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Bishop McClory welcomes Pope Leo XIV's first major document, *Magnifica Humanitas*, on human dignity in the age of artificial intelligence

VATICAN CITY – Pope Leo XIV released his first encyclical, [*Magnifica Humanitas*](#), on the protection of the human person in the age of artificial intelligence during a press conference on the morning of May 25, 2026.

“Pope Leo XIV has given us an exceptional lens through which to view artificial intelligence,” said Most Rev. Robert J. McClory. “The encyclical is not just addressed to Catholics, but to the world, in this pivotal moment where technology has the potential to shape so many aspects of the human experience. Pope Leo challenges us to engage the exponential growth and use of artificial intelligence with integrity and concern for all of humanity.

“Technological progress is a sign of human creativity,” the bishop added. “With the opportunities presented by AI, discernment is needed to ensure such technology serves humanity, not vice versa.”

In a statement shared by Archbishop Paul S. Coakley, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), “The Church in the United States welcomes the publication of Pope Leo XIV’s first encyclical letter, *Magnifica Humanitas*, with gratitude and praise. It is a powerful reminder that no technology can replace a child of God, and all technology should be placed at the service of helping humanity thrive.”

The statement draws attention to the work that the pope’s predecessor, Pope Leo XIII, addressed in *Rerum Novarum* one hundred thirty-five years ago, regarding the challenges posed by the rise of the industrial revolution, noting that “our Holy Father shines the light of the Gospel and the tradition of the Church on the new opportunities and challenges posed by the rise of Artificial Intelligence. The Pope calls us to never lose sight of the inherent dignity of all human life and the moral imperative for technology to support peace and the common good rather than the limited interest of a few.”

The content of the **42,300-word** document shared by the global leader of the Catholic Church addressed observations and concerns related to the use of AI, including:

- A call upon governments to collaborate in the regulation of private companies that build AI technology, “disarming AI” from singularly determining the future of humanity
- With a common responsibility, address the threat that AI technology poses to peace, the dignity of workers and human intellectual thought
- Respond to the need for education in the use of AI, due to the ease with which this technology distorts reality, blurring the line between truth and fabrication
- A call to vigilance to safeguard the potential for AI to isolate individuals from one another, avoiding engaging with the complexity of human relations in favor of clear and predictable responses

A papal encyclical is one of the most authoritative teaching documents in the Catholic Church. In January 2025, the Vatican released its first document on the topic, *Antiqua et Nova* (Latin for “Ancient and New”): *Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence*. Earlier this year, Pope Leo XIV addressed the use of artificial intelligence in his message for the 60th World Day of Communications, *Preserving Human Voices and Faces*.

While publicly released on May 25, Pope Leo XIV signed *Magnifica Humanitas*, his first encyclical, on May 15, the 135th anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, the landmark encyclical of the Holy Father's namesake, Pope Leo XIII, during the industrial revolution. *Rerum Novarum* called for respect for workers' rights, responsibility of employers to provide a just wage, and the role of the state in protecting the common good, confronting a social order that risked subordinating human dignity to profit and efficiency.

"Artificial intelligence is not just revolutionizing Silicon Valley," said Cecilia Cicone, digital media strategist for the Diocese of Gary. "Our parishes, schools and ministries are seeking guidance on how to interact with AI tools."

The Diocese of Gary held a formation opportunity for parish and ministry leaders entitled "The Ethics of AI and Its Role in Evangelization" on Feb. 21, 2026.

"It's clear how the technology can be misused," said Cicone. "We have seen 'bad actors' use AI to imitate Church leaders to take advantage of the faithful. I hope Pope Leo's call for regulation of the technology will inspire getting more safeguards in place to aid in distinguishing truth from falsehood."

"I look forward to studying this rich document and unpacking it for the faithful locally over the next several months," said Bishop McClory. "*Magnifica Humanitas* will be an important guide for our parishes, schools and ministries."

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About the Diocese of Gary

The Diocese of Gary serves an estimated 170,000 Catholics in Lake, Porter, LaPorte and Starke counties through 51 parishes, two missions and one Catholic student center, three diocesan high schools, one private high school, 16 parish elementary schools, and one diocesan elementary school serving 6,579 students. An additional 4,916 students are enrolled in parish Catholic formation programs. More than two million are served by Catholic-affiliated agencies, including six Catholic hospitals, residential and day care facilities for adults and children, and centers for Social Services. Learn more at dcgary.org.
