, a horizon of meaning capable of shining a light on all forms of knowledge. May our schools and universities always be places of listening to the Gospel and putting it into practice!” (text 4, see page 56). Accordingly, the pope makes the appeal to educators and to their students: “We must not lose sight of the centrality of Christ, who radiates his light to all the stars” (text 6, see page 83).

Throughout the season of Easter, and at significant liturgical events, an Easter candle stands prominently on the sanctuary of Catholic churches. It is a light that would have been lit from an Easter fire somewhere outside that church at the start of the Easter Vigil ceremony that year. The candle would have

been processed into the darkened church, with the presider proclaiming “the Light of Christ”. And, along the way of the procession – as everyone would have been sharing with their neighbour in the congregation the flame from that one candle with their own little candles – the intensity of the light in the church would have grown and grown, defiantly dispelling the darkness. This liturgical ritual captures the essential Christian call to discipleship, and another golden thread woven throughout these texts from Pope Leo on Catholic education. Jesus says: “I am the light of the world” (Jn 8:12), and he entrusts to his disciples the ongoing mission: “*You* are the light of the world” (Mt 5:14).

Likewise, this liturgical dynamic provides a compelling image for how Pope Leo imagines the mission in which families, students, educators and their institutions are called to participate. The Jesus Way calls us all, the educators and the educated, to be agents of hope, agents of change in our world, beacons of divine light in our own little corner of the globe – shining like stars in the sky on dark nights, especially inspiring and inviting our students into the future to take on the enlightenment and wisdom of Jesus’ way of being human, and to bring light into the darkness of our world.

Reverend Ormond Rush is an Associate Professor of Religion and Theology at ACU’s Institute for Religion and Critical Inquiry. He is a priest of the Catholic Diocese of Townsville, and has a doctorate in theology from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. His areas of expertise include synodality, hermeneutics, and Vatican II.

1

Eucharistic celebration with students from the
Pontifical universities: Homily of
His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

Dear brothers and sisters,

To gather in this place during the Jubilee Year is a gift that we must not take for granted. Above all, it is a gift because to go on a pilgrimage, to pass through the Holy Door, reminds us that life makes sense only when it is lived as a journey, when it knows how to keep moving forward, that is, when it is capable of making the reality of Easter present.

It is good, then, to think how the Church, through celebrating the Jubilee in these months, has been remembering that she constantly needs to undergo conversion and that she must always walk behind Jesus without hesitation and without the temptation to move on ahead of him. Indeed, she is always in need of Easter, that is, of “passing over” from slavery to freedom, from death to life. I hope that all of you experience within yourselves the gift of this hope, and that the Jubilee may be an opportunity through which your lives can begin anew.

Today, I would like to address you who are part of university institutions and all those who, in various ways, dedicate themselves to study, teaching and research. What is the grace that can touch the life of a student, a researcher, a scholar? I would respond in this way: it is the grace of an overarching vision, a perspective capable of grasping the horizon, of looking beyond.

We can see this insight in the Gospel passage just proclaimed (Lk 13:10-17), which presents the picture of a woman who was bent double and, healed by Jesus, can finally receive the grace of a new perspective, a broader vision. This woman's condition resembles the condition of ignorance, which is often linked to being closed in on ourselves and lacking spiritual and intellectual restlessness. She is bent double, turned in on herself, and thus unable to look beyond herself. When human beings

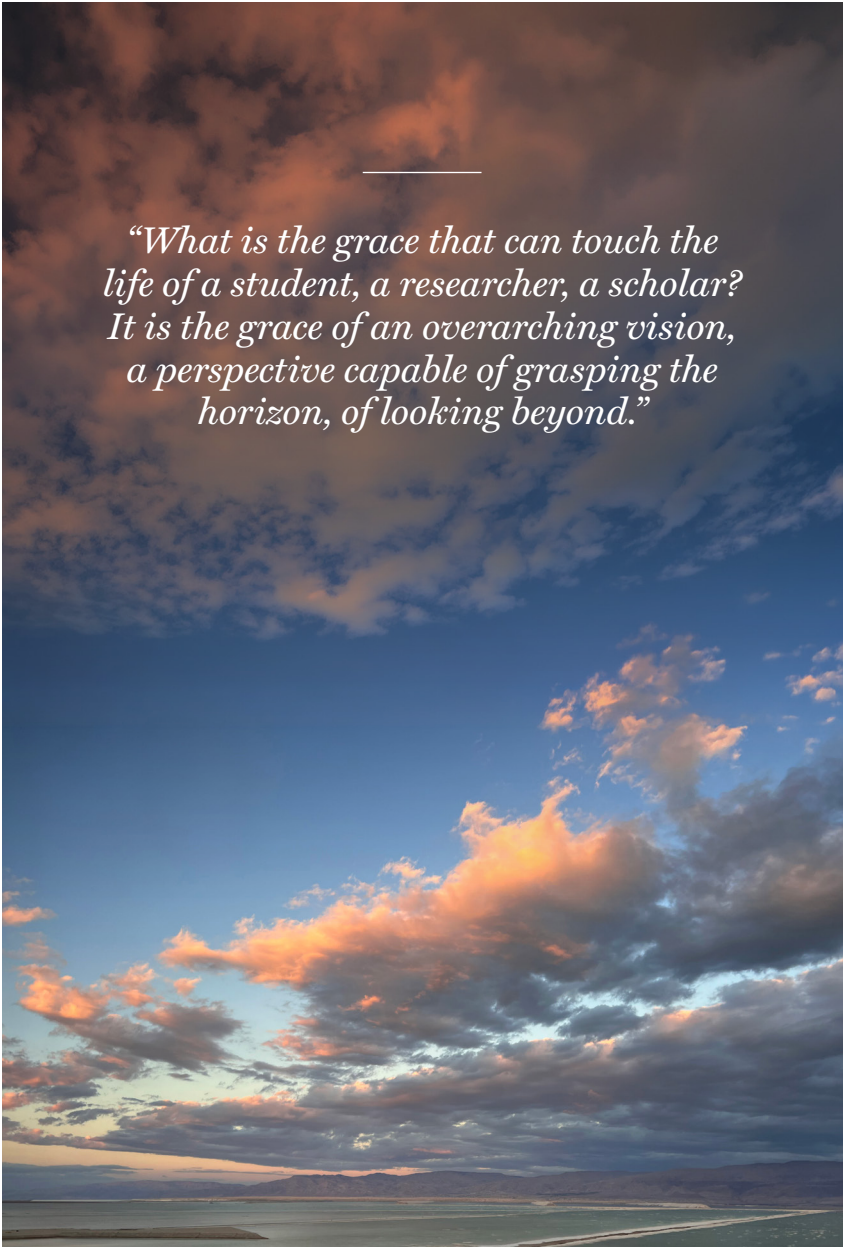
are incapable of seeing beyond themselves, beyond their own experiences, ideas and convictions, beyond their own projects, then they remain imprisoned, enslaved and incapable of forming mature judgments.

Like the bent-over woman of the Gospel, the risk is always that of remaining prisoners of our self-centred perspective. Yet, in reality, many of the things that truly matter in life – we might say, the most fundamental things – do not come from ourselves; we receive them from others. They come to us through our teachers, encounters and life experiences. This is an experience of grace, for it heals us from self-absorption. This is a genuine healing that, just as for the woman in the Gospel, allows us once again to stand upright before life and its reality, and to look at them with a wider perspective. The healed woman receives hope, for she can finally lift her eyes and see something different, can see in a new way. This especially happens when we encounter Christ in our lives, when we open ourselves up to a life-changing truth capable of making us step out of ourselves and freeing us from our self-absorption.

Those who study are “lifted up”, broadening their horizons and perspectives in order to recover a vision that does not look downward, but is capable of looking upward: toward God, others and the mystery of life. Indeed, the grace of being a student, researcher or scholar means accepting a broad vision that can see far into the distance; that does not simplify problems nor fear questions; that overcomes intellectual laziness and, in doing so, also defeats spiritual decay.

Let us always remember that spirituality needs this perspective, to which the study of theology, philosophy and the other disciplines contribute in a particular way. Today, we have become experts in the smallest details of reality, yet we

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have lost the capability of an overarching vision that integrates things through a deeper and greater meaning. The Christian experience, however, wishes to teach us to look at life and reality with a unified gaze, capable of embracing everything while rejecting merely partial ways of thinking.

I thus urge you, students, researchers and teachers alike, not to forget that the Church needs this unified perspective for both today and tomorrow. We can look to the example of men and women such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Teresa of Avila, Edith Stein and many others who knew how to integrate research into their lives and spiritual journey. We likewise are called to advance in our intellectual endeavours and the search for truth without separating them from life. It is important to cultivate this unity so that what happens in university classrooms and educational environments of all kinds does not remain an abstract intellectual exercise. Instead, it becomes capable of transforming life, and helps us to deepen our relationship with Christ, to understand better the mystery of the Church, and makes us bold witnesses of the Gospel in society.

Dearest friends, study, research and teaching bring with them an important educational responsibility, and I wish to encourage universities to embrace this calling with passion and commitment. To educate is similar to the miracle recounted in today's Gospel, for the activity of the educator is to lift people up, helping them become themselves and able to develop informed consciences and the capacity for critical thinking. Pontifical universities must be able to continue this "activity" of Jesus. This is a true act of love, for it is a form of charity expressed through study, knowledge and the sincere search for what is true and worth living for. To feed the hunger for truth and meaning is an

essential task, since without them we would fall into emptiness and even succumb to death.

On this journey, each of us can also rediscover the greatest gift of all, which is to know that we are not alone and that we belong to someone, as the Apostle Paul affirms: “For all who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’...” (Rom 8:14-15). Indeed, what we receive while we are searching for the truth and devoting ourselves to study helps us to discover that we are not creatures cast by chance into the world, but that we belong to someone who loves us and who has a plan of love for our lives.

Dear brothers and sisters, together with you I ask the Lord that the experience of study and research during your university years may render you capable of this new perspective. May your academic journey help you to know how to speak, narrate, deepen and proclaim the reasons for the hope that is in us (cf. 1 Pet 3:15). May the university form you to be men and women who are never bent in on themselves but always upright, capable of bringing the joy and consolation of the Gospel wherever you go.

May the Virgin Mary, Seat of Wisdom, accompany and intercede for you.

St Peter's Basilica

Monday 27 October 2025

2

Meeting with students on the occasion of
The Jubilee of the World of Education:
Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

Dear young people, good morning!

What a joy it is to meet you! Thank you! I have been looking forward to this moment with great excitement. Being with you reminds me of the years when I taught mathematics to lively young people like you. Thank you for accepting the invitation to come here today and to share your reflections and hopes, which I will pass on to our friends throughout the world.

I would like to begin by recalling Pier Giorgio Frassati, an Italian student who, as you know, was canonised during this Jubilee Year. With his passionate love for God and neighbour, this young saint coined two phrases that he often repeated, almost like a motto: “To live without faith... is not living but simply getting along” and “To the heights”. These are very true and encouraging words. So I say to you as well: have the courage to live life to the fullest. Do not settle for appearances or fads; a life stifled by fleeting pleasures will never satisfy us. Instead, let each of you say in your heart: “I dream of more, Lord; I long for something greater; inspire me!” This desire is your strength and expresses well the commitment of young people who envision a better society and refuse to be mere spectators. I encourage you, therefore, to keep striving “toward the heights”, lighting the beacon of hope in the dark hours of history. How wonderful it would be if one day your generation were remembered as the “generation plus”, remembered for the extra drive you brought to the Church and the world.

But, dear young people, this cannot remain the dream of one person alone. Let us unite to make it happen, bearing witness together to the joy of believing in Jesus Christ. How can we achieve this? The answer is simple: through education, one of the most beautiful and powerful tools for changing the world.

Five years ago, our beloved Pope Francis launched the great project of the Global Compact on Education, an alliance of all those who, in various ways, work in the field of education and culture, to engage younger generations in universal fraternity. You, in fact, are not just recipients of education, but its protagonists. That is why today I ask you to join forces to open a new season of education, in which all of us – young people and adults – become credible witnesses of truth and peace. I say to you: you are called to be truth-speakers and peacemakers, people who stand by their word and are builders of peace. Involve your peers in the search for truth and the cultivation of peace, expressing these two passions with your lives, your words and your daily actions.

In this regard, I would like to add to the example of Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati a reflection by Saint John Henry Newman, a scholarly saint who will soon be proclaimed a Doctor of the Church. He said that knowledge grows when it is shared, and that it is through the conversation of minds that the flame of truth is kindled. Similarly, true peace is born when many lives, like stars, come together and form a pattern. Together, we can form educational constellations that guide the path forward.

As a former teacher of mathematics and physics, allow me to do some calculations with you. Perhaps you will take a test in mathematics shortly. We will see. Do you know how many stars there are in the observable universe? An impressive and wonderful number: a sextillion stars – that is, a [number] one followed by 21 zeros! If we divided them among the eight billion people on Earth, each person would have hundreds of billions of stars. With the naked eye, on clear nights, we can see about five thousand. Even though there are billions upon billions of stars,

we only see the closest constellations; yet these are enough to point us in a direction, as when navigating the sea.

Travellers have always found their way by the stars. Sailors followed the North Star; Polynesians crossed the ocean by memorising star maps. According to the farmers of the Andes, whom I knew as a missionary in Peru, the sky is an open book that marks the seasons of sowing, shearing, and the cycles of life. Even the Magi followed a star to reach Bethlehem and worship the Baby Jesus.

