

The HOLY SEE

LEO XIV | ENCYCLICALS



ENCYCLICAL LETTER

MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS

OF HIS HOLINESS

POPE LEO XIV

ON SAFEGUARDING THE HUMAN PERSON
IN THE TIME OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

[Multimedia]

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INTRODUCTION

1. Humanity, created by God in all its grandeur, is today facing a pivotal choice: either to construct a new world in which God and humanity dwell together. Each generation inherits the task of shaping its own era, of a world where the dignity of every person is safeguarded, justice is promoted and fraternity is made possible. Yet, instead of creating an inhumane and more unjust world. Whenever humanity is in danger of marring its true identity as the image of Incarnate God, knowing that it is “only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of humanity is revealed.” Jesus Christ, this humanity in its grandeur becomes the Way, the Truth and the Life, opening the path to fullness.

2. Founded on Christ, the living stone, we experience the powerful and mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. Our authentic human effort to cooperate with him for the good will be blessed by our heavenly Father, in whose reason, we can diligently contribute to every initiative that builds a more just world, and we can call for the integral development of every human being. We wish to engage in dialogue with all men and women of the events, questions and aspirations of humanity. [2] Together with them, we seek to identify new paths promoting a dignified life for all. Indeed, openness to dialogue is an integral part of the Church's vocation: "a sacrament... of communion with God and of the unity of the entire human race," [3] she recognizes that the Gospel challenges and directs human experience.

3. In this spirit, [Pope Leo XIII](#) published his Encyclical *Rerum Novarum* in 1891, the 135th anniversary of its promulgation this year. With that document, [my beloved predecessor](#) gave impetus to the reflection on social issues which is now known as the "Social Doctrine of the Church." When some objected that the Church should focus on social matters, but instead focus on communicating the message of eternal life, [Leo XIII](#) responded with realistic clarity: "The proclamation of the Gospel cannot overlook the concrete lives of people." [4] Many decades have passed since then, but pastors, theologians and faithful have continued to reflect on social issues in the light of the Gospel. The Church is a legacy of wisdom, where we find principles for thought, criteria for discernment and guidance for action. Founded on Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and in engagement with the sciences, it helps us to discern the present and identify appropriate ways for living out a clear Christian witness, with joy and in service to the common good. It is not a static set of concepts, but a living *corpus* of truth that safeguards and interprets humanity's vocation to a full and joyful life. We listen to its own voice to this living tradition, invoking the help of the Spirit of wisdom, who has dwelt in the world since the beginning.

The *res novae* of our time

4. While [Leo XIII](#) spoke in his time of "new things" (*rerum novarum*), today we cannot limit ourselves to the teachings of the past. Instead, we must ask God for the wisdom to interpret the great trends of our time, particularly in the last few years, it has become increasingly evident how rapidly and profoundly digitalization, artificial intelligence and other technologies are transforming our world. Technology should not be considered, in itself, as a force antagonistic to humanity. On the contrary, the history since the beginning has shown that technological development has significantly improved the living conditions of humanity. At the same time, however, it has revealed the ambiguity of tools that can cause harm when not oriented toward the good. Today, however, the situation is more complex. The power and prevalence of emerging technologies are interwoven into the fabric of daily life and are deeply affecting the collective imagination: "Never has humanity had such power over its destiny, and a horizon extending in directions that are imaginable but not yet fully predictable. This complicates the task of discernment and the long-term effects they may have on both the dignity of individuals and the common good."

5. It now falls to us to face the challenges of our time with clarity of thought and responsibility. It is necessary to develop regulatory tools capable of upholding justice and curbing the distorting effects of technological power. Not only is there a need for regulation. As [Pope Francis](#) warned, we must realistically ask ourselves who holds this power today and how it should be recognized that nuclear energy, biotechnology, information technology, knowledge of our own DNA, and other technologies have acquired... have given those with the knowledge, and especially the economic resources to use them, the power to act over the whole of humanity and the entire world." [7] In the past, it was largely up to the State to guide and regulate technology; however, the main drivers of development are private, often transnational, parties that are endowed with power and resources that intervene that surpass those of many Governments. Technological power thus takes on an unprecedented scale and complexity which makes it even more challenging to discern, govern and direct such power toward the common good.

6. For this reason it is necessary to begin a shared discernment process for identifying the spiritual and transformations. If we focus only on contingencies, we risk letting the succession of emergencies dictate living through a rapid phase of transition, a “change of era,” in which — while some are vying for the future — most people are watching and waiting, observing from the sidelines. For this very reason, crucial questions impose themselves on our conscience and can no longer be postponed. Toward what goal do we wish to orient ourselves? What direction should we choose as a people and as a civilization?

Two biblical images

7. In order to answer these questions and discern how to navigate responsibly the era of AI, I would like to turn to the Bible: the construction of the Tower of Babel (cf. *Gen 11:1-9*) and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. Babel appears in the Book of Genesis, at the origins of humanity, immediately after the genealogies of Noah. In the land of Shinar, the people decided to build a city and a tower “with its top in the heavens” (*Gen 11:4*). They sought to guarantee stability and power for themselves, and above all to “make a name for themselves” — an impressive feat: a single language, a single technology, a single direction. However, the project conceived without reference to God, supported by a uniformity that eliminated diversity and that broke down communion. When a city is built on pride and the claim to self-sufficiency, communication breaks down and people no longer understand each other. The result is not unity, but dispersion. Babel thus reveals the danger of a grandiose, arises from self-affirmation, sacrifices human dignity for efficiency and aspires to reach heaven.

8. The Book of Nehemiah, in turn, opens at a time of great vulnerability in the history of ancient Israel. After the people returned to Jerusalem, but the city was still in ruins, the walls collapsed and the gates buried. Nehemiah, a Jew in the service of the Persian King Artaxerxes, received news of the disastrous state of his ancestral land. He fasted, prayed and interceded for the people. He then asked the king for permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the destroyed areas in silence. He did not impose solutions from above. He convened the families, assembled the people, listened to their concerns, coordinated their efforts and addressed any opposition. The city was reborn, not through the initiative of one man, but through the shared responsibility of all: men, women, young people and households all play a part. It is an undertaking with God at the center, which rebuilds the city stone by stone. Thus, ancient Jerusalem rediscovers a common language — not one of uniformity, but one of communion that arises when all persons assume their own role and recognize that their strength comes from the Lord.

