



AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONFERENCE

BISHOPS COMMISSION FOR LIFE, FAMILY AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

MEDIA RELEASE

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Bishops welcome Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical

Pope Leo XIV has released his first teaching letter, an encyclical titled *Magnifica humanitas* ("Magnificent Humanity").

Addressed to all humanity, it is a reflection on what it means to protect and preserve human dignity in the age of artificial intelligence.

Pope Leo XIV signed *Magnifica humanitas* on May 15, the 135th anniversary of the publication of Pope Leo XIII's seminal encyclical [*Rerum novarum*](#).

"The magnificent humanity created by God stands today before a decisive choice: to erect a new Tower of Babel or to build the holy city, where God and humanity dwell together," the encyclical begins.

It sets out the contrast between a world founded on power and self-sufficiency and a path of shared responsibility and communion.

"Every human person is planned and willed by God to enter into communion with him, with others and with creation," the document reads.

Every generation, it argues, is entrusted with the task of shaping its own time, yet every age faces the risk of building an inhuman and more unjust world.

"When human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanisation, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us, the splendour of which no machine can ever replace," it says.

Bishops Commission for Life, Family and Public Engagement chair, Archbishop Peter Comensoli, said artificial intelligence was driving a new industrial revolution and it was important to address how this will challenge human dignity, work, family and the environment.

"The pope's message will be important for helping all people to grapple with this complex and life-changing area," Archbishop Comensoli said.

“Putting people first ought to be our response to the project of artificial intelligence.

“A good first step in doing this will be to read *Magnifica humanitas* and consider its practical application across our parishes, schools, hospitals, welfare agencies, workplaces and the general community.”

The encyclical offers insights into the protection of the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, recognising that a change in epoch is unfolding.

It places the dignity of the human person at the centre as the criteria for guiding technical progress.

Magnifica humanitas spells out a “spirituality for our time”, central to which is the affirmation that “the Word became flesh”. In an age marked by promises of progress capable of overcoming every limit, the fullness of the human condition does not arise from technical power, but from a relationship involving freedom, love, responsibility and grace.

The document is divided into an introduction, conclusion and five chapters:

Chapter 1: A dynamic approach faithful to the Gospel

Chapter 2: Foundations and Principles of the Church’s Social Teaching

Chapter 3: Technology and Domination. The Dignity of the Human Person in the Face of the Promises of AI

Chapter 4: Safeguarding the human dimension in the digital transformation: truth, work, freedom

Chapter 5: The Culture of Power and the Civilisation of Love

The full version of *Magnifica humanitas* can be found [here](#).

Two videos and infographics released by the Vatican can be found [here](#).