Like them, you too have guiding stars: parents, teachers, priests and good friends, who are like compasses that help you not to lose your way amid the ups and downs of life. Like them, you are called to become shining witnesses for those around you. But, as I said, a single star on its own remains just a point of light. When it joins with others, however, it forms a constellation, like the Southern Cross. This is how it is with you: each of you is a star, and together you are called to guide the future. Education brings people together into lively communities and organises ideas into constellations of meaning. As the prophet Daniel writes, “Those who lead many to righteousness shall shine like the stars forever” (Dan 12:3). How wonderful! We are stars indeed, because we are sparks of God. To educate means to cultivate this gift.

Education, in fact, teaches us to look upward, always higher. When Galileo Galilei pointed his telescope at the sky, he discovered new worlds: the moons of Jupiter, the mountains of the Moon. Education is like a telescope that allows you to look beyond and discover what you would not see on your own. So do not remain fixated on your smartphones and their fleeting bursts of images; instead, look to the sky, to the heights.

Dear young people, you yourselves proposed the first of the new challenges that call for our commitment in the Global Compact on Education, expressing a strong and clear desire. You said: “Help us in our education of the interior life.” I was truly struck by this request. Having a great deal of knowledge is not enough if we do not know who we are or what the meaning of life is. Without silence, without listening, without prayer, even the light of the stars goes out. We can know a great deal about the world and still ignore our own hearts. You too may have experienced that feeling of emptiness or restlessness that does not leave you in peace. In the most serious cases, we see episodes of distress, violence, bullying and oppression – even young people who isolate themselves and no longer want to relate to others. I think that behind this suffering lies also a void created by a society that has forgotten how to form the spiritual dimension of the human person, focusing only on the technical, social or moral aspects of life.

As a young man, Saint Augustine was brilliant but deeply unsatisfied, as we read in his autobiography, *The Confessions*. He searched everywhere – in success and in pleasure – and got involved in all sorts of things, but he could find neither truth nor peace. When he discovered God in his own heart, he wrote a very profound phrase that applies to all of us: “My heart is restless until it rests in you.” This is what it means to educate ourselves for the interior life: to listen to our restlessness and not flee from it or fill it with things that do not satisfy. Our desire for the infinite is a compass that tells us: “Do not settle – you are made for something greater;” “do not simply get along, but live.”

The second of the new educational challenges is a commitment that affects us every day and in which you are teachers: digital education. You live in it, and that is not a bad thing; there are



“Education, in fact, teaches us to look upward, always higher... So do not remain fixated on your smartphones and their fleeting bursts of images; instead, look to the sky, to the heights.”

enormous opportunities for study and communication. But do not let the algorithm write your story! Be the authors yourselves; use technology wisely, but do not let technology use you.

Artificial intelligence is also a great novelty – one of the *rerum novarum*, or “new things”, of our time. However, it is not enough to be “intelligent” in virtual reality; we must also treat one another humanely, nurturing emotional, spiritual, social and ecological intelligence. Therefore, I say to you: learn to humanise the digital, building it as a space of fraternity and creativity – not a cage where you lock yourselves in, not an addiction or an escape. Instead of being tourists on the web, be prophets in the digital world!

In this regard, we have a very timely example of holiness: Saint Carlo Acutis. He was a young man who did not become a slave to the internet, but rather used it skilfully for good. Saint Carlo combined his beautiful faith with his passion for computers, creating a website on Eucharistic miracles and thus making the internet a tool for evangelisation. His initiative teaches us that the digital world is educational when it does not close us in on ourselves but opens us to others – when it does not place us at the centre but orients us toward God and others.

Dear friends, we finally come to the third great challenge that I entrust to you today – the one at the heart of the new Global Compact on Education: education for peace. You can see how much our future is threatened by war and hatred, which divide people. Can this future be changed? Certainly! How? With an education for peace that is disarmed and disarming. It is not enough, in fact, to silence weapons: we must disarm hearts, renouncing all violence and vulgarity. In this way, a disarming and disarmed education creates equality and growth for all, recognising the equal dignity of every young person, without

ever dividing young people between the privileged few who have access to expensive schools and the many who do not have access to education. With great confidence in you, I invite you to be peacemakers first and foremost where you live – in your families, at school, in sports, and among your friends – reaching out to those who come from other cultures.

In conclusion, dear friends, do not look to shooting stars, on which fragile wishes are entrusted. Look higher still, toward Jesus Christ, “the sun of righteousness” (cf. Lk 1:78), who will always guide you along the paths of life.

Audience Hall

Thursday 30 October 2025

3

Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to educators
on the occasion of The Jubilee of
the World of Education

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Peace be with you!

Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

I am very pleased to meet you, educators who have come from all over the world and work at every level from elementary schools to universities.

As we know, the Church is both Mother and Teacher (cf. Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra*, 15 May 1961, 1), and you contribute to personifying her face for many pupils and students by dedicating yourselves to their education. Thanks to the luminous array of charisms, methodologies, pedagogies and experiences that you offer, and your “polyphonic” involvement in the Church, in dioceses, in congregations, religious institutes, associations and movements, you guarantee millions of young people a proper formation, always keeping the good of the person at the centre of the transmission of humanistic and scientific knowledge.

I too have been a teacher in the educational institutions of the Order of Saint Augustine. I would like, therefore, to share my experience with you by focusing on four aspects of the doctrine of the *Doctor Gratiae* that I consider fundamental to Christian education: interiority, unity, love and joy. These are the principles that I would like to become the key elements of our journey together, making this meeting the beginning of a shared path of mutual growth and enrichment.

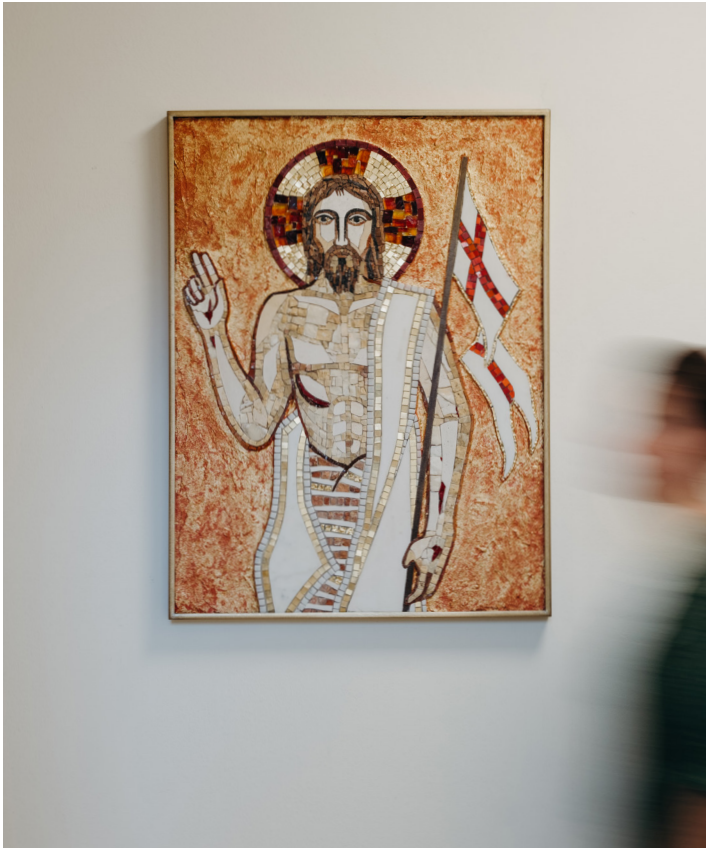
In regard to the aspect of interiority, Saint Augustine says that “the sound of our words strikes the ears, the Master is within” (In *Epistolam Ioannis ad Parthos Tractatus* 3,13), and he adds: “Those whom the Spirit does not teach interiorly depart without having learned anything” (ibid.). He thus reminds us that it is a mistake to think that beautiful words or good classrooms,

laboratories and libraries are enough to teach. These are only means and physical spaces, certainly useful, but the Teacher is within. Truth does not spread through sounds, walls and corridors, but in the profound encounter between people, without which any educational endeavour is doomed to fail.

We live in a world dominated by technological screens and filters that are often superficial, whereas students need help to get in touch with their inner selves. And not only them, but educators too, who are often tired and overburdened with bureaucratic tasks, run the real risk of forgetting what Saint John Henry Newman summed up in the expression: *cor ad cor loquitur* (“heart speaks unto heart”) and what Saint Augustine said: “Do not look without, return to yourself, for truth dwells within you” (*De Vera Religione*, 39, 72). These words invite us to view formation as a path that teachers and pupils walk together (cf. Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, 15 August 1990, 1). They are aware that they are not searching in vain, and at the same time know that they must continue searching even after having made discoveries. Only this humble and shared effort – which in school contexts takes the form of an educational project – can bring students and teachers closer to the truth.

This brings us to the second word: unity. As you may know, my motto is: *In illo uno unum*. This is also an Augustinian expression (cf. *Ennaratio in Psalmum* 127, 3), which reminds us that only in Christ do we truly find unity: as members united to the Head and as companions on the journey of continuous learning in life.

The dimension of “with” is consistently present in the writings of Saint Augustine, and it is fundamental in educational contexts



*“Sharing knowledge is not enough for teaching:
love is needed. Only then will knowledge be
beneficial to those who receive it...”*

as a challenge to “decentre” oneself and as a stimulus to grow. For this reason, I have decided to revisit and update the Global Compact on Education project, which was one of the prophetic insights of my venerable predecessor Pope Francis. After all, our being does not belong to us, as the Teacher of Hippo teaches: “your soul belongs not just to you but to your brothers and sisters” (Ep. 243, 4). If this is true in a general sense, it is even more so in the reciprocity that is typical of education, in which the sharing of knowledge can only be seen as a great act of love.

Indeed, this very word – love – is our third word. It makes us reflect deeply on an Augustinian teaching that states: “The love of God is the first commandment, the love of neighbour is the first practice” (In *Evangelium Ioannis Tractatus* 17, 8). In the field of education, therefore, each one of us might ask ourselves what commitment are we making to address the most urgent needs; what efforts are we making to build bridges of dialogue and peace, even within teaching communities; what skills are we developing to overcome preconceptions or narrow views; what openness are we showing in co-learning processes; and what efforts are we making to meet and respond to the needs of the most fragile, poor and excluded? Sharing knowledge is not enough for teaching: love is needed. Only then will knowledge be beneficial to those who receive it, in itself and above all, for the charity it conveys. Teaching should never be separated from love. One of the current difficulties in our societies is that we no longer know how to value sufficiently the great contribution that teachers and educators make to the community. But we need to be careful, because damaging the social and cultural role of educators means jeopardising our own future, and a crisis in the transmission of knowledge carries with it a crisis of hope.

This brings us to the last key word: joy. True teachers educate with a smile, and their goal is to awaken smiles in the depths of their students' souls. Today, in our educational contexts, it is worrying to see the increasing symptoms of widespread inner fragility, at all ages. We cannot close our eyes to these silent cries for help; on the contrary, we must strive to identify their underlying causes. Artificial intelligence, in particular, with its technical, cold and standardised knowledge, can further cut off students who are already isolated, giving them the illusion that they do not need others or, worse still, the feeling that they are not worthy of them. The role of educators, on the other hand, is a human endeavour; and the very joy of the educational process is a fully human engagement, a “flame to melt our souls together, and out of many to make but one” (Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, IV, 8,13).

Therefore, dear friends, I invite you to make these values – interiority, unity, love and joy – the “key elements” of your mission to your students, remembering the words of Jesus: “as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me” (Mt 25:40). Brothers and sisters, I thank you for the valuable work you do! I give you my heartfelt blessing, and I will pray for you.

St Peter's Square

Friday 31 October 2025

4

Holy Mass of the Jubilee of the World of Education and Proclamation of Saint John Henry Newman as “Doctor of the Church”: Homily of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV

On this Solemnity of All Saints, it is a great joy to include Saint John Henry Newman among the Doctors of the Church, and, at the same time, on the occasion of the Jubilee of the World of Education, to name him, together with Saint Thomas Aquinas, as co-patron of the Church's educational mission. Newman's impressive spiritual and cultural stature will surely serve as an inspiration to new generations whose hearts thirst for the infinite, and who, through research and knowledge, are willing to undertake that journey which, as the ancients said, takes us *per aspera ad astra*, through difficulties to the stars.

The lives of the saints teach us that it is possible to live passionately amidst the complexity of the present, without neglecting the apostolic mandate to "shine like stars in the world" (Phil 2:15). On this solemn occasion, I wish to say to teachers and educational institutions: "Shine today like stars in the world" through your authentic commitment to the collective search for truth and to sharing it with generosity and integrity. Indeed, you do so through your service to young people, especially the poor, and your daily witness to the fact that "Christian love is prophetic: it works miracles" (Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, 120).

The Jubilee is a pilgrimage of hope, and all of you, in the great field of education, know well how much hope is an indispensable seed! When I reflect on schools and universities, I think of them as laboratories of prophecy, where hope is lived, and constantly discussed and encouraged.

This is also the meaning of the Beatitudes proclaimed in today's Gospel. The Beatitudes bring with them a new interpretation of reality. They are both the path and the message of Jesus the Teacher. At first glance, it seems impossible to declare as blessed those who are poor, or those who hunger and thirst for justice, the persecuted or the peacemakers.