9. In light of these two images, the Holy Spirit challenges us today regarding our relationship with technology. Scientific discoveries are talents entrusted to humanity so that they may bear fruit (cf. *Mt 25:14-30*) to heal, connect, educate and protect our common home; but it can also divide, exclude and generate new problems. Abstract, technology in and of itself is not a solution to humanity’s problems, just as it is not inherently evil. Technology is never neutral, because it takes on the characteristics of those who devise, finance, regulate and use it. The primary choice is not between a “yes” or “no” to technology, but rather between constructing Babel or rebuilding Jerusalem: between a power that claims to dominate the heavens and a people who work together in the presence of God to build a future of coexistence.

10. We must, then, avoid the “Babel syndrome,” namely the idolatry of profit that sacrifices the weak, ignores differences, and the pretense that a single language — even a digital one — can translate everything, including the human into data and performance. The risk of dehumanization — of building a future that excludes God and reduces the human to a mere technical object — is an ancient and ever-new temptation that today takes on a technical guise. Instead, let us choose the “way of Jerusalem,” the importance of working together to make the City of God a safe place for returning exiles. Rebuilding

precisely from the plurality of voices and visions which, even though they sometimes remind us of the c
spoken languages, a bright possibility emerges. Indeed, this is the possibility of building together, of tra
and of making listening and dialogue the common ground upon which to cultivate justice and fraternity.
discover their unique role of guiding actions toward God so that, in his light, pluralism does not dissipat
the practice of synodality, it becomes the space in which humanity rediscovers its solid foundations and
Revelation, John sees the New Jerusalem “coming down out of heaven from God” (*Rev 21:2*) as a gift
grace is an invitation for us Christians to work together in order to foster a peaceful, just and dignified li
“cities.”

Building for the common good

11. Building a city founded on the common good implies, first and foremost, building on a firm relationsl
that the truth of his love calls us to life “in all its fullness” (*Jn 10:10*) and communion with him. Like Sai
have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in you.” [8] Indeed, God has in
happiness that embraces all the dimensions of life. The Church, in dialogue with the men and women c
need to safeguard and guide this aspiration toward its deepest truth.

12. Secondly, building for the common good means accepting the limits and weakness of humanity with
be corrected. Today, the human desire for fullness of life is at risk of being misled by deceitful goals, su
that promises to free us from all weakness, and models of wellbeing that leave behind entire populatio
in unlimited “upgrades,” in forms of progress that exacerbate inequalities, and in immediate solutions in
wounds. As a result, while some pursue the illusion of unlimited self-assertion, many are deprived of ba
reminds us, with a firm yet humble voice, that true fulfilment is not achieved by eliminating weakness bu
found where freedom and responsibility are intertwined with mutual care and true solidarity, and where
dignity of each person and the good of all peoples.

13. Thirdly, building a world in which everyone can flourish requires shared responsibility and courage.
the weight of the challenges the world is facing, just as no one is so weak that they cannot play their pa
weakness” (*2 Cor 12:9*). All are given their own section of the wall: scientists and researchers, entrepre
legislators, civil society, popular movements and faith communities. This is the logic of subsidiarity, whic
generations, peoples, disciplines and cultures as the best way for fostering stability, prosperity and pea
tensions or differences because they can become creative forces when guided by shared responsibility

14. Finally, building for the common good requires an evangelical language. We must avoid humiliating
rather for a clarity that sheds light and a frankness that unlocks new possibilities. We cannot condone r
unfounded fears. Instead, let us establish standards for discernment — the dignity of the human persor
goods, the preferential option for the poor, care for our common home and peace — and let us translat
such as responsible planning, the assessment of human and social impact, the inclusion of the most vul
literacy and guiding research and industry toward justice and peace.

Remaining human

15. In the recent Ordinary Jubilee Year of 2025, we walked as pilgrims of hope and were blessed with r
these gifts, we can move forward with confidence to face the arduous tasks and demanding challenges
artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pr
human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its ful

which no machine can ever replace. True progress always stems from a heart open to others, an intelligence seeks what unites rather than what separates.

16. I address this heartfelt appeal to all the Catholic faithful, to all Christians and to all men and women get our hands dirty on the “construction site” of our time. Like Nehemiah, let us pray, plan wisely and work in the forefront of our actions and the human person at the center of our choices. Thus, the “rejected stones, migrants and the least among us — will become the cornerstone, and a solid, welcoming common home where love and faithfulness will finally meet, and righteousness and peace will embrace (cf. *Ps 85:10*). This is the task that stands before us is that of being builders of communion, rather than architects of Babel, coming Kingdom, instead of lords of towers destined for ruin. With the heart of a shepherd and a father, let us avoid the construction of yet another Tower of Babel and to join forces in building up the common good, so that heaven and the world once again will come to recognize the human heart as the place where God desires to dwell.

CHAPTER ONE

A DYNAMIC APPROACH FAITHFUL TO THE GOSPEL

17. In this first chapter, I intend to present synthetically how the Social Doctrine of the Church has taken root in the Magisterium and in the [Second Vatican Council](#), in order to demonstrate its dynamic character. Indeed, this teaching addresses historical questions in the light of revealed Truth. In this regard, artificial intelligence is considered as merely yet another theme to be studied or a crisis to be managed, but rather as a development of the categories of Social Doctrine from within, calling for their further development in fidelity to the Gospel.

18. This overview, however, would not be very comprehensible if, before reflecting on the contribution of relevant documents, we do not first clarify some fundamental principles concerning the way in which the Church relates to the world. Failing to do so would expose Social Doctrine to the risk of being perceived as an internal matter or as an external code of ethics imposed from above. In reality, it stems from a Church that respects the autonomy of earthly realities and the distinction between ecclesial and political communities. Indeed, the Church strives to serve the common good.

A Church journeying through human history

19. The Church is present in the world as a sign of unity for the entire human family. She recognizes the current setting in which to carry out her particular vocation of listening, dialogue and service, and of concern for the lives of contemporary men and women. This involvement in people’s lives helps the Church realize that her mission has a historical scope and entails a responsibility for the way in which social relations are organized; she cannot consider herself a stranger to the forces shaping society. On the contrary, the Church actively participates in the process by which society grows and is organized, and she offers her own contribution to the creation of a more just society. [Francis](#) emphasized this historical dimension of the Church’s mission: “No one can demand that religion be confined to the sanctum of personal life, without influence on societal and national life, without concern for the soundness of the social order, without the right to offer an opinion on events affecting society.” [9]

20. The Church’s vocation and duty to accompany humanity in the specifics of history leads her to recognize and respect their own proper character and order. [The Second Vatican Council](#) expressed this principle with particular clarity in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, whose sixtieth anniversary we remembered and celebrated with gratitude: “The autonomy of earthly affairs is meant that created things and societies themselves enjoy their own laws and their own autonomy is perfectly in order.” [10] This affirmation shows that creation bears the imprint of an original

must preserve, cultivate and bring to fulfilment. In this regard, the Church offers herself in a way that he depth. She supports with humble firmness the choices that promote the dignity of every person, the col good of all. The Church thus stands alongside the world without overpowering it, so that the promise of Spirit continues to sustain in the heart of humanity may come to fruition in every human endeavor.