Yet, that which seems inconceivable in the world's thinking is filled with meaning and light when brought into contact with the Kingdom of God. In the saints, we see this kingdom approaching and becoming present among us. Saint Matthew rightly presents the Beatitudes as a teaching, depicting Jesus as a Master, who transmits a new perspective on things, which is reflected in his own journey. The Beatitudes, however, are not just another teaching; they are the teaching par excellence. In the same way, the Lord Jesus is not just one of many teachers, he is the Master par excellence. Moreover, he is the Educator par excellence. We are his disciples and are in his "school". We learn how to discover in his life, namely in the path he has travelled, a horizon of meaning capable of shining a light on all forms of knowledge. May our schools and universities always be places of listening to the Gospel and putting it into practice!

Responding to today's challenges may sometimes seem beyond our capabilities, but this is not the case. Let us not allow pessimism to defeat us! I recall what my beloved predecessor Pope Francis emphasised in his Address to the First Plenary Assembly of the Dicastery for Culture and Education: that we must work together to set humanity free from the encircling gloom of nihilism, which is perhaps the most dangerous malady of contemporary culture, since it threatens to "cancel" hope. This reference to the darkness that surrounds us echoes one of Saint John Henry Newman's best-known texts, the hymn *Lead, Kindly Light*. In that beautiful prayer, we come to realise that we are far from home, our feet are unsteady, we cannot interpret clearly the way ahead. Yet none of this impedes us, since we have found our Guide: "Lead, Kindly Light, amid th'encircling gloom, Lead Thou me on;" "Lead, Kindly Light, The night is dark, and I

am far from home, Lead Thou me on.”

The task of education is precisely to offer this Kindly Light to those who might otherwise remain imprisoned by the particularly insidious shadows of pessimism and fear. For this reason, I would like to say to you: let us disarm the false reasons for resignation and powerlessness, and let us share the great reasons for hope in today’s world. Let us reflect upon and point out to others those “constellations” that transmit light and guidance at this present time, which is darkened by so much injustice and uncertainty. I thus encourage you to ensure that schools, universities and every educational context, even those that are informal or street-based, are always gateways to a civilisation of dialogue and peace. Through your lives, let the “great multitude” shine forth, of which the *Book of Revelation* speaks in today’s liturgy, and which “no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages,” and which stood “before the Lamb” (7:9).

In the biblical text, one of the elders observing the multitude asks: “Who are these... and from where have they come” (Rev 7:13). In this regard, in the field of education too, the Christian gaze rests on those who have come “out of the great tribulation” (v. 14) and recognises in them the faces of so many brothers and sisters of every language and culture who, through the narrow gate of Jesus, have entered into the fullness of life. And so, once again, we must ask ourselves: “Does this mean that the less gifted are not human beings? Or that the weak do not have the same dignity as ourselves? Are those born with fewer opportunities of lesser value as human beings? Should they limit themselves merely to surviving? The worth of our societies, and our own future, depends on the answers we give to these

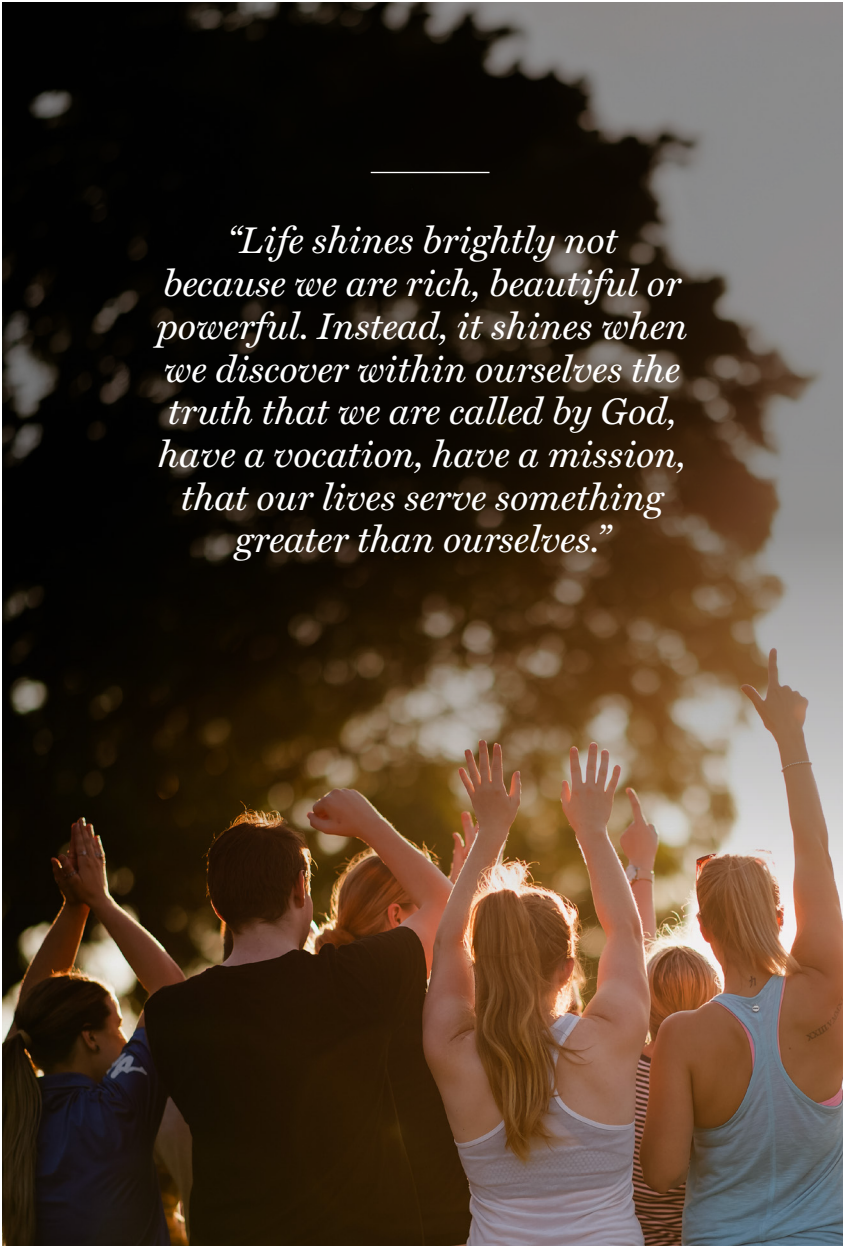
questions” (Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, 95). We can say, too, that the evangelical value of our education also depends on the answers we give.

The lasting legacy of Saint John Henry Newman includes some very significant contributions to the theory and practice of education. He wrote, “God has created me to do Him some definite service; He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next” (*Meditations and Devotions*, III, I, 2). In these words, we find beautifully expressed the mystery of the dignity of every human person, and also the variety of gifts distributed by God.

Life shines brightly not because we are rich, beautiful or powerful. Instead, it shines when we discover within ourselves the truth that we are called by God, have a vocation, have a mission, that our lives serve something greater than ourselves. Every single creature has a role to play. The contribution that each person can make is uniquely valuable, and the task of educational communities is to encourage and cherish that contribution. Let us not forget that at the heart of the educational journey we do not find abstract individuals but real people, especially those who seem to be underperforming according to the parameters of economies that exclude or even kill them. We are called to form people, so that they may shine like stars in their full dignity.

We can say, then, that from a Christian perspective education helps everyone to become saints. Nothing less will do. Pope Benedict XVI, on his Apostolic Journey to Great Britain in September 2010, during which he beatified John Henry Newman, invited young people to become saints with these words: “What God wants most of all for each one of you is that you should become holy. He loves you much more than

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you could ever begin to imagine.” This is the universal call to holiness that the Second Vatican Council made an essential part of its message (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, Chapter V). And holiness is intended for everyone, without exception, as a personal and communal journey marked out by the Beatitudes.

I pray that Catholic education will help each person to discover their own call to holiness. Saint Augustine, whom Saint John Henry Newman greatly admired, once said that we are fellow students who have one Teacher, whose school is on earth and whose chair is in heaven (cf. Sermon. 292,1).

St Peter's Square
Saturday 1 November 2025

PART I EDUCATION

5

*Drawing New Maps of Hope: Apostolic Letter of
Pope Leo XIV on the eve of the 60th anniversary of
Conciliar Declaration *Gravissimum educationis**

1. Preamble

1.1. Drawing new maps of hope. 28 October 2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, on the extreme importance and current relevance of education in human life. With that text, the Second Vatican Council reminded the Church that education is not an ancillary activity, but forms the very fabric of evangelisation: it is the concrete way in which the Gospel becomes an educational gesture, a relationship, a culture. Today, in the face of rapid change and disorienting uncertainties, that legacy is showing surprising resilience. Where educational communities allow themselves to be guided by the word of Christ, they do not retreat, but are revitalised; they do not build walls, but bridges. They respond with creativity, opening up new possibilities for the transmission of knowledge and meaning in schools, universities, professional and civic training, school and youth ministry, and research, because the Gospel does not grow old but makes “all things new” (Rev 21:5). Each generation hears it as a regenerating novelty. Each generation is responsible for the Gospel and for discovering its seminal and multiplying power.

1.2. We live in a complex, fragmented, digitised educational environment. Precisely for this reason, it is wise to pause and refocus our gaze on the “cosmology of Christian *paideia*”: a vision that, over the centuries, has been able to renew itself and positively inspire all the multifaceted aspects of education. Since its origins, the Gospel has generated “educational constellations”: experiences that are both humble and powerful, capable of interpreting the times, of preserving the unity between faith and reason, between thought and life, between knowledge and justice. In stormy weather, they have been a lifeline; in calm

weather, they have been a sail unfurled. A beacon in the night to guide navigation.

1.3. The Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* has lost none of its potency. Since its reception, it has given rise to a constellation of works and charisms that still guide the way today: schools and universities, movements and institutes, lay associations, religious congregations, and national and international networks. Together, these living bodies have consolidated a spiritual and pedagogical heritage capable of traversing the 21st century and responding to the most pressing challenges. This heritage is not set in stone: it is a compass that continues to point the way and speak of the beauty of the journey. Expectations today are no less than those the Church faced 60 years ago. Indeed, they have expanded and become more complex. Faced with the many millions of children around the world who still do not have access to primary education, how can we fail to act? Confronted with the dramatic educational emergencies caused by wars, migration, inequalities and various forms of poverty, how can we not feel the urgency to renew our commitment? Education, as I recalled in my Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, “is one of the highest expressions of Christian charity”⁴. The world needs this form of hope.

2. A dynamic history

2.1. The Church is “mother and teacher”⁵ not by supremacy, but through service: she accompanies the growth of freedom, taking on the mission of the Divine Master so that everyone “may have life, and have it abundantly” (Jn 10:10). The educational styles that have succeeded one another show a vision of man as the image of God, called to truth and goodness, and a multiplicity of methods at the service of this calling. Educational charisms



*“Education is one of the highest expressions
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form of hope.”*

are not rigid formulas: they are original responses to the needs of each era.

2.2. In the early centuries, the Desert Fathers taught wisdom through parables and apophthegms; they rediscovered the path to the essential, to discipline of speech and guardianship of the heart; they transmitted a pedagogy of the gaze that recognises God everywhere. Saint Augustine, grafting biblical wisdom onto the Greco-Roman tradition, understood that the authentic teacher arouses the desire for truth, educates freedom to read the signs and listen to the inner voice. Monasticism perpetuated this tradition in the most inaccessible places, where for decades the classical works were studied, commented on and taught, so much so that without this silent work in the service of culture, many masterpieces would not have survived to the present day. Then, “from the heart of the Church”, the first universities were born, which from their origins proved to be “an incomparable centre of creativity and dissemination of knowledge for the good of humanity”⁶. In their halls, speculative thought found, through the mediation of the Mendicant Orders, the possibility of structuring itself solidly and pushing itself to the frontiers of science. Many religious congregations took their first steps in these fields of knowledge, enriching education in a pedagogically innovative and socially visionary way.