21. Recognizing that God upholds the freedom of men and women in the unfolding of history, [the Seco](#) distinction between the ecclesial community and the political community, emphasizing that each must c Church's presence in the world is also expressed through her relationship with civil society and public ii entities, the Church acknowledges the value of social and political realities and honors their specific res that fosters the wellbeing of individuals and strengthens the fabric of society. The Church does not clair belonging to the State. On the contrary, she esteems those who serve the common good, and she firml that civil institutions hold within society. At the same time, the mission entrusted to the Church prompts the men and women of our time. This closeness does not stem from an intent to supplant civil institutioi criticism of their work. Rather, it stems from evangelical charity, which impels the Church to draw near t whenever they surface with greater severity. When the Church intervenes, she does so following the ex discretion and closeness, aware that what arises from urgent necessity cannot become the norm, nor r responsibilities proper to the civil community.

22. Starting from this twofold acknowledgment — the autonomy of earthly realities and the distinction b spheres of competence — allows for a clearer understanding of the direction that the [Second Vatican C](#) relationship with the world. *Gaudium et Spes* reminds us that “it is the task of the whole People of God theologians, to listen to and distinguish the many voices of our times and to interpret them in the light o revealed Truth may be more deeply penetrated, better understood and more suitably presented.” [11] I mere sociological exercise, but instead requires spiritual discernment. Guided by the Spirit, the People cultural and social transformations both the signs of the presence of Christ, who comes and guides hist aberrations that obscure his face. In this way, the essential core of revealed Truth is not altered, but ma standard for guiding concrete choices, inspiring paths of personal and communal conversion, promotin new forms of evangelical witness in public life. History is thus understood as one of the places in which taught by the Spirit about the humanizing power of the Gospel; and she learns to develop her own teac every person and the good of all peoples.

The wisdom of the word of God in dialogue with the human sciences

23. The Church regards all who sincerely seek “truth, goodness and beauty” as companions on the jou “precious allies” [12] in defending the dignity of every person and in caring for creation. Adopting the pa [Vatican Council](#), which invites us to listen, discern and interpret the signs of the times, and enlightened Church is not afraid to encounter human knowledge. Indeed, the word of God provides reliable standar and opening ways of reconciliation and peace among peoples. When it comes to applying these standa time, the contributions of philosophy and of the human and social sciences is essential. These disciplin cultural, economic and political dynamics more deeply. [Saint John Paul II](#) recalled that the Church wel social sciences in order “to draw from them concrete insights that help her carry out her magisterial offi of knowledge does not diminish the power of the Gospel. On the contrary, it makes it possible to identif fosters the lives of individuals and communities. Following this perspective, [Pope Francis](#) emphasized t

specific questions, the Church does not claim to offer “a definitive opinion,” [14] but recognizes the importance of research and of encouraging a serious and honest debate among experts while welcoming a diversity of views.

24. Nourished by this fruitful dialogue between the Gospel and human knowledge, the Church has progressively developed her Social Doctrine, cultivating in history a wise patrimony marked by theological and anthropological coherence and a deep understanding of the person. Precisely because this patrimony arises from faith and a corresponding vision, it is not a repertoire of technical solutions or an economic or political model to be set against others. Instead, it is precisely that of the principles that guide the interpretation of events and sustain an evangelical understanding of the choices these entail. Herein lies the proper function of Social Doctrine, which does not claim to supplant governments or institutions, but offers itself as a foundation for collective discernment, helping to recognize and promote the dignity of persons, the vitality of communities and the common good.

Social Doctrine as a shared discernment

25. Understanding that the truth is a gift to be shared, not a possession to be monopolized, frees the Church from seeking forms of presence based on power. In order to rediscover the evangelical approach of a gentle witness, [Saint John Paul II](#) invited us to examine honestly the times when acquiescence was given to violence in the service of truth.” [16] In this same vein, I too have reaffirmed that the Church “does not defend a truth,” [17] because truth is not a territory to be defended, but a good to be shared. For his part, [Pope Francis](#) offers his perspective in his striking phrase, “time is greater than space.” [18] What matters most is not occupying cultural strongholds, but initiating good processes and enabling them to mature. In this way, the truth does not come from above, but grows over time within the concrete interweaving of lives, communities and cultures. This is not imposed, but instead welcomes and guides it. It does not eliminate conflicts, but transforms them, reuniting that which was broken. This concept can also be illustrated by the image of a multifaceted polyhedron, [19] in which the one truth of God is seen from different angles.

26. This attitude of openness to truth, which is at the same time both one and diverse, profoundly expresses the Church's love for she embraces the entire human family yet is also immersed in the concrete situations of peoples and cultures. The [Second Vatican Council](#) reminds us that, in virtue of this very catholicity, “each part contributes its own gifts to the whole. In this way, the Church grows as a whole and as individual communities thanks to a mutual exchange and communion. It follows, then, that the People of God are not only gathered together from many peoples and nations through different functions, vocations, cultures and traditions, each being called to support and enrich the whole.” [20] [Saint Paul VI](#) acknowledged that, given the great variety of historical situations, it is unrealistic to think that the Church can propose a single response that is valid in all contexts. [21] For this reason, he invited each Christian to witness in its own country with clarity and responsibility. The fruitful tension between the universality of the Church and the particularity of her life, for she encompasses the whole world, while addressing the specific issues of each time and setting in which the Gospel takes shape.

27. In light of what has been said so far, the Church's Social Doctrine can be seen more authentically as a process and norms to be applied, but a process of shared discernment. It is born from the encounter between the Church and the questions of history. It allows itself to be challenged by the signs of the times, and draws nourishment from the sciences, culture and human experience. Therefore, when the dignity of our brothers and sisters is violated, when the tragedies of humanity, when the economy turns against the person or science oversteps the limits of its competence — together with other Christian denominations and believers of other religions — must make her voice heard.

to promote communion. Understood in this way, Social Doctrine becomes a theology of communion in which made flesh continues to be present through dialogue, memory and prophecy.