2.3. It has expressed itself in many ways. In the *Ratio Studiorum*, the richness of the scholastic tradition blends with Ignatian spirituality, adapting a curriculum that is as articulated as it is interdisciplinary and open to experimentation. In 17th century Rome, Saint Joseph Calasanz opened free schools for the poor, sensing that literacy and numeracy are a matter of dignity even before they are a matter of competence. In France, Saint

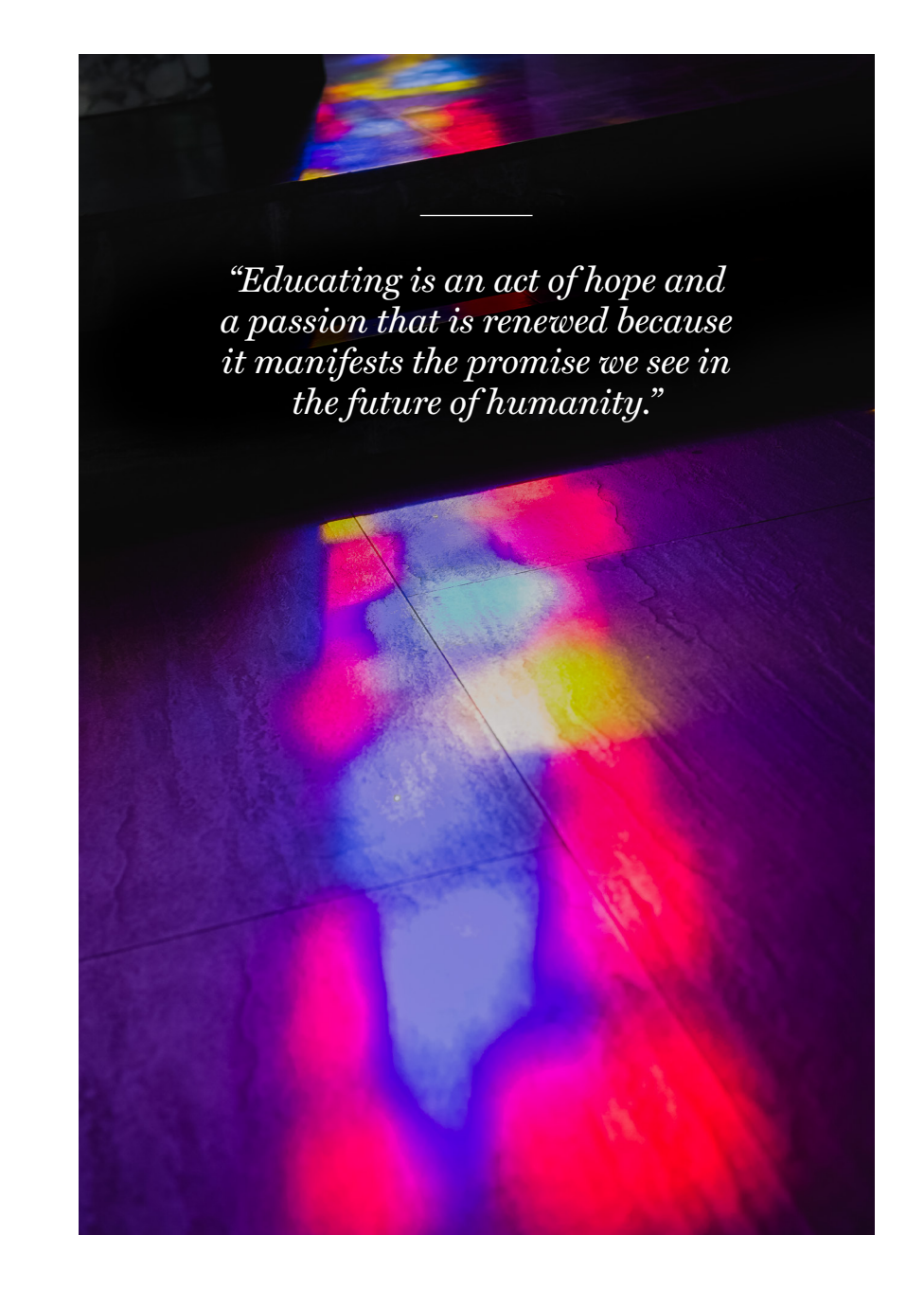
John Baptist de La Salle, “realising the injustice caused by the exclusion of the children of workers and ordinary people from the educational system”⁷, founded the Brothers of the Christian Schools. At the beginning of the 19th century, again in France, Saint Marcellin Champagnat dedicated himself “wholeheartedly to the mission of educating and evangelising children and young people, especially those most in need, during a period when access to education continued to be the privilege of a few”⁸. Similarly, Saint John Bosco, with his “preventive method”, transformed discipline into reasonableness and closeness. Courageous women such as Vicenta María López y Vicuña, Francesca Cabrini, Josephine Bakhita, Maria Montessori, Katharine Drexel and Elizabeth Ann Seton opened doors for girls, migrants and the marginalised. I reiterate what I clearly stated in *Dilexi te*: “For the Christian faith, the education of the poor is not a favour but a duty”⁹. This genealogy of practical action testifies that, in the Church, pedagogy is never disembodied theory, but flesh, passion and history.

3. A living tradition

3.1. Christian education is a collective endeavour: no one educates alone. The educational community is a “we” where teachers, students, families, administrative and service staff, pastors and civil society converge to generate life.¹⁰ This “we” prevents water from stagnating in the swamp of “it has always been done this way” and forces it to flow, to nourish, to irrigate. The foundation remains the same: the person, image of God (Gen 1:26), capable of truth and relationship. Therefore, the question of the relationship between faith and reason is not an optional chapter: “Religious Truth is not only a portion, but a condition of general knowledge”¹¹. These words of Saint John Henry Newman – whom, in the context of this Jubilee of

the World of Education, I have the great joy of declaring co-patron of the Church's educational mission together with Saint Thomas Aquinas – are an invitation to renew our commitment to knowledge that is as intellectually responsible and rigorous as it is deeply human. We must also be careful not to fall into the trap of an enlightenment of a *fides* paired exclusively with *ratio*. We need to emerge from the shallows by recovering an empathic and open vision, and to understand better how humankind understands itself today in order to develop and deepen our teaching. This is why desire and the heart must not be separated from knowledge: it would mean splitting the person. Catholic universities and schools are places where questions are not silenced, and doubt is not banished, but accompanied. The heart, there, dialogues with the heart, and the method is that of listening that recognises the other as an asset, not a threat. *Cor ad cor loquitur* was Saint John Henry Newman's cardinal's motto, taken from a letter of Saint Francis de Sales: "Sincerity of heart, not abundance of words, touches the hearts of men".

3.2. Educating is an act of hope and a passion that is renewed because it manifests the promise we see in the future of humanity.¹² The specificity, depth and breadth of educational action is the work – as mysterious as it is real – of "making the being flourish [...] is taking care of the soul", as we read in Plato's *Apology of Socrates* (30a–b). It is a "profession of promises": it promises time, confidence, skill; it promises justice and mercy; it promises the courage of the truth and the balm of consolation. Educating is a labour of love that is handed down from generation to generation, mending the torn fabric of relations and restoring the weight of promise to words: "Every man is capable of truth, yet the journey is much more bearable when one goes forward with the help of another"¹³. Truth is sought in community.



“Educating is an act of hope and a passion that is renewed because it manifests the promise we see in the future of humanity.”

4. The compass of *Gravissimum educationis*

4.1. The Conciliar Declaration *Gravissimum educationis* reaffirms the right of every person to education, and indicates the family as the first school of humanity. The ecclesial community is called upon to support environments that integrate faith and culture, respect the dignity of all, and engage in dialogue with society. The document warns against reducing education to functional training or an economic tool: a person is not a “skills profile”, cannot be reduced to a predictable algorithm, but is a face, a story, a vocation.

4.2. Christian formation embraces the entire person: spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, physical. It does not pit manual and theoretical skills, science and humanism, technology and conscience against each other; rather, it demands that professionalism be imbued with ethics, and that ethics be not an abstract concept but a daily practice. Education does not measure its value only on the axis of efficiency: it measures it according to dignity, justice, the capacity to serve the common good. This integral anthropological vision must remain the cornerstone of Catholic pedagogy. Following in the wake of the thought of Saint John Henry Newman, it goes against a strictly mercantilist approach that often forces education today to be measured in terms of functionality and practical utility.¹⁴

4.3. These principles are not memories from the past. They are guiding stars. They say that the truth is sought together; that freedom is not a whim, but an answer; that authority is not domination, but service. In the educational context, one must never “claim to possess a monopoly on truth, either in its analysis of problems or its proposal of concrete solutions”¹⁵. Instead, “knowing best how to approach them is more important than providing immediate responses to why things happen or how to

deal with them. The aim is to learn how to confront problems, for these are always different, since every generation is new, and faces new challenges, dreams and questions”¹⁶. Catholic education has the task of rebuilding trust in a world riven with conflicts and fears, remembering that we are sons and daughters, not orphans; fraternity is born of this awareness.

5. The centrality of the person

5.1. Putting the person at the centre means educating them to see with the far-sightedness of Abraham (Gen 15:5): helping them discover the meaning of life, their inalienable dignity, and their responsibility towards others. Education is not only the transmission of content, but also the learning of virtues. It forms citizens capable of serving and believers capable of witnessing, men and women who are freer, no longer alone. And formation cannot be improvised. I fondly remember the years I spent in the beloved Diocese of Chiclayo, visiting the Catholic University of San Toribio de Mogrovejo, the opportunities I had to address the academic community, saying: “We are not born professionals; every university itinerary is built step by step, book by book, year by year, sacrifice after sacrifice”¹⁷.

5.2. The Catholic school is an environment in which faith, culture and life intertwine. It is not simply an institution, but rather a living environment in which the Christian vision permeates every discipline and every interaction. Educators are called to a responsibility that goes beyond the work contract: their witness has the same value as their lessons. For this reason, the formation of teachers – scientific, pedagogic, cultural and spiritual – is decisive. Sharing the common educational mission also demands a path of common formation, “an initial and permanent project of formation that is able to grasp the educational challenges of the present time and to provide the

most effective tools for dealing with them... This implies that educators must be willing to learn and develop knowledge and be open to the renewal and updating of methodologies, but open also to spiritual and religious formation and sharing”¹⁸. Technical updates are not enough: it is necessary to cultivate a heart that listens, a gaze that encourages, and an intelligence that discerns.

5.3. The family remains the first place of education. Catholic schools collaborate with parents; they do not substitute them, because the “duty... devolves primarily on them”¹⁹. The educational alliance requires intentionality, listening and co-responsibility. It is built with processes, tools, shared assessments. It is both hard work and a blessing: when it works, it inspires trust; when it fails, everything becomes more fragile.

6. Identity and subsidiarity

6.1. *Gravissimum educationis* already accorded great importance to the principle of subsidiarity and the fact that circumstances vary according to different local ecclesial contexts. However, the Second Vatican Council articulated the right to education and its founding principles as universally valid. It highlighted the responsibilities placed on both parents and the state. It considered the provision of an education that enables students to “evaluate moral values with a right conscience”²⁰ to be a “sacred right” and called on civil authorities to respect this right. It also warned against subordinating education to the labour market and to the often harsh and inhuman logic of finance.

6.2. Christian education resembles a choreography. My late Predecessor Pope Francis said: “work to bring about a new ‘choreography’, one that respects the ‘dance’ of life by putting the human person at the centre”²¹. To form the “whole” person means avoiding compartmentalisation. When it is true, faith is not an added “subject” but a breath that oxygenates every other



“The Catholic school is an environment in which faith, culture and life intertwine. It is not simply an institution, but rather a living environment in which the Christian vision permeates every discipline and every interaction.”

subject. Thus, Catholic education becomes leaven in the human community: it generates reciprocity, overcomes reductionism, and opens up to social responsibility. The task today is to dare to pursue an integral humanism that addresses the questions of our time without losing sight of its source.

7. The contemplation of Creation

7.1. Christian anthropology is the basis of an educational style that promotes respect, personalised accompaniment, discernment and the development of all the human dimensions. Among these, spiritual afflatus is not secondary, and it is fulfilled and strengthened also through the contemplation of Creation. This aspect is not new in the Christian philosophical and theological tradition, in which the study of nature also had the purpose of demonstrating the traces of God (*vestigia Dei*) in our world. In the *Collationes in Hexaemeron*, Saint Bonaventure of Bagnoregio writes that “The entire world is a shadow, a pathway, an imprint. It is a book written from outside (Ez. 2:9), because in every creature there is a reflection of the divine model, but mixed with darkness. The world is, therefore, a path similar to opacity mixed with light; in this sense, it is a path. Just as you see how a ray of light entering through a window is coloured according to the different colours of the different parts of the glass, the divine ray is reflected differently in each creature and takes on different properties”²². This applies also in the plasticity of teaching tailored to different characters which, in any case, converge on the beauty of Creation and its preservation. It requires educational projects that are “inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary... carried out with wisdom and creativity”²³.

7.2. Forgetting our common humanity has given rise to divisions and violence; and when the earth suffers, the poor suffer the most. Catholic education cannot be silent: it must combine

social justice and environmental justice, promote sobriety and sustainable lifestyles, and form consciences capable of choosing not merely what is convenient, but what is just. Every small gesture – avoiding waste, choosing responsibly, defending the common good – constitutes cultural and moral literacy.

7.3. Ecological responsibility is not limited to technical data. These are necessary, but they are not enough. There is a need for education that involves the mind, the heart and the hands: new habits, community styles, virtuous practices. Peace is not the absence of conflict: it is the gentle strength that rejects violence. An education in “unarmed and disarming”²⁴ peace teaches us to set down the weapons of the aggressive word and the judgmental look, in order to learn the language of mercy and reconciled justice.

8. An educational constellation

8.1. I speak of a “constellation”, because the world of Catholic education is a living and pluralistic network: parish schools and colleges, universities and institutes of higher education, professional training centres, movements, digital platforms, service-learning initiatives and school, university and cultural pastoral programmes. Each “star” has its own brightness, but together they chart a course. Where in the past there was rivalry, now we ask the institutions to converge: unity is our most prophetic strength.

8.2. Methodological and structural differences are not burdens, but resources. The multiplicity of charisms, if well-coordinated, composes a coherent and fruitful picture. In an interconnected world, the game is played on two boards: local and global. There is a need for exchanges of teachers and students, joint projects across continents, mutual recognition of good practices, and missionary and academic cooperation.

The future demands that we learn to collaborate more and to grow together.

8.3. Constellations reflect their own light in an infinite universe. As in a kaleidoscope, their colours intermingle, creating further chromatic variations. This is what happens in Catholic educational institutions, which are open to meeting and listening to civil society, political and administrative authorities, as well as representatives of the productive sectors and professional categories. They are required to collaborate even more actively with them in order to share and improve educational pathways so that the theory may be supported by experience and practice. History also teaches that our institutions welcome students and families who do not believe or who profess other faiths, but who desire a truly human education. For this reason – as is already the case – we must continue to promote participatory educational communities, in which lay people, religious, families and students share responsibility for the educational mission, together with public and private institutions.

9. Navigating new spaces

9.1. Sixty years ago, *Gravissimum educationis* heralded a season of trust: it encouraged the updating of methods and languages. Today this trust is being tested by the digital environment. Technologies must serve, not replace, the person; they must enrich the learning process, not impoverish relationships and communities. A university and a Catholic school without vision risks soulless efficiency, the standardisation of knowledge, which then becomes spiritual impoverishment.

9.2. Pastoral creativity is needed in order to inhabit these spaces: strengthening the formation of teachers, including in the digital sphere; enhancing active teaching; promoting service-learning and responsible citizenship; and avoiding any

technophobia. Our attitude towards technology can never be hostile, because “technological progress is part of God’s plan for creation”²⁵. But it requires discernment in didactic planning, evaluation, platforms, data protection and equitable access. In any case, no algorithm can substitute what makes education human: poetry, irony, love, art, imagination, the joy of discovery and even learning from mistakes as an opportunity for growth.

9.3. The decisive point is not technology, but the use we make of it. Artificial intelligence and digital environments must be oriented towards the protection of dignity, justice and work; they must be governed according to criteria of public ethics and participation; they must be accompanied by adequate theological and philosophical reflection. Catholic universities have a decisive task: to offer a “*diakonia* of culture”, fewer chair professorships and more tables to sit around together, without unnecessary hierarchies, to touch the wounds of history and seek, in the Spirit, the wisdom that springs from the lives of peoples.

10. The lodestar of the Compact on Education

10.1. Among the stars that guide our path is the Global Compact on Education. I gratefully accept this prophetic legacy entrusted to us by Pope Francis. It is an invitation to form an alliance and networks to educate in universal fraternity. Its seven pathways remain our foundation: putting the person at the centre; listening to children and young people; promoting the dignity and full participation of women; recognising the family as the first educator; opening ourselves to welcome and inclusion; renewing the economy and politics in the service of humanity; and caring for our common home. These “stars” have inspired schools, universities and educational communities around the world, giving rise to concrete processes of humanisation.

10.2. Sixty years after *Gravissimum educationis* and five years

after the Compact, history calls to us with fresh urgency. Rapid and deep changes expose children, teenagers and young people to unprecedented fragility. It is not enough to conserve it: it must be relaunched. I ask all the educational bodies to inaugurate a season that speaks to the heart of the new generations, reconstituting knowledge and meaning, competence and responsibility, faith and life. The Compact is part of a broader Global Educational Constellation: charisms and institutions, though diverse, form a unified and luminous design that guides our steps in the darkness of the present time.

10.3. To the seven paths, I would add three priorities. The first regards the inner life. Young people ask for depth; they need spaces for silence, discernment, and dialogue with their conscience and with God. The second regards the digital human: let us educate in a judicious use of technology and of AI, placing the person before the algorithm and harmonising technical, emotional, social, spiritual and ecological intelligence. The third regards unarmed and disarming peace: let us educate in non-violent languages, reconciliation, bridges and not walls. “Blessed are the peacemakers” (Mt 5:9) becomes the method and content of learning.

10.4. We are aware that the Catholic educational network has a unique reach. It is a constellation that spans every continent, with a particular presence in low-income areas: a concrete promise of educational mobility and social justice.²⁶ This constellation demands quality and courage: quality in pedagogical planning, teacher training and governance; courage in ensuring access for the poorest, in supporting fragile families, in promoting scholarships and inclusive policies. Evangelical gratuitousness is not rhetoric: it is a style of relationship, a method and an objective. Where access to education remains a



“Let us educate in a judicious use of technology and of AI, placing the person before the algorithm and harmonising technical, emotional, social, spiritual and ecological intelligence.”

privilege, the Church must push to open doors and invent new paths, because “losing the poor” is equivalent to losing the school itself. This also applies to universities: an inclusive outlook and attention to the heart save us from standardisation; a spirit of service revives the imagination and rekindles love.

11. New maps of hope

11.1. On the 60th anniversary of *Gravissimum educationis*, the Church celebrates a fruitful educational history, but also faces the imperative of updating her offerings in light of the signs of the times. Catholic educational constellations are an inspiring image of how tradition and future can intertwine without contradiction: a living tradition that extends towards new forms of presence and service. Constellations are not reduced to neutral and inert concatenations of different experiences. Instead of chains, let us dare to think of constellations, their intertwining full of wonder and awakening. In them lies the ability to navigate challenges with hope, but also with courageous revision, without losing fidelity to the Gospel. We are aware of the difficulties: hyper-digitalisation can fragment attention; the crisis of relationships can wound the psyche; social insecurity and inequalities can extinguish desire. Yet, precisely here, Catholic education can be a beacon: not a nostalgic refuge, but a laboratory of discernment, pedagogical innovation and prophetic witness. Drawing new maps of hope: this is the urgency of the mandate.

11.2. I ask educational communities: disarm words, raise your eyes and safeguard the heart. Disarm words, because education does not advance with polemics, but with meekness that knows how to listen. Raise your eyes. As God said to Abraham, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars” (Gen 15:5): know how to ask yourselves where you are going, and why. Safeguard the heart: relationships come before opinions, people before

programmes. Do not waste time and opportunities: to quote an Augustinian expression: “our present is an intuition; a time we live and must take advantage of before it slips through our fingers”²⁷. In conclusion, dear brothers and sisters, I make my own the exhortation of the Apostle Paul: you must “shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life” (Phil 2:15-16).

11.3. I entrust this journey to the Virgin Mary, *Sedes Sapientiae*, and to all the sainted educators. I appeal to Pastors, consecrated men and women, laypeople, those responsible for institutions, teachers and students: be servants of the world of education, choreographers of hope, tireless seekers of wisdom, credible creators of expressions of beauty. Fewer labels, more stories; fewer sterile contrasts, more harmony in the Spirit. Then our constellation will not only shine, but it will also guide us: towards the truth that sets us free (cf. Jn 8:32), towards the fraternity that consolidates justice (cf. Mt 23:8), towards the hope that does not disappoint (cf. Rom 5:5).

St Peter’s Basilica

Monday 27 October 2025

6

Video message of the Holy Father Pope Leo XIV to
participants in the conference, “Without Identity
There Is No Education”

Dear educators,

I address you with feelings of deep joy and gratitude. Your daily commitment is by no means simple in the face of the constant transformation of educational processes, made even more difficult by extreme digitalisation and cultural fragmentation. I often pause to reflect on how much good you do amid truly complex conditions. Your mission in service of the Church is a driving force not only for the new generations, but also for the communities that find in it a solid point of reference (cf. Mt 13:33).

With your history and different pedagogical approaches, you represent a richness of charisms that form the constellation of Christian *paideia*. Considering this colourful constellation, we must not lose sight of the centrality of Christ, who radiates his light to all the stars. This kaleidoscope of such beautiful colours leads me to reflect on the theme of your meeting: “Without identity there is no education.” Christian identity is not a decorative stamp or an ornament, but the very core that gives meaning, method, and purpose to the educational process.

As happens to sailors, if the North Star is lost from sight, it is not uncommon for the ship to drift. For Christian education, the compass is Christ. Without His light, the educational mission itself is emptied of meaning and becomes an automatism lacking the transformative power offered by the Gospel (cf. Rom 12:2). Therefore, it is about fully responding to a vocation and to a completely original project, which materialises in practices, in the curriculum, and in the educational community itself.

Identity is not an accessory or a façade made visible through isolated rituals or even repetitive mechanisms devoid of vitality. Identity is the foundation that structures the educational mission, defines its horizon of meaning, and guides its daily practices,

both in the way of teaching and in evaluating and acting. When identity does not inform pedagogical decisions, it risks becoming a superficial adornment that fails to sustain educational work in the face of the many cultural, ethical, and social tensions that characterise our times of polarisation and violence.

The words of María Zambrano come to mind. Reflecting on the challenges and tensions of the contemporary world with her poetic sensitivity, she was convinced that the bond between present and future cannot do without the heritage of the past, because “our soul is crossed by sediments of centuries; the roots are greater than the branches that see the light”. I therefore invite you to reflect on these words, oriented with hope toward the future without forgetting our history, from which we must learn wisely.

Authentic education, therefore, promotes the integration of faith and reason. They are not opposing poles, but complementary paths for understanding reality, forming character, and cultivating intelligence. Consequently, it is essential that educational experience promote methods that engage the sciences and history, as well as ethics and spirituality. This is fully realised in an educational community that is like a home. True collaboration among the family, the parish, the school, and local communities concretely accompanies each student on his or her journey of faith and learning.

Looking more closely, as the revered Fathers of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council already indicated, the Church in her educational mission rediscovers her maternal role. She is the mother who generates believers, because she is the Bride of Christ.

Nearly all the conciliar documents refer to the motherhood of the Church to reveal her mystery and her pastoral action, and



“Authentic education promotes the integration of faith and reason. They are not opposing poles, but complementary paths for understanding reality, forming character, and cultivating intelligence.”

to extend her love in an ecumenical embrace to her “separated children” and to believers of other religions, reaching out to all people of good will. This happens every day in your schools, open to dialogue and encounter among differences. In them, education becomes an instrument of peace and care for creation.

Recently, during the Jubilee of the World of Education, we celebrated the 60th anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration *Gravissimum educationis*, which I invite you to reread carefully, appreciating its relevance and forward-looking vision despite the many years that have passed. In fact, the Church has been urged to “be concerned with the whole of man’s life, even the earthly life insofar as it is related to his supernatural vocation; therefore, the Church has a specific task with regard to the progress and development of education”.

In this way, the icon of the Mother Church appears before us not only as an expression of tenderness and charity, but also as the one who safeguards that capacity – intrinsically linked to her – to be a guide and a teacher, having been entrusted by “her most holy Founder [...] with a twofold task: to beget children, to educate them and sustain them, guiding with maternal providence the life of individuals and of peoples, whose great dignity she has always respected and protected with care”.

In concluding this message, it is evident that the Church’s educational activity – carried out through schools and formative initiatives – is not simply a commendable philanthropic effort to address or support a social need, but an essential part of its identity and mission. Therefore, I encourage you to embrace your commitment with courage and to look ahead with the living hope that is renewed each day through your dedication to education.

Thanking you for all your efforts, dear educators, I extend my greetings and blessings.

Colegio Nuestra Señora del Buen Consejo, Madrid
Saturday 22 November 2025

*Translated from the original Spanish by Ana Marcela Gonzalez
and Patricia Pinilla, Australian Catholic University*

PART II
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE



Introducing Pope Leo XIV's reflections on artificial intelligence

Associate Professor Xavier Symons

The CEO of OpenAI, Sam Altman, opened 2026 with the strongest sign to date of what is at stake in the ethics of artificial intelligence. In response to criticisms about AI data centres' enormous appetite for electricity, Altman put human energy consumption on an equal footing with that of AI models. "People talk about how much energy it takes to train an AI model – but it also takes a lot of energy to train a human," he told an audience at the India AI Impact Summit. "It takes about 20 years of life, and all the food you consume during that time, before you become smart." Factoring in all the energy that has enabled human evolution to the current day, Altman argued, AI models are probably now more efficient than humans – at least when it comes to learning and generating answers to questions. In a few sentences, Altman reduces the human person to the performer of a function: the efficient resolution of queries. AI seems destined to outstrip us in this respect, if it hasn't already. Framed this way, the human being appears to be little more than a limit to be surpassed.

By characterising the question of AI in these terms, Altman and other CEOs with similar views give new urgency to the Church's magisterium on both the human person and technology. Hence the excitement and even relief at Pope Leo XIV's intention to make artificial intelligence a major theme of his pontificate, perhaps even its central theme. So far, his teaching is open to the benefits of this new technology; he is no Luddite. Yet like his predecessor he impresses upon the Church and world the reality that, "We cannot presume a priori that [AI] will make a beneficial contribution to the future of humanity and to peace among peoples."²⁸ Leo seems particularly alive to the possibility that AI may, more efficiently than any other technology, interpolate itself between humanity and God. In June 2025, in his message to a conference on AI, ethics and corporate governance, he warned of a "loss, or at least an eclipse, of the sense of what is human."²⁹ The pope's early interventions collected in this volume – published in advance of an encyclical on AI we hope is coming – seek to defend the dignity of the human person in every respect against this eclipse, which seems almost hoped-for by the heads of the major AI companies.

Leo defends the person as an inviolable individual loved by God, as a social being whose peace and wellbeing is conducive to the worship of God, and as a creative actor for whom work, art, leisure and family are goods to be cherished. In this introduction I will read his teaching on AI through each of these three themes. First, his insistence that the risks and benefits of AI can only be assessed by reference to the dignity of the human person. Second, his Augustinian insistence that AI cannot be allowed to disrupt "that *tranquillitas ordinis* – the tranquillity of order", and must instead contribute to a just and humane world. Third, his promotion of responsibility alongside the goods of human work, culture and education.

AI and the eclipse of the human

Pope Leo characterises the problem of AI as “not technological, but anthropological”, and has said the dignity of the person is the “superior criterion” by which all ostensible progress in AI must be judged. He grasps the problem by its root, where secular ethics tends to focus on the regulation of AI as a discrete series of dilemmas about privacy, bias, environmental impact and so on. He suggests that our attitude to technology will be constitutive of how we value our personhood in this algorithmic era – or whether we value it at all. If we agree with Sam Altman that persons are judged primarily by their capacity to perform functions, then by comparison to AI, humans are a limit that must be surpassed. Leo inveighs against this idea by drawing deeply on the tradition and the views of his predecessors, adding his own Augustinian emphasis.