The development of Social Doctrine from Leo XIII to the present

28. Having outlined the way in which the Church is present in history and engages in dialogue with the the development of Social Doctrine in the Magisterium, which has responded to the major social transformations of the century to the present day. Naturally, I cannot do justice to the full richness of this teaching, whose function is the Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church and have been further examined by recent Magisterium documents. I will systematically explore everything that has been developed in the Encyclicals of my late venerable predecessor John Paul II and Francis. Nevertheless, I will emphasize some essential points in order to show how the present teaching is rooted in that tradition. I would also like to stress how, within this tradition, the unchanging core of revealed truths and the Church's mission in society is constantly intertwined with a renewed capacity for listening to historical situations and for responding to them. I will now review some of the significant stages of this development, beginning with the period inaugurated by Pius IX in 1848 with Novarum.

The first stages of the Church's Social Doctrine

29. What we now call the "Social Doctrine of the Church" is not a spontaneous product of the modern age, but the result of receiving and structuring a long tradition of ecclesial reflection on life in society, rooted in Sacred Scripture and the theological and legal developments of the Middle Ages and modern era. Although the expression "Social Doctrine" was coined by Pius XII in 1950, [23] its content began to take shape as an organic *corpus* of social teaching starting with Novarum. Confronted with the "new things" of his time — the conflict between capital and labor, the rapid economic and social transformations — Leo XIII did not limit himself merely to acknowledging the unreconcilable tensions of the area for the Church's pastoral mission. He exposed them to rigorous discernment, illuminating their cause in the light of the Gospel and an integral vision of the human person created in the image of God. Saint John Paul II has called this "lasting paradigm" [24] of Social Doctrine: an exemplary practice through which the Church, when faced with the challenges of her right and duty to examine social realities, make pronouncements about them and indicate paths for the future. The perennial contents of the faith and ancient ecclesial wisdom find expression in a living doctrine that grows and develops in response to the "new things" of every era.

30. Leo XIII's Encyclical Rerum Novarum constitutes a milestone in the development of the Church's social teaching. It places the dignity of work and of workers at the forefront of its reflection; affirms the right to a fair wage and recognizes that persons have a fundamental value that takes precedence over capital and profit; defends the worker's indispensable societal role; esteems workers' associations; and proposes forms of cooperation between workers and employers as an alternative to the mentality of class struggle. It is not surprising, then, that Pius XI defined Christian social action. In Rerum Novarum, the Church's ancient wisdom regarding the human person was brought up to date and offered the first major systematic framework for the future. This framework was further developed in the following decades. While many of the historical conditions described by Leo XIII and his successors remain highly relevant today: the primacy of human labor over any mindset focused solely on profit; the consequent attention to the people and families most susceptible to exploitation — and the inseparable connection between the Gospel and pursuing a more just social order. Rerum Novarum thereby continues to remind us that the Church's mission is one that does not also affect the structures of human society.

31. [Pius XI](#)'s Encyclical *Quadragesima Anno* was published in 1931 on the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, a major global economic crisis, marking a further step in the Church's social teaching. Rather than limiting its focus to a specific question," it broadened its focus to encompass the overall structure of the economic and political order. It addresses the concentration of economic power in the hands of a few; criticizes both unlimited competition and collectivism; affirms the freedom and responsibility of the individual; strongly affirms the workers' right to association; and reiterates the principle of proportionate not only to performance, but also to the needs of workers and their families. Within this framework, it formulated the principle of subsidiarity, which was to become one of the cornerstones of Social Doctrine: "whatever can be carried out by individuals, families, intermediary organizations and local communities should be done at the lowest possible level authorities. Alongside these contributions, in various interventions of his Magisterium — from the 1925 encyclical *Bisogno* and *Mit Brennender Sorge* to *Divini Redemptoris* — [Pius XI](#) clearly recalled the societal role of the Church and warned against forms of totalitarianism that demean the dignity of the person, stifle life in society, exalt the State above the individual, and discriminate according to race. At least three insights of his social teaching remain particularly relevant today: the awareness that the law governs not only individual behavior but also economic and institutional structures; the importance of the principle of subsidiarity in strengthening of the fabric of associations and communities while avoiding further centralization of power; and the right to work, fair remuneration and the genuine possibility for families to lead a dignified life.

32. In the tragic context of the Second World War, and the years of reconstruction that followed, the teaching of [Pius XII](#) made a significant contribution to the development of Social Doctrine. This is particularly true of his Christmas message of 1944, which outlined the framework of an international order based on justice, peace and the recognition of human rights. [Pope](#) proposed a dialogue with society based on an appeal to natural law understood as a set of objective principles that protect the interests of individuals and States, and which must regulate both the internal life of nations and their mutual relations. He attributed a decisive role to professional associations, labor unions and the various intermediary organizations in the construction of the social order. He recognized these organized forms of society as an essential safeguard for civil equilibrium and the rule of law. He affirmed the need for a sound rule of law for guarding against the abuse of power, and he recognized the importance of ensuring the proper exercise of authority. At the same time, he warned against any attempt to base law on force or on the advantage of the strongest. An international order governed by the advantage of the strongest exposes weaker peoples to oppression and undermines trust between nations. Finally, [Pius XII](#) identified profound economic imbalances between countries as a major cause of international conflict. [26] Three guidelines remain particularly significant for our own times, currently marked by new forms of inequality: the need for law to take precedence over interests; the awareness that economic disparities lead to social conflict and violence; and the necessity of a network of associations capable of mediating between the individual and the State. These principles continue to provide important criteria that enable Social Doctrine to interpret the dynamics of globalization and to promote a peaceful international order.

The years of the Second Vatican Council

33. A new phase in the Church's social teaching began with [Saint John XXIII](#), who placed a greater emphasis on social issues and the language of rights. In *Mater et Magistra*, he presented the Christian faith as a light for the world. He recalled that, while the Church's primary mission is the sanctification and proclamation of the Gospel, it is also concerned with the concrete needs of people's daily lives, and is concerned with every authentic human good. [27] Based on the Gospel, [John XXIII](#) emphasized that societal life requires a balance between the initiative of citizens and the action of the State, which must coordinate and provide the conditions for the freedom and responsibility of individuals. Hence, he drew attention to fair remuneration for work, workers' rights, and the reduction of disparities between countries. A few years later, in *Pacem in Terris*, [John XXIII](#) addressed for the first time the issue of international peace and justice.

people of good will, organically linking the dignity of the person to the recognition of fundamental rights direction for society — at the international level too — based on truth, justice, love and freedom. [28] In by widespread conflict and new forms of global interdependence, the following aspects of his thought re universal perspective of his appeal; his reference to human rights as a shared framework; and his conv institutions and relations between peoples that are inspired by the dignity of every person.