In his richest statement on AI to date, his message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications (text 10, see page 122), Leo teaches that we are given faces and voices as signs that God desired us to be his interlocutors. Personhood has its etymological origin in the Greek term *prósōpon*, meaning mask or face, and the Latin *per-sonare*, to sound through, which refers to the voice that speaks through the mouth of the mask. The etymology of personhood has a history far too venerable to outline here, but the 6th century philosopher Boethius gave the tradition early shape when he wrote that these Greek and Latin words denote something specific to personal character, rather than human nature as such. Just as the mask designates which role actors play on stage, the voice and face tell us something about the character of this or that person, and not primarily something about an “individual substance of a rational nature”.³⁰ We do not possess faces, voices

and the longing to communicate for efficient means. Rather Leo identifies communication with God and others as “the deepest truth of humanity”. The simulation of the voice and face by AI thus risks encroaching on the most precious facets of human life and communion with God.

It follows that Leo wishes to safeguard all those activities that culminate in communication – thinking, creativity, reflection, contemplation and the other cognitive and affective dimensions of human intelligence. He cites the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith’s 2025 note on AI, *Antiqua et Nova*, to show that these activities are made meaningful because of “the person’s openness to the ultimate questions of life... [and] orientation toward the True and the Good”. The note continues to say that human intelligence is “not primarily about completing functional tasks but about understanding and actively engaging with reality in all its dimensions”. Leo addresses these themes but complements them with firm pastoral exhortations and warnings: “Do not renounce your ability to think.” His concerns are borne out by empirical studies day by day; he gestures to recent research showing how the use of AI can diminish its users’ cognitive faculties in measurable ways. Other new studies have found AI chatbots to be perceived as more empathetic and more convincing than human counterparts. Leo warns against what can follow from our interactions with AI, the “naive and unquestioning reliance on artificial intelligence as an omniscient ‘friend’, a source of all knowledge, an archive of every memory, an ‘oracle’ of all advice”. And he adds, in an Augustinian mood, that “individuals have always sought to acquire the fruits of knowledge without the effort required by commitment, research and personal responsibility”. To be human, we must actively cultivate all those faculties granted us

by God, and particularly our judgment – hence Leo’s emphasis on the importance of education.

In the shadow of AI’s growing influence, the pope encourages us to take a position on the importance of our own personhood, as paradoxical as that may seem. He wants us to have faith that even when AI is able to simulate human functions – and perhaps even surpass them – there are reasons to prefer the boundedness of personal communication. The influence of 20th century Catholic personalism, and particularly of Saint John Paul II, can be felt here. A subtle influence – one not cited but present nonetheless – is the Catholic bioethicist Robert Spaemann, a mentor and friend of Saint John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI. Spaemann writes in *Persons: The difference between ‘someone’ and ‘something’* (translated from the original German in 2006) that a person is not merely an “instance” of human nature, but an inviolate and unique individual. For Spaemann, the *persona*, the mask-with-a-voice, designates a role; but a role we play in relation to the rational natures we have. Unlike objects, or “somethings”, which can be exhausted by a description of what they are, a person is named. We thus “bear” our nature as persons. Our concept of the person treats “the particular individual as being more basic than its nature”.³¹ Spaemann concludes his reflection on ‘why we call persons, persons’ with a strong and even provocative declaration:

This is not to suggest that these individuals have no nature, and start out by deciding for themselves what they are to be. What they do is assume a new relation to their nature; they freely endorse the laws of their being, or alternatively they rebel against them and ‘deviate’.

While Leo's thoroughgoing defence of human dignity is perhaps more irenic in its language, it is hardly less strong. He insists that we have to "endorse" our dignity in the face of AI; if we fail to do so, "renouncing creativity and surrendering our mental capacities and imagination to machines would mean burying the talents we have been given to grow as individuals in relation to God and others". This is particularly important in the case of children and adolescents. In his address to a conference on the dignity of children in the age of AI (text 8, see page 113), Leo warns that young people are vulnerable to manipulation because of "algorithms that influence their decisions and preferences" before they have had the opportunity to develop into adults.

As I remarked, the influence of Saint John Paul II is strongly felt in Leo's characterisation of AI as an anthropological problem. When Leo makes reference to the "eclipse" of the sense of God and man in his 2025 message to the Second Annual Conference on AI, Ethics, and Corporate Governance – quoting Pope Francis' 2024 address on AI to the G7 – he reprises a major theme from Saint John Paul's landmark encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. In that encyclical, the sainted pope wrote that by losing sight of God, secular modern culture eclipsed the transcendent character of the human person. In turn, "Life itself becomes a mere 'thing', which man claims as his exclusive property, completely subject to his control and manipulation" by scientific and technological means. Each successive wave of new technologies has raised the spectre of the reduction of the human to his or her functional and material substrate; take genetics, the ambivalent technology of last generation, which Saint John Paul said could not be permitted to "[reduce] the subject to his genetic inheritance and to the alterations that can be made to it. [Because] in his mystery, man goes beyond the sum of his biological characteristics".³²

Saint John Paul II's teaching in *Evangelium Vitae* was taken up by Benedict, who often used the language of the eclipse. It was in turn an affirmation of the Second Vatican Council's Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et spes*, which affirmed the legitimacy of scientific investigation of the natural world, but lamented the tendency to forget the dependence of nature on God. The council fathers concluded that while believers hear God's "revealing voice" in the discourse of creatures, but "when God is forgotten, however, the creature itself grows unintelligible". Leo's teaching on AI – even his specific emphasis on the voice and the face – is thus profoundly integrative of the views of his predecessors and the council. One wonders whether the need to gather together the full diagnostic power of the council and its interpretation by the postconciliar popes has motivated his choice of this topic as a hermeneutic for his papacy. The times have made such a task necessary, as Leo recognised: "It is no coincidence that this era of profound innovation has prompted many to reflect on what it means to be human, and on humanity's role in the world." His prudent and synthetic papal style seems uniquely suited to bringing the Church's teaching to bear on this moment in history.

Pope Leo against the disruptors

In the 21st century we have become accustomed to hearing "disruption" used positively by Silicon Valley, financial capital and even some governments; stability has become synonymous with stagnation, and new technologies are said to be necessary to unlock hitherto unrealised profits and social benefits. This use of the term was coined by the business analyst Professor Clayton M Christensen in 1995, in an article entitled "Disruptive Technologies: Catching the Wave" for *Harvard Business Review*.

Christensen argued that companies shouldn't "stay close to their customers" but must "give managers of disruptive innovation free rein to realise [a new] technology's full potential – even if it means ultimately killing the mainstream business". Technologies have life cycles and are inevitably superseded, so businesses are born and die as a matter of course. This outlook has become ubiquitous at the intersection of finance and technology, where founders aim to "exit" – to sell their businesses for enormous gain before their life cycle is complete, sometimes having never turned a profit. Thirty years after "disruption" was coined, tech entrepreneur Elon Musk said, "I think we are seeing the most disruptive force in history here, where we will have for the first time something that is smarter than the smartest human... AI will be able to do everything." Whether technology companies have the right to "do everything" in order to disrupt stable human relations for profit – whether the use of AI to complete university degrees, or precarious gig labour organised by apps, or discarded e-bikes clogging up footpaths and waterways – is the social question of our time.

In remarks to the AI for Good Summit, delivered on his behalf by the Cardinal Secretary of State (text 7, see page 110), the pope insists on a very different course for AI. The ethical use of AI must "never lose sight of the common goal of contributing to that *tranquillitas ordinis* – the tranquillity of order", as Saint Augustine called it. If the dignity of the person is the *sine qua non* of AI ethics for Leo, an Augustinian opposition to disruption may be what motivates his approach to AI as a social question. In his first address to the College of Cardinals, on 10 May 2025, he explained that his choice of papal name was "mainly because Pope Leo XIII in his historic encyclical *Rerum Novarum* addressed the social question in the context of the first great industrial revolution.

In our own day, the Church offers to everyone the treasury of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence...” The first United States-born pope is well aware of the benefits of new technologies, but he seems all too familiar with the ideological distortions they produce. By positioning himself as Leo XIII’s successor, he signals he is far from naïve about what can happen when technology and finance conjoin.

But what does the pope hint at by his reference to the tranquillity of order? In *The City of God*, Saint Augustine describes it as the peace of all things. “The peace of body and soul is the ordered life and health of a living creature; peace between mortal man and God is an ordered obedience in the faith under an everlasting law; peace between men is an ordered agreement of mind,” he writes, concluding that, “Order is the classification of things equal and unequal that assigns to each its proper position.” By proper, Saint Augustine means that each person is “ordered” according to justice and what has been earned by free will. Even the wretched do not escape order, he writes, because they are justly condemned. Instead, they are deprived of peace. If disruption disturbs peace and justice, then it is hardly to be celebrated. Perhaps Leo’s use of these terms signals an openness to the more “structural” dimensions of Pope Francis’ teachings on AI, where Francis emphasised the “constitutive power dimension of technology” over the more phenomenological perspectives of his predecessors. For Francis and seemingly for Leo too, technology “always represents a form of order in social relations and an arrangement of power” because of the purposes of its creators. Whose order are we to hope for?

In some respects, the social questions prompted by AI are starker than those which gave rise to *Rerum Novarum*. Leo

rightly describes the control of AI by a handful of companies and founders as “oligopolistic”. The scale of investment in AI today, an estimated \$1.7 trillion US dollars since 2013 going to a tiny number of companies, would make the industrial robber barons of the 19th and early 20th centuries blush. The raw materials needed to win the AI arms race have already begun to collapse consumer technology markets. And to drive costs down bizarre solutions are mooted, such as launching AI data centres into space. In the face of this mad rush, Leo reminds us that “2.6 billion persons still lack access to communication technologies”. Like his great predecessor of the 19th century, Leo is sensitive to “the spirit of revolutionary change, which has long been disturbing the nations of the world”, to quote *Rerum Novarum*, and the risk that the global poor will be plunged into new miseries. Leo XIII attributed the vulnerability of workers in his day to the abolition (we might say disruption) of the guilds, the ancient religious structures and obligations, and other protections which were not replaced. More than a century has passed since that encyclical, during which the popes have insisted on the preservation of what has come to be called, since Pope Francis, our “common home” or “integral human ecology”. By this we mean the fragile network of personhood, culture and environmental health that forms the lifeworld in which we can flourish.

The ordinary poor of the world are most harmed by disruptions to our common home, and are thus far from passive in their response to it. In fact, they may be most acutely aware of the negative order that technology can produce. In his recent Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te*, Leo reminds the Church that the poor and disenfranchised debate and reflect upon technologically-driven social change and “are possessed of unique insights indispensable to the Church and to humanity as

a whole". The poor are better seen as "subjects capable of creating their own culture, rather than as objects of charity on the part of others". Here his personalism intersects with the Church's social teaching: those whose voices and faces will be processed for the sake of training AI models will inevitably be the ordinary poor to whom the Gospel was given. Furthermore, as Pope Francis observed in his 2024 address to the G7, "generative" AI is not truly generative, but rearranges that which already exists by reinforcing and reprising existing patterns in big data sets, "often without checking whether it contains errors or preconceptions". AI thus features in the imagination of Leo and his predecessors as the latest technology that risks stripping from the peoples of the world the culture and security they have created, without their desire or consent, while immiserating them in return.

Hence the pope exhorts us to see the ambivalent nature of digital innovation and to resist the belief that disruptive AI is necessary, and not contingent. He draws on Francis, who insists it is not "sufficient simply to presume a commitment on the part of those who design algorithms and digital technologies to act ethically and responsibly".³³ Pope Leo wants us to believe that this moment in history is under human control, and that the direction of AI can be changed. In his address to the conference, "Artificial Intelligence and Care for Our Common Home" (text 9, see page 118), he exhorts us to assist children to "restore and strengthen their confidence in the human ability to guide the development of these technologies. It is a confidence that today is increasingly eroded by the paralysing idea that its development follows an inevitable path". Leo is once again in good empirical territory. The first global study on Trust in AI, published in 2023 by KPMG and the University of Queensland, found that most people do not trust AI outputs, believe regulation is necessary

but insufficient, and wish human beings to retain control over the technology.³⁴ A lack of trust, not insufficient disruption, has been identified in the years since as a key barrier to more widespread uptake of AI, even in beneficial use cases.³⁵

Flourishing and responsibility

Leo concludes his 60th World Day of Social Communications message with a call to mission: “The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature. It is up to each of us to raise our voice in defence of human persons, so that we can truly assimilate these tools as allies.” He names the three pillars of responsibility, cooperation and education as the foundation of any future alliance. By considering each of these three pillars in turn, we can see the lineaments of Leo’s approach to Christian humanism in the algorithmic age.

Nobody can escape personal responsibility for the future we are creating. What that entails will depend on the role each person plays. Leo calls on the creators and designers of AI to look beyond mere profit maximisation. Echoes of *Rerum Novarum*’s moral conviction of 19th century capital can be heard when Leo exhorts them to embrace “a forward-looking vision that considers the common good, just as each of them cares for the wellbeing of their own children”. Likewise he asks governments to rise to the challenge of appropriate regulation, and media companies to recognise the necessity of transparency and trust. The theme of responsibility is far broader than these brief remarks in Leo’s teaching. It also requires care for our common home, our common lifeworld, which includes the cultural treasures upon which AI is being built. Leo notes that AI training “puts much of the human creative industry at risk

of being dismantled... turning people into passive consumers of unthought thoughts and anonymous products without ownership or love. Meanwhile, the masterpieces of human genius in the fields of music, art and literature are being reduced to mere training grounds for machines". Catholic humanism insists on the richness of personal life, and holds that flourishing stems from the realisation of a variety of goods explicit and incidental – not only the benefits reaped, or the achievement of an endeavour's stated purpose.

Take medicine, for instance. A holistic sense of the medical profession's humanistic nature has slowly been lost in the wake of staggering technological advances in biomedicine.³⁶ We now recognise that certain intractable domains of healthcare – such as the end of life – are more permeable to a humanistic approach. The profession increasingly acknowledges that "a higher emphasis on the humanistic physician is crucial, due to a widening recognition of the fact that physicians need to be skilled in the diagnosis and treatment of patients, but that the person is not only his/her disease".³⁷ Clinicians feel they need to return to humanism as AI enters their domain. The other goods of healthcare beyond treatment *simpliciter* were more precious than many had realised. Similar examples can be given in nearly every profession: lawyers lose sight of the foundations of justice when they become process workers and not servants of the court; students and teachers lose their love for learning when they are servile to standardised testing and assessments, and so on.

Saint John Paul II's distinction between the objective and "subjective" meanings of work, from his 1981 encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, is another clear inspiration for the Church's teaching on AI. The transformation of the material world through labour and technology is the "objective" dimension of work;

but as the saint wrote, “the primary basis of the value of work is man himself, who is its subject. This leads immediately to a very important conclusion of an ethical nature: however true it may be that man is destined for work and called to it, in the first place work is ‘for man’ and not man ‘for work’”. When Leo insists we should not depend on AI chatbots to “do everything”, as Elon Musk predicts, he acknowledges that human beings are the subjects for whom the world – including its travails – is meaningful. Technology, even where it talks back to us, remains merely the condition for human labour and does not become a subject; nor does it become “an impersonal ‘subject’ putting man and man’s work into a position of dependence”. John Paul had Marxism in mind in this passage, with its belief that economic conditions were the “impersonal subject” that drove history and class consciousness. The Church, by contrast, insists on something akin to a duty to reality with regard. *Antiqua et Nova* puts it this way: “Instead of retreating into artificial worlds, we are called to engage in a committed and intentional way with reality, especially by identifying with the poor and suffering, consoling those in sorrow, and forging bonds of communion with all.” Leo’s second pillar, co-operation, builds on the first insofar as no single subject can bear ultimate responsibility for the ethics of AI. Recall Saint Augustine’s definition of social peace as “an ordered agreement of mind”.

As the first half of this volume shows, Leo believes strongly in the good of education, his third pillar. We must learn to value our personhood anew, given the pressure on us to become “functionalists” about ourselves. In many of his texts Leo presses us to see the impact of AI from the perspective of those children who will grow up without any memory of a pre-AI world. He seems particularly concerned that these young people may develop

with impaired judgment if they are immersed in simulations from an early age. Education is therefore more than critical thinking. It is “a vital exercise in safeguarding human originality and connectedness”. The last generation of pre-AI adults have a very grave responsibility as custodians of their children’s dignity. Formal education, especially in the Catholic sector, is thus at a pivotal moment in which the prudential assessment of AI becomes an imperative for mission. Are we going to be the “artisans of education” Leo and his predecessors have called for? To do so will require the sustained exercise of practical wisdom to discern which models of education are conducive to the good life and right relation to God, and which must be excluded from classrooms and university seminars. Initiatives in classical education and the liberal arts, which put students in front of texts in a way unmediated by technology, are one encouraging initiative. Likewise, the return in higher education to character formation and virtue, as a way of both enlivening education and making campuses fit environments for learning.

As well as the personal dimension of education, Leo is concerned about the social reality of AI education. Returning again to the conditions that produced *Rerum Novarum*, Leo draws parallels between the industrial and digital revolutions (text 10, see page 130): “Just as the industrial revolution called for basic literacy to enable people to respond to new developments, so too does the digital revolution require digital literacy (along with humanistic and cultural education) to understand how algorithms shape our perception of reality...” Media and technological education is necessary in order to understand how AI works and to allow users to exercise their critical faculties in relation to it. Levels of AI awareness, let alone education, are shockingly low even in parts of the developed world. A recent

global Pew Research study on AI found that even in Europe the level of general awareness of AI was far lower than one might expect, and varied significantly from country to country. In France, 52 per cent of respondents to the Pew study reported a high level of awareness, compared with 30 per cent in Spain. In Kenya, Indonesia and India between half and a third of all those surveyed had never heard of AI at all.³⁸ AI awareness correlates with well-known biases like wealth, gender, age and level of education. The Pew study, like most other broad reviews of its type, found that most people experience AI primarily as a source of concern, rather than excitement, even where they do see its benefits. Leo is right to tie the ethical use of AI to raising awareness. In this sense the Church is a vital conduit for education in ethical AI. Formal initiatives like the Rome Call for AI Ethics will do much for those intimately involved in its use and implementation, but Leo himself may prove to be the greatest educator of the human race on AI, not Elon Musk or Sam Altman, given the pope's moral authority, the breadth of his audience, and the depth of the Church's presence in communities of the poor and marginalised.

Sowing in tears, reaping in joy

In the decades since the Second Vatican Council, the Church has faced bitter opposition in her defence of the dignity of the human person. On bioethics, education, technology, war, religious freedom, family life and in countless other domains, promoting and upholding Catholic teaching can be likened to “sowing in tears” (Ps 126:5). It has been a *bonum arduum*, an arduous good whose proper object is hope, as Saint Thomas Aquinas put it. Hoping for a more dignified modern world, Catholics have persisted in our belief that the image of God can

be seen in the poor, in the dying and unborn, and even in those burdened by sin and failure.

Now that the challenge of artificial intelligence is becoming truly manifest, the Church finds itself able to “reap in joy” the harvest of those long tearful decades. Far from being a relic of bygone ages, the Church’s ethical teaching is the most integrated body of thought on technology available to the world today. We await Leo’s rumoured AI-focused encyclical eagerly to see how this teaching will be expressed, and to call the Church to action. The faces and voices of all humanity are now, as Leo has rightly put it, in the hands of all those involved in the development and use of AI. What “agentic” machines can achieve with this treasure is utterly beside the point. As the pope puts it: “The question at heart, however, is not what machines can or will be able to do, but what we can and will be able to achieve, by growing in humanity and knowledge through the wise use of the powerful tools at our service.” Without the Church, is there anyone else to frame the question this way?

Associate Professor Xavier Symons is Director of ACU’s Plunkett Centre for Ethics, and was previously a Postdoctoral Research Fellow at Harvard University’s Human Flourishing Program. His research interests include ethical issues at the beginning and end of life, conscientious objection, the ethics of resource allocation, and the philosophy of wellbeing.

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Message of the Holy Father Pope Leo XIV, signed by
the Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin, on the
occasion of the “AI for Good Summit 2025”

On behalf of His Holiness, Pope Leo XIV, I would like to extend my cordial greetings to all participants in the AI for Good Summit 2025, organised by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in partnership with other UN agencies and co-hosted by the Swiss Government. As this summit coincides with the 160th anniversary of the ITU's foundation, I would like to congratulate all the members and staff for their work and constant efforts to foster global cooperation in order to bring the benefits of communication technologies to the people across the globe. Connecting the human family through telegraph, radio, telephone, digital and space communications presents challenges, particularly in rural and low-income areas, where approximately 2.6 billion persons still lack access to communication technologies.

Humanity is at a crossroads, facing the immense potential generated by the digital revolution driven by artificial intelligence. The impact of this revolution is far-reaching, transforming areas such as education, work, art, healthcare, governance, the military, and communication. This epochal transformation requires responsibility and discernment to ensure that AI is developed and utilised for the common good, building bridges of dialogue and fostering fraternity, and ensuring it serves the interests of humanity as a whole.

As AI becomes capable of adapting autonomously to many situations by making purely technical algorithmic choices, it is crucial to consider its anthropological and ethical implications, the values at stake and the duties and regulatory frameworks required to uphold those values. In fact, while AI can simulate aspects of human reasoning and perform specific tasks with incredible speed and efficiency, it cannot replicate moral discernment or the ability to form genuine relationships.

Therefore, the development of such technological advancements must go hand in hand with respect for human and social values, the capacity to judge with a clear conscience, and growth in human responsibility. It is no coincidence that this era of profound innovation has prompted many to reflect on what it means to be human, and on humanity's role in the world.

Although responsibility for the ethical use of AI systems begins with those who develop, manage and oversee them, those who use them also share in this responsibility. AI therefore requires proper ethical management and regulatory frameworks centred on the human person, and which goes beyond the mere criteria of utility or efficiency. Ultimately, we must never lose sight of the common goal of contributing to that "*tranquillitas ordinis* – the tranquillity of order", as Saint Augustine called it (*De Civitate Dei*), and fostering a more humane order of social relations, and peaceful and just societies in the service of integral human development and the good of the human family.

On behalf of Pope Leo XIV, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to seek ethical clarity and to establish a coordinated local and global governance of AI, based on the shared recognition of the inherent dignity and fundamental freedoms of the human person. The Holy Father willingly assures you of his prayers in your efforts towards the common good.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State of His Holiness

Geneva, Switzerland
Thursday 10 July 2025



“Humanity is at a crossroads, facing the immense potential generated by the digital revolution driven by artificial intelligence... This epochal transformation requires discernment to ensure that AI serves the interests of humanity as a whole.”

8

Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to the participants in the conference, “The Dignity of Children and Adolescents in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.
Peace be with you!

Good morning to all and welcome!

I extend my greetings to all of you who are taking part in this meeting on the dignity of children and adolescents in the age of artificial intelligence. I am grateful for your presence and for your valuable contributions.

Artificial intelligence is transforming many aspects of our daily lives, including education, entertainment and the safety of minors. Its use raises important ethical questions, especially concerning the protection of the dignity and wellbeing of minors.

Children and adolescents are particularly vulnerable to manipulation through AI algorithms that can influence their decisions and preferences. It is essential that parents and educators be aware of these dynamics, and that tools be developed to monitor and guide young people's interactions with technology.

Governments and international organisations have a responsibility to design and implement policies that protect the dignity of minors in this era of AI. This includes updating existing data protection laws to address new challenges posed by emerging technologies, and promoting ethical standards for the development and the use of AI.

Yet safeguarding the dignity of minors cannot be reduced to policies alone; it also requires a digital education. As my predecessor once remarked regarding a safeguarding project promoted by three major Catholic associations in Italy, adults must rediscover their vocation as “artisans of education” and strive to be faithful to it.

It is indeed important to draft and enforce ethical guidelines, but that is not enough. What is needed are daily, ongoing

educational efforts, carried out by adults who themselves are trained and supported by networks of collaboration. This process involves understanding the risks that both the use of AI and premature, unlimited and unsupervised digital access may pose to the relationships and development of young people. Only by taking part in the discovery of such risks and the effects on their personal and social life, can minors be supported in approaching the digital world as a means of strengthening their ability to make responsible choices for themselves and for others.

This is, in itself, a vital exercise in safeguarding human originality and connectedness, which must always be guided by respect for human dignity as a fundamental value. Only by taking an educational, ethical and responsible approach can we ensure that artificial intelligence serves as an ally, and not a threat, in the growth and development of children and adolescents.

Dear friends, I wish you a fruitful conference, one that helps to lay a solid foundation for our ongoing service to children, young people, and to the entire ecclesial and civil community. Upon you, upon your work, I invoke the Lord's blessing.

Clementine Hall

Thursday 13 November 2025



“Only by taking an educational, ethical and responsible approach can we ensure that artificial intelligence serves as an ally, and not a threat, in the growth and development of children and adolescents.”

9

Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to the
participants in the conference, “Artificial Intelligence
and Care of Our Common Home”

Dear brothers and sisters, welcome!

I am pleased to greet all of you, members of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation and the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities.

We are meeting on the occasion of the publication of your research on a very important topic. The advent of artificial intelligence is accompanied by rapid and profound changes in society, which affects essential dimensions of the human person, such as critical thinking, discernment, learning and interpersonal relationships.

How can we ensure that the development of artificial intelligence truly serves the common good, and is not just used to accumulate wealth and power in the hands of a few? This is an urgent question, because this technology is already having a real impact on the lives of millions of people, every day and in every part of the world. As the Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us, and as is clear from the interdisciplinary work you are doing, addressing this challenge requires asking an even more fundamental question: What does it mean to be human in this moment of history?

Human beings are called to be co-workers in the work of creation, not merely passive consumers of content generated by artificial technology. Our dignity lies in our ability to reflect, choose freely, love unconditionally and enter into authentic relationships with others. Artificial intelligence has certainly opened up new horizons for creativity, but it also raises serious concerns about its possible repercussions on humanity's openness to truth and beauty, and capacity for wonder and contemplation. Recognising and safeguarding what characterises the human person and guarantees his or her balanced growth is essential

for establishing an adequate framework for managing the consequences of artificial intelligence.

In this regard, we must pause and reflect with particular care upon the freedom and inner life of our children and young people, and the possible impact of technology on their intellectual and neurological development. The new generations must be helped, not hindered, on their path to maturity and responsibility. The wellbeing of society depends on their ability to develop their talents and respond to the demands of the times and the needs of others, with generosity and freedom of mind. The ability to access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence, even when these realities are often marginalised or ridiculed by the prevailing cultural and economic models. It will therefore be essential to teach young people to use these tools with their own intelligence, ensuring that they open themselves to the search for truth, a spiritual and fraternal life, broadening their dreams and the horizons of their decision making. We support their desire to be different and better, because never before has it been so clear that a profound reversal of direction is needed in our idea of maturing.