34. The Second Vatican Council marked a turning point in the Church's understanding of herself in the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, the Council presented the image of a Church that is close to humanity, committed to reflecting on the concrete reality of historical situations, rather than abstract concepts. The of marriage and the family, economic and societal life, the political community, war and peace. It insists structures are just only to the extent that they serve the integral development of the person and promot all. [29] The importance of this conciliar document for the Social Doctrine of the Church lies not only in thematic reflection, but also in its method of discernment that invites us to interpret historical changes g expertise. This approach reveals that dialogue with the world is not a tactical choice for the Church, but mission because the Gospel, like leaven, is capable of transforming the structures of society from withi greater humanity. The Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae* can be included in the same context. Here, the freedom is a fundamental right grounded in human dignity that must be guaranteed by law so as to pre' act against their conscience or impeded from seeking and professing the truth both privately and public relevant today and continues to provide Social Doctrine with decisive criteria for protecting individuals a societies.

35. During the Pontificate of Saint Paul VI, an understanding of peace emerged that was not reduced to shape within the scope of integral human development. In *Populorum Progressio*, he described develk humane to more humane living conditions. He further understood it as a process that concerns “each p that is every dimension of the person and all people without exception. For this reason, Paul VI could a in this way is in reality “the new name for peace,” [32] because it aims to eradicate the roots of injustice opportunities for a more dignified life for all. The establishment of the Pontifical Commission *Iustitia et light as an attempt to give stable form to this insight at the ecclesial and international levels, while beari between rich and poor countries and the need for policies that genuinely promote more humane living c*

36. In *Octogesima Adveniens*, written on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarun* to postindustrial society, marked by urbanization, new forms of poverty and rapid cultural changes that individuals and communities. Paul VI believed that although the Gospel was proclaimed, written and liv context very different from our own, its message was not “outdated.” [33] Instead, it offers a vision of th authority and the common good that is still capable of guiding economic, political and cultural choices to remains relevant because it provides the criteria for recognizing what humanizes or dehumanizes and v changing situations. For the Social Doctrine of the Church, Paul VI's most demanding legacy is precise in the world who are excluded from the development befitting human dignity, the Christian community c proclamation of peace. Rather, beginning where people are marginalized, it must allow the Gospel to p and political structures which — as John Paul II would later remind us — can become veritable “structu person or people will be treated as expendable in the processes of development.

The recent Magisterium

37. The rich social teaching of [Saint John Paul II](#) lies at the crossroads of the crisis of the great ideological century and the onset of economic globalization. His Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, written ninety years after *Novarum*, opened up a new avenue for reflection on work. It presents fair wages as the concrete measure of the entire socioeconomic system because they reveal whether the worker is treated as a person or merely as a commodity. It is not considered simply as a problem to be dealt with or a means of generating income, but a fundamental principle of economic activity and the key to the entire societal question. Through work, human beings bring their capacity for cooperation into play, contributing to the cultural and moral elevation of society. [36] In light of modern insecurity, fragmented career paths and automation must not be evaluated solely in terms of efficiency, but in terms of the worker, the right to sufficient remuneration and the genuine possibility of participating in society.

38. With his Encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, marking the twentieth anniversary of *Populorum Progressio*, he addressed the scourge of underdevelopment. He acknowledged the failure of numerous attempts to accelerate the economic development of the peoples and to assist them in the process of industrialization, noting the persistent and indeed widening gap between the North and South. [37] He also denounced the economic, financial and commercial mechanisms that, in the name of progress, structurally favor their own interests while stifling weaker economies, and he asked that they be subjected to international technical scrutiny. [38] In this context, solidarity was understood as a concrete, shared responsibility among nations — a form of social friendship or political charity oriented toward the “civilization of love” proposed by the Church.

39. On the centenary of *Rerum Novarum*, the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* offered a reflection on the challenges of the late twentieth century, the rise of democracy and the market economy. [Saint John Paul II](#) reiterated [Pius XII](#)'s message that the market economy, as it guarantees the effective participation of citizens, enables them to elect and peacefully replace their leaders, rather than being monopolized by small elite groups motivated by particular or ideological interests. [40] Likewise, the potential of the market and private initiative only if they remain subordinate to the moral law and are governed by the Church without sacrificing the most vulnerable to the rationale of profit. [41] This adds a particularly relevant legacy to the Church's social teaching. The affirmation of the link between the dignity of work, solidarity among peoples, a critical assessment of the market economy continues to provide criteria for evaluating new forms of exploitation, exclusion and crisis.

40. In his social Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, [Pope Benedict XVI](#) sought to reassess and expand the teaching of the Church in *Populorum Progressio*, interpreting it in light of globalization. He noted that such development should be for the benefit to everyone and genuinely sustainable.” [42] That is, economic progress that is truly inclusive and sustainable. He reaffirmed, however, that in wealthy countries new kinds of poverty were emerging as well as social exclusion, while, in poorer regions, small minorities lived in consumerist affluence alongside situations of poverty. In addition, he observed that the new global economic and financial system, marked by a vast mobility of capital, had reduced the political power of States and their ability to influence economic processes. [44] For this reason, the Church affirms that economic activity cannot claim to solve social problems simply through the expansion of a commercial system, but that it must be oriented toward the common good, for which the political community bears its own irreplaceable responsibility. [43]

41. [Benedict XVI](#) placed charity at the center of his analysis, stating that it “is at the heart of the Church's mission and that it is always united with truth. He also noted with concern that there is a tendency to dismiss moral principles in the social, legal, political and economic fields. The originality of his contribution lies in showing that development is not a neutral market reality, but spaces where charity in truth must find historical expression. This teaching invites us, in light of growing inequalities, pressures in the financial markets, the environmental crisis and a lack of political will, to invite to evaluate every model of development on its ability to be inclusive and sustainable, to rebuild economics and politics on the common good, and to acknowledge the critical and generative role of charity in the life of the Church and the world.”

42. Pope Francis' social teaching develops along the lines of *Gaudium et Spes*, which invites us to view hopes and vulnerabilities, and to bring them into dialogue with the Gospel. This approach emerges with *Gaudium*, where he states that the Christian proclamation has an intrinsic social dimension and calls for the cry of the poor, migrants and victims of new forms of slavery. Francis' insistence on a synodal Church that seeks to read the signs of the times in the light of the Gospel and allows herself to be evangelized by history, also fits into this perspective. [47]

43. In *Laudato Si'*, Francis provided the first significant systematic treatment of the environmental crisis, demonstrating that it is not an isolated issue, but rather the ecological aspect of the contemporary social crisis. An integral ecology combined care for our common home with the preferential option for the poor, and the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" [48] cannot be separated. In this light, the universal destination of goods, alongside the critique of a technocratic paradigm that seeks to reduce everything to an object to be dominated by labor threatened by the mindset of waste; and the need for intergenerational justice. Finally, he advocated for those working in the fields of politics and finance, so that neither would become self-referential.

44. Faced with the breakdown of the social fabric, a "world war being fought piecemeal," individualistic pandemic on community ties, Francis, in *Fratelli Tutti*, sought to revive the dream of a humanity that offers universal fraternity. He proposed a culture of encounter, a "better politics" capable of seeking the common good and a world that ensures "land, housing and work for all." [49] Finally, in *Dilexit Nos*, he showed that the social cannot be separated from a personal relationship with Christ. Turning to the word of God, he reminded us that the love of the heart of Jesus is concrete love for our brothers and sisters, and affirmed that "there is no greater love." [50]

Interpreting history in the light of faith

45. Considering this historical overview, it is clear that the Church's Social Doctrine is not the result of a single event, but rather the product of a patient process in which each pontiff — together with the Second Vatican Council — has contributed, in the light of the "new things" of each particular era. In response to the challenges of their time, each one interpreted the Gospel according to the Gospel, bringing to light different aspects of a single heritage: the dignity of the person, the universal destination of goods, solidarity and subsidiarity, care for creation and the centrality of peace and fraternity. This development, though not always linear, is marked by different emphases, progressive insights, and renewals that do not break with what came before, but allow its implications to mature. If today we can speak of a living Social Doctrine, it is because this faith-based interpretation of history has never been interrupted, remaining ever relevant for each generation. It is to the great principles of Social Doctrine, which direct the discernment of belief and action, that I now wish to turn our attention, in order to grasp more effectively their internal coherence and capacity.

CHAPTER TWO

FOUNDATIONS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH

46. The Social Doctrine of the Church is a living reality, in dialogue with history, cultures and sciences. It is based on a core set of unchanging truths. For this reason, it can be considered a form of wisdom that is capable of guiding the lives of believers even today. In this second chapter, I would like to focus on some of the foundations and principles of the Social Doctrine that will help us to interpret the "new things" of our time, particularly in view of the inherent dignity of the human person. To protect the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, I believe that today we must once again

universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, solidarity and social justice. I am convinced that a harmonic principles requires that they be considered collectively, so that it becomes clear how they relate to and

47. In offering these reflections, my hope is, first and foremost, to help the lay faithful and people of God implementing the above-mentioned principles in their daily lives, family relationships, work and involve themselves be inspired by the aim of embodying God's love in the concrete events of life. At the same time, I call on academic institutions and universities to give fresh impetus to these principles, and to apply them in a way that is effective in addressing the digital revolution. In this way, theological and philosophical enquiry will be at the service of the Church's pastoral journey, and contribute to the Magisterium's task of enlightening the consciences through its efforts to make the life of our societies more just and fraternal.

The foundations of Social Doctrine

The human person: image of the Triune God

48. The Church's Social Doctrine brings us to the very heart of our faith: the mystery of the living God, the communion of Persons — Father, Son and Holy Spirit — is love itself in relationship, expressed in the relationship with the world. [51] As the Council recalled, human persons are called to communion with God and "can only be realized in sincere self-giving." [52] Indeed their deepest vocation is to enter into the Trinitarian dynamic of

49. If the mystery of God as Love is the source of Social Doctrine, we see its most concrete expression in the Incarnate Word. By becoming man, the Son of God enters our history and takes on human flesh, bringing life to the Father and the Holy Spirit. In him, "the mystery of humanity truly becomes clear" [53] because he is open to others, capable of building healthy and beautiful relationships and committed to the total gift of self. This is why he is engaged in the great work of renewal that began with the mystery of his passion, death and resurrection, to bring up the Kingdom of God, learning to embrace all men and women as brothers and sisters, children of God. This proclamation of the Gospel and Christian life, guided by the action of the Holy Spirit, tend to bring about [54]

50. At the heart of the Christian understanding of the human person lies the great biblical affirmation that the human person is made in the image and likeness (cf. *Gen 1:26-27*) of the Triune God. Created for relationship, every human person is called to enter into communion with him, with others and with creation. Human dignity does not depend on a person's physical life, nor on the right or wrong choices made; instead, it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person's actions as an expression of his unfailing love. For this reason, the human person always remains the "way for the Church to follow the authentic path of integral human development. [56]

The equal dignity of all human beings

51. Saint John Paul II stated that, "this heightened sense of the dignity of the human person and of his respect due to the journey of conscience, certainly represents one of the positive achievements of modern society. It follows the line already laid out by the Second Vatican Council, which had noted a growing recognition of the dignity of persons, their superiority over material things and their universal and inviolable rights and duties. [58] If the growth in appreciation of human dignity is not obscured by the pressure of new ideologies or very powerful interests, it will lead to a more authentic path of integral human development. Among these ideologies, I consider particularly insidious the one that suggests that every person must be valued to the point of attributing greater value to those who are more efficient or effective. From this perspective, human beings are seen as a means of achieving results, a resource to be used and exploited, and are no longer recognized as

should never be instrumentalized. The value of persons, however, does not depend on what they achieve or do. The value of persons simply by virtue of being human, and no human power can legitimately deny or arbitrate that value. [60]

52. When we speak of dignity, we do not always use the word in the same way. Sometimes we refer to personal dignity, which is the respect which a person directs his or her choices and actions. At other times, we think of social dignity, which is the respect and the concrete respect received from society. In other cases, we refer to existential dignity, meaning the respect which a person perceives his or her own worth and the value of life. These aspects of dignity can be enhanced or diminished. At the same time, there is also the more profound and important level of ontological dignity. This is the dignity that belongs to every person by virtue of existing, of having been willed, created and loved by God. [61] No sin, failure, humiliation or exclusion can diminish the value of a human life that God has willed and called into being. [61]

53. The fundamental dignity of each person, therefore, is neither acquired nor earned, nor does it need to be defended. The Declaration *Dignitas Infinita* offers a summary of the Church's thinking on this subject: "Every human person is inalienably grounded in his or her very being, which prevails in and beyond every circumstance, state, or situation, and in every encounter" [62] — in other words, always and without exception. The dignity of every human being cannot be lost. John Paul II stated, [63] for two reasons: first, because the love of God, who calls us to friendship with Him, is absolutely unconditional, in the sense that, even if we search endlessly, we will never find anything that is more fundamental than His love for us.