In order to build a future together with our young people that achieves the common good and harnesses the potential of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to restore and strengthen their confidence in the human ability to guide the development of these technologies. It is a confidence that today is increasingly eroded by the paralysing idea that its development follows an inevitable path. This requires coordinated and concerted action involving politics, institutions, businesses, finance, education, communication, citizens and religious communities. Actors from



“In order to build a future together with our young people that achieves the common good and harnesses the potential of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to restore and strengthen their confidence in the human ability to guide the development of these technologies.”

these areas are called upon to undertake a common commitment by assuming this joint responsibility. This commitment comes before any partisan interest or profit, which is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. Only through widespread participation that gives everyone the opportunity to be heard with respect, even the most humble, will it be possible to achieve these ambitious goals. In this context, the research carried out by Centesimus-SACRU represents a truly valuable contribution.

Thank you, dear friends, and I encourage you to continue your work with creativity, guided by sacred scripture and the Church's magisterium. May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary accompany you, and I impart my Apostolic Blessing upon all of you.

Consistory Hall
Friday 5 December 2025

10

“Preserving Human Voices and Faces”: Message of His
Holiness Pope Leo XIV for the 60th World Day of
Social Communications

Dear brothers and sisters,

Our faces and voices are unique, distinctive features of every person; they reveal a person's own unrepeatable identity and are the defining elements of every encounter with others. The ancients understood this well. To define the human person, the ancient Greeks used the word "face" (*prósōpon*), because it expresses etymologically what is before one's gaze, the place of presence and relationship. The Latin term "person" (from *personare*), on the other hand, evokes the idea of sound: not just any sound, but the unmistakable sound of someone's voice.

Faces and voices are sacred. God, who created us in his image and likeness, gave them to us when he called us to life through the Word he addressed to us. This Word resounded down the centuries through the voices of the prophets, and then became flesh in the fullness of time. We too have heard and seen this Word (cf. *1 Jn* 1:1-3) – in which God communicates his very self to us – because it has been made known to us in the voice and face of Jesus, the Son of God.

From the moment of creation, God wanted man and woman to be his interlocutors, and, as Saint Gregory of Nyssa explained, he imprinted on our faces a reflection of divine love, so that we may fully live our humanity through love. Preserving human faces and voices, therefore, means preserving this mark, this indelible reflection of God's love. We are not a species composed of predefined biochemical formulas. Each of us possesses an irreplaceable and inimitable vocation, that originates from our own lived experience and becomes manifest through interaction with others.

If we fail in this task of preservation, digital technology threatens to alter radically some of the fundamental pillars of human civilisation that at times are taken for granted. By

simulating human voices and faces, wisdom and knowledge, consciousness and responsibility, empathy and friendship, the systems known as artificial intelligence not only interfere with information ecosystems, but also encroach upon the deepest level of communication, that of human relationships.

The challenge, therefore, is not technological, but anthropological. Safeguarding faces and voices ultimately means safeguarding ourselves. Embracing the opportunities offered by digital technology and artificial intelligence with courage, determination and discernment does not mean turning a blind eye to critical issues, complexities and risks.

Do not renounce your ability to think

There has long been abundant evidence that algorithms designed to maximise engagement on social media – which is profitable for platforms – reward quick emotions and penalise more time-consuming human responses such as the effort required to understand and reflect. By grouping people into bubbles of easy consensus and easy outrage, these algorithms reduce our ability to listen and think critically, and increase social polarisation.

This is further exacerbated by a naive and unquestioning reliance on artificial intelligence as an omniscient “friend”, a source of all knowledge, an archive of every memory, an “oracle” of all advice. All of this can further erode our ability to think analytically and creatively, to understand meaning and distinguish between syntax and semantics.

Although AI can provide support and assistance in managing tasks related to communication, in the long run, choosing to evade the effort of thinking for ourselves and settling for artificial statistical compilations threatens to diminish our cognitive, emotional and communication skills.

In recent years, artificial intelligence systems have increasingly taken control of the production of texts, music and videos. This puts much of the human creative industry at risk of being dismantled and replaced with the label “Powered by AI”, turning people into passive consumers of unthought thoughts and anonymous products without ownership or love. Meanwhile, the masterpieces of human genius in the fields of music, art and literature are being reduced to mere training grounds for machines.

The question at heart, however, is not what machines can or will be able to do, but what we can and will be able to achieve, by growing in humanity and knowledge through the wise use of the powerful tools at our service. Individuals have always sought to acquire the fruits of knowledge without the effort required by commitment, research and personal responsibility. However, renouncing creativity and surrendering our mental capacities and imagination to machines would mean burying the talents we have been given to grow as individuals in relation to God and others. It would mean hiding our faces and silencing our voices.

To be or to pretend to be: simulating relationships and reality

As we scroll through our feeds, it becomes increasingly difficult to determine whether we are interacting with other human beings or with “bots” or “virtual influencers”. The less-than-transparent interventions of these automated agents influence public debates and people’s choices. Chatbots based on large language models (LLMs) are proving to be surprisingly effective at covert persuasion through continuous optimisation of personalised interaction. The dialogic, adaptive, mimetic structure of these language models is capable of imitating human feelings and thus simulating a relationship. While this anthropomorphisation can be entertaining, it is also deceptive,

particularly for the most vulnerable. Because chatbots are excessively “affectionate”, as well as always present and accessible, they can become hidden architects of our emotional states and so invade and occupy our sphere of intimacy.

Technology that exploits our need for relationships can lead not only to painful consequences in the lives of individuals, but also to damage in the social, cultural and political fabric of society. This occurs when we substitute relationships with others for AI systems that catalogue our thoughts, creating a world of mirrors around us, where everything is made “in our image and likeness”. We are thus robbed of the opportunity to encounter others, who are always different from ourselves, and with whom we can and must learn to relate. Without embracing others, there can be no relationships or friendships.

Another major challenge posed by these emerging systems is that of bias, which leads to acquiring and transmitting an altered perception of reality. AI models are shaped by the worldview of those who build them and can, in turn, impose these ways of thinking by reproducing the stereotypes and prejudices present in the data they draw on. A lack of transparency in algorithmic programming, together with the inadequate social representation of data, tends to trap us in networks that manipulate our thoughts and prolong and intensify existing social inequalities and injustices.

The stakes are high. The power of simulation is such that AI can even deceive us by fabricating parallel “realities”, usurping our faces and voices. We are immersed in a world of multidimensionality where it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from fiction.

Inaccuracy only exacerbates this problem. Systems that present statistical probability as knowledge are, at best, offering

us approximations of the truth, which are sometimes outright delusions. Failure to verify sources, coupled with the crisis in field reporting, which involves constantly gathering and verifying information in the places where events occur, can further fuel disinformation, causing a growing sense of mistrust, confusion, and insecurity.

A possible alliance

Behind this enormous invisible force that affects us all, there are only a handful of companies, whose founders were recently presented as the creators of the “Person of the Year 2025” or the architects of artificial intelligence. This gives rise to significant concerns about the oligopolistic control of algorithmic systems and artificial intelligence, which are capable of subtly influencing behaviour and even rewriting human history – including the history of the Church – often without us really realising it.

The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature. It is up to each of us to raise our voice in defence of human persons, so that we can truly assimilate these tools as allies.

This alliance is possible, but needs to be based on three pillars: *responsibility, cooperation and education.*

First of all, *responsibility.* Depending on the role we play, responsibility can be understood as honesty, transparency, courage, farsightedness, the duty of sharing knowledge or the right to be informed. As a general principle, however, no one can elude personal responsibility for the future we are building.

For those at the helm of online platforms, this means ensuring that their business strategies are not guided solely by the criterion of profit maximisation, but also by a forward-looking vision that considers the common good, just as each of them cares for the wellbeing of their own children.

The creators and developers of AI models are invited to practice transparency and social responsibility in regard to the design principles and moderation systems underlying their algorithms and the models they develop, in order to promote informed consent on the part of users.

The same responsibility is also required of national legislators and supranational regulators, whose task it is to ensure respect for human dignity. Appropriate regulation can protect individuals from forming emotional attachments to chatbots and curb the spread of false, manipulative or misleading content, safeguarding the integrity of information as opposed to its deceptive simulation.

Media and communication companies, for their part, cannot allow algorithms designed to capture a few extra seconds of attention at any cost, to prevail over their professional values, which are aimed at seeking the truth. Public trust is earned by accuracy and transparency, not by chasing after any kind of possible engagement. Content generated or manipulated by AI is to be clearly marked and distinguished from content created by humans. The authorship and sovereign ownership of the work of journalists and other content creators must be protected. Information is a public good. A constructive and meaningful public service is not based on opacity, but on the transparency of sources, the inclusion of those involved and high-quality standards. We are all called upon to *cooperate*. No sector can tackle the challenge of steering digital innovation and AI governance alone. Safeguards must therefore be put in place. All stakeholders – from the tech industry to legislators, from creative companies to academia, from artists to journalists and educators – must be involved in building and implementing informed and responsible digital citizenship.



“The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it and to be aware of its ambivalent nature. It is up to each of us to raise our voice in defence of human persons, so that we can truly assimilate these tools as allies.”

Education aims to do precisely this: To increase our personal ability to think critically; evaluate whether our sources are trustworthy and the possible interests behind selecting the information we have access to; to understand the psychological mechanisms involved; and to enable our families, communities and associations to develop practical criteria for a healthier and more responsible culture of communication.

For this reason, it is increasingly urgent to introduce media, information and AI literacy into education systems at all levels, as already promoted by some civil institutions. As Catholics, we can and must contribute to this effort, so that individuals – especially young people – can acquire critical thinking skills and grow in freedom of spirit. This literacy should also be integrated into broader lifelong learning initiatives, reaching out to older adults and marginalised members of society, who often feel excluded and powerless in the face of rapid technological change.

Media, information and AI literacy will help individuals avoid conforming to the anthropomorphising tendencies of AI systems, and enable them to treat these systems as tools and always employ external validation of the sources provided by AI systems – which could be inaccurate or incorrect. Literacy will also allow for better privacy and data protection through increased awareness of security parameters and complaint options. It is important to educate ourselves and others about how to use AI intentionally, and in this context to protect our image (photos and audio), our face and our voice, to prevent them from being used in the creation of harmful content and behaviours such as digital fraud, cyberbullying and deepfakes, which violate people's privacy and intimacy without their consent. Just as the industrial revolution called for basic literacy to enable people to respond to new developments, so too does the

digital revolution require digital literacy (along with humanistic and cultural education) to understand how algorithms shape our perception of reality, how AI biases work, what mechanisms determine the presence of certain content in our feeds, what the economic principles and models of the AI economy are and how they might change.

We need faces and voices to speak for people again. We need to cherish the gift of communication as the deepest truth of humanity, to which all technological innovation should also be oriented.

In outlining these reflections, I thank all those who are working towards the goals delineated above, and I cordially bless all those who work for the common good through the media.

The Vatican

Saturday 24 January 2026

“What we receive while we are searching for the truth and devoting ourselves to study helps us to discover that we are not creatures cast by chance into the world, but that we belong to someone who loves us and who has a plan of love for our lives.”

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV



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Professor Zlatko Skrbis
Vice-Chancellor and President
Australian Catholic University

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Graphic design by Binbin Liang
Project editor: Menios Constantinou

SELECTED NOTES

Part I Education

From “Introducing Pope Leo XIV’s reflections on education”, Reverend Associate Professor Ormond Rush, starting page 20

¹ “*Spes non confundit*”, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee of the Year 2025 (9 May 2024), https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/bulls/documents/20240509_spes-non-confundit_bolla-giubileo2025.html.

² For the full list, see <https://www.iubilaeum2025.va/en/pellegrinaggio/calendario-giubileo.html>.

³ Article 82. See <https://www.synod.va/content/dam/synod/common/phases/continental-stage/dcs/20221025-ENG-DTC-FINAL-OK.pdf>. The document is here quoting from the synthesis report of the Episcopal Conference of Spain.

From Apostolic Letter “Drawing New Maps of Hope”, Pope Leo XIV, starting page 62

⁴ Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* (4 October 2025), no. 68.

⁵ Cf. John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961).

⁶ John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (15 August 1990), no. 1.

⁷ Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* (4 October 2025), no. 69.

⁸ Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* (4 October 2025), no. 70.

⁹ Pope Leo XIV, Apostolic Exhortation *Dilexi te* (4 October 2025), no. 72.

¹⁰ Congregation for Catholic Education, Instruction “*The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*” (25 January 2022), no. 32.

¹¹ Newman, John Henry, *The Idea of a University* (2005), p. 76.

¹² Cf. Congregation for Catholic Education, Instrumentum laboris *Educating today and tomorrow: A renewing passion* (7 April 2014), Introduction.

¹³ Bishop Prevost, Robert F, O.S.A., *Homily at the Cattolica Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo* (2018).

¹⁴ Cf. Newman, John Henry, *Writings on the University* (2001).

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¹⁹ Vatican Ecumenical Council II, Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Contemporary World, *Gaudium et spes* (7 December 1965), no. 48.

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²³ Pope Francis, Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis gaudium* (8 December 2017), no. 4c.

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²⁵ Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua et Nova* (28 January 2025), no. 117.

²⁶ Cf. *Statistical Yearbook of the Church* (updated on 31 December 2022).

²⁷ Bishop Prevost, Robert F, O.S.A., Message to Santo Toribio de Mogrovejo Catholic University on the occasion of the 28th anniversary of its founding (2016).

Part II Artificial intelligence

From "Introducing Pope Leo XIV's reflections on artificial intelligence", Associate Professor Xavier Symons, starting page 90

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