The supreme value of human rights

54. The Church gratefully acknowledges that "the movement toward the identification and proclamation of human rights is a significant attempt to respond effectively to the inescapable demands of human dignity." [64] In this regard, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, proclaimed by the United Nations on 10 December 1948, is a landmark expression of the human conscience of our time. [65] It is "a milestone on the long and difficult path of human progress, from the Christian perspective, human rights are not an external addition to the person, but an expression of the human dignity, which the international community is called to protect and promote.

55. Human rights are inviolable, since they are "inherent in the human person and in human dignity." [66] They are also inalienable. [68] Precisely because they are grounded in the common dignity of every man and woman, they have moral consequences and legal effects, for "it would be vain to proclaim human rights if, at the same time, we do not have the duty of respecting them, respect by all, in all places and for all." [69] Among these rights, the first is the right to life, the natural end, [70] without which it is impossible to exercise any other right. When this fundamental right is violated, as in the case of induced abortion, killing of the innocent and euthanasia — we are faced with choices that the Church considers gravely wrong.

56. Looking at our own time, we cannot ignore the fact that the protection of human rights has been exposed to serious dangers. The first is that these rights are declared in a purely formal sense, while technological progress continues to facilitate overt violations of human dignity. The second, which is in fact the root of the first, is the inability to recognize the universality, since we have abandoned "the search for the solid foundations sustaining our decisions and actions." [71] Francis urged us not to underestimate this last issue. He pointed out that when reason seriously examines the world, it discovers values that apply to everyone, since they derive from human nature. If this task of inquiry were taken seriously, the rights considered untouchable today might, in the future, end up being questioned or denied by the same people who have obtained only an apparent consensus from populations that are frightened or manipulated. [73]

57. Along with a greater awareness of the value of every human person and their rights, recognition of the need to protect them, there is still a long way to go to ensure that the rights of a great many, namely women, are equally and effectively protected throughout the world. It is a fact that "doubly poor are those women who endure situations of exclusion, mistreatment and violence."

frequently less able to defend their rights.” [74] It is, therefore, not enough to state simply that men and women have equal rights; it is necessary that this be reflected in concrete decisions, such as in laws, access to employment opportunities, responsibilities, and the way society listens to and values women’s contributions. As long as this gap persists, society does not truly and fully recognize that women have the same dignity as men.

58. It is individuals that matter, each and every person, together with their families. Social movements, political proclamations in favor of a population are worthless unless they lead to the flourishing of persons and their inalienable rights. Similarly, it is not enough to extol individual freedom or private enterprise if we then allow people to continue living without decent work, protections or access to basic necessities.

The principles of Social Doctrine

The principle of the common good

59. Recognizing that every man and woman possesses an inalienable dignity, together with rights that cannot be nullified, requires us to shape the way we live together, including our economic and political choices, and this gives rise to the first major principle of Social Doctrine that I wish to highlight: the common good. We can describe the common good as the dignity recognized in every person. When [Benedict XVI](#) referred to the non-negotiable values that he included among them “the promotion of the common good.” [75] For a Christian, going beyond the narrow self-interest and committing oneself, within the limits of one’s ability, to the common good is a non-negotiable value,

60. [The Second Vatican Council](#) affirmed that the common good consists in “the sum total of social conditions that allow groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily.” [76] This definition provides a good reference point, because the common good cannot be reduced to a mere list of conditions or institutions that serve individual benefits, nor the intersection of their particular interests; it is a greater good that belongs to everyone and is achieved, nurtured and protected by our collective efforts. We can say that social action reaches its fullness when it achieves a shared good, just as a person’s moral action finds its fulfillment in the choice of the true good. [77]

61. In this sense, we can say that the whole is “greater than the sum of its parts” [78] and that, for this reason, the pursuit of individual interests is not capable of generating a better world for the whole human family.” [79] Indeed, pursuing one’s own progress without caring for others is insufficient for contributing to the good of all. This is the specific value of the common good, which is the result of an “interdependence” [80] that creates a network and has an impact on people. The common good is a “plus,” the result of interaction and mutual influence through initiatives, efforts and decisions. If we were to add up the individual goods, we could not explain the existence of the common good and, at the same time, enriches them.

62. It is the pursuit of the common good that gives life to a people, understood not as a mere collection of individuals in which people learn to recognize that they themselves are interconnected and jointly responsible for the common good. Each person contributes to the building up of one’s people through “a slow and arduous effort calling for a deep commitment and a willingness to achieve this through the growth of a peaceful and multifaceted culture of encounter.” [81] The common good means having a shared vision. It is clear that there are many ideological and practical differences between people, interests and frequent disagreements, but that does not mean it is impossible to engage in dialogue to reach a common good that enable the creation of a shared vision, upon which everyone can move forward together.

63. It is the State’s responsibility to ensure cohesion, unity and the proper organization of civil society, which is pursued with everyone’s contribution. In practical terms, this means that public authorities have the duty to balance different sectoral interests with the requirements of justice,” [82] seeking a balance between individual interests and the common good.

without leaving behind the most vulnerable. When politics abandons a long-term perspective and reduces to sterile polarizations, then the language of the common good loses credibility, and, at the same time, grows.

64. This also applies to international politics. As the divide between nations widens, a mentality of confrontation takes hold, and the difficult path toward a more united and fraternal world suffers new and painful setbacks. A shared journey toward a more just development for the entire human family “sounds like madness.” [83] It is necessary to encourage everyone to conceive of ways of cooperating and of more effective international institutions, capable of promoting the common good without compromising the legitimate diversity of peoples and nations. Indeed, the promotion of the common good is inseparable from respect for the right of peoples to exist, to preserve their own identity and to contribute to the development of nations. [84] Moreover, any attempt or plan to eliminate or subjugate a nation is gravely immoral and

The principle of the universal destination of goods

65. “Among the numerous implications of the common good, immediate significance is taken on by the principle of the universal destination of goods.” [85] First of all, this principle reminds us that the earth’s goods — soil, water, air — are entrusted by God to the entire human family to sustain the lives of all, and that every person has an inherent right to these goods now and in the future. Saint John Paul II recalled that, “God gave the earth to the whole human race for the benefit of all, without excluding or favoring anyone.” [86] Consequently, “it is not in accordance with God’s plan to use the earth’s goods so that benefits accrue solely to a select few.” [87] Today, we are called to recognize that this universal destination of goods applies not only to material goods, but also to immaterial and cultural goods.

66. Certainly there is a right to private property, which has its own specific meaning and purpose, yet it is always subordinated to the universal destination of goods. According to John Paul II, this subordination is the golden rule of social ethics: “the right to private property is not absolute and unconditional, but is always ordered to the good of the whole ethical and social order.” [88] In the Church’s tradition, property has been viewed as a means to the good of the whole so that they may better serve the common good. Since “the Christian tradition has never recognized the right to private property as absolute or inviolable,” [89] its social function must not be considered a mere theological opinion, but a principle present in Sacred Scripture and in the writings of the Church Fathers. For this reason, Pope Francis recalled that the right to private property lived out in its fullest sense, also means “to restore to the poor what belongs to them.” [90]

67. Today, among the goods that are universally intended for everyone, we must also include new forms of goods such as algorithms, digital platforms, technological infrastructure and data. In a context where the wealth of nations is based on knowledge and technology, when these goods remain concentrated in the hands of a few, without adequate regulation, a new imbalance is created that contradicts the universal destination of goods. In turn, it widens the gap between those who are included and those who are excluded, between those who can participate in the digital revolution and those who remain on the margins. Our common home and our responsibility toward the poor and future generations require that the use of the possibilities offered by technology be regulated in such a way as to respect the environment, avoid waste and exploitation.

The principle of subsidiarity

68. The principle of subsidiarity stems from the very same understanding of the human person that has led to the development of the common good. If every woman and man is called to take ownership of his or her own life and to contribute to the good of society, then social institutions must also respect and support this responsibility. The Social Doctrine of the Church is based on the principle according to which the role of individuals, families, local communities and intermediary org

supplanted by higher-level authorities. Moreover, higher-level institutions must recognize, protect and promote the contributions of lower-level entities, coordinating their contributions so that they can cooperate effectively for the common good.

69. Starting with [Leo XIII](#) and the beginnings of modern social teaching, the Church has insisted that no power should be subsumed by the State, but should be allowed to act freely, as far as possible, without harming the common good. [John Paul II](#) took up and developed this perspective, noting that the political community is at the service of the common good and must protect the common good, intervening when necessary, but without permanently supplanting the role of families, organizations and social institutions. [93] Subsidiarity does not justify the State's disengagement, but rather requires that public intervention is necessary precisely to enable all social actors to fulfill their mission without being replaced or reduced to mere facilitators. [94]

70. This principle encourages us to move beyond any form of paternalistic or welfare-based management and to promote a culture of shared responsibility in a State that values citizens' initiative, and a civil society capable of mobilizing energies in the service of the common good. In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, decisions should be taken at the highest possible level possible to the persons involved, thereby fostering community life and avoiding people being present only as passive recipients of decisions already taken. In this way people can participate in the decision-making process. When families, associations, volunteer organizations and those in the so-called "third sector" are recognized and supported, social life becomes more vibrant, people, services become more attuned to real needs, and solutions are more creative and respectful of human dignity.

71. The principle of subsidiarity applies especially in the context of the digital revolution. Here, the high-tech world has become a major economic and technological actor that exercises *de facto* power over the conditions of everyday life through its expertise, data and decision-making authority, involves companies and platforms that define conditions of interaction, and even economic opportunities. The principle of subsidiarity requires that such processes should not be carried out in an opaque and unilateral manner, but instead be directed toward the common good with transparency, and that they involve forms of participation (including independent checks, transparency regarding algorithms, equitable access and the possibility of recourse). [96]

72. In this context, States and transnational institutions are called to ensure fair rules and effective safeguards. Families, intermediary organizations, schools, universities, religious institutions and associations have a voice and should be consulted on choices that affect people's daily lives, such as employment, access to services, data management and privacy. It is not for a handful of actors to dictate these processes on their own; instead, we must build forms of cooperation that involve the global community and make them jointly responsible for the common good. [97]

The principle of solidarity

73. Having considered the common good and subsidiarity, I would like to reflect on the principle of solidarity, which is rooted in the human person generated by faith, namely that every human being is created in the image of God and is called to live in relationships that bind him or her to others, to specific populations and to creation. [Saint Paul VI](#) observed that solidarity is not merely an aspiration of believers, but is a social and political reality to be embodied in communal choices. It is the concrete recognition that the future of each individual is connected to the future of all; indeed, "no one can be happy if others are not happy; no close link between subsidiarity and solidarity thereby becomes evident. It is thus clear that there is an inseparable link between subsidiarity and solidarity. When subsidiarity is not linked to solidarity, it ends up becoming merely the protection of individual interests."

is not supported by subsidiarity, it degenerates into a form of welfare that does not foster responsibility. It pertains to the responsibility of authentic participation. Solidarity is expressed when each person, both part in the life of the community — by staying informed, engaging with others, making their voice heard in decisions and choices — while also assuming real responsibility so that the common good is achieved.

74. In many areas, we are already experiencing a kind of “*de facto* solidarity,” for our lives are intertwined with people and communities across the world in real time, and global economies and communications mean far-reaching impact. This network of relationships, however, only constitutes solidarity in the fullest sense if it is a conscious choice. Faith invites us to see this reality as a call: we are not merely neighbors to one another; that each of us may take responsibility, as best we can, for the lives and wounds of our brothers and sisters; when we decide not to remain indifferent to what happens to our neighbor but instead to transform our individual, cultural and technological — into paths of sharing, cooperation and mutual care, embracing the idea of community.” [101]

75. The Church’s social teaching emphasizes that solidarity is both a principle and a virtue. As a principle of relationships among individuals, groups and peoples, pointing to an awareness of interdependence, it depends on the good of others. As a virtue, it requires a “firm and persevering determination” [102] to show particular attention to those most in need. [Pope Francis](#) noted that solidarity is “a way of making history and not just masses of individuals. For this reason, it requires a modest and shared way of life, the ability to order to create opportunities for others in the future, and a willingness to challenge habits and privileges of digital consumption and the use of technology — when they prevent others from living with dignity.

76. In a world marked by increasingly close connections between people, communities and nations, so solidarity is a dimension. [Benedict XVI](#) strongly emphasized the link between development, justice and responsibility that authentic development requires solidarity and inter-generational justice, [104] as well as an awareness of the natural environment. Today, this responsibility also extends to digital and information infrastructure. “the digital ecosystem” can be preserved or exploited, shared or monopolized. Solidarity demands that digital platforms and artificial intelligence take into account not only the immediate benefit for a few, but also the needs of future generations.

The principle of social justice

77. For the Christian community, social justice is a concrete way of following Jesus and remaining faithful to the Gospel. In the New Testament, Jesus proclaims the “good news to the poor” (*Lk* 4:18) and identifies himself with the lowly, the poor and strangers (cf. *Mt* 25:31-46). He thus teaches us that justice is born from, and fulfilled in, fraternity, because the least among us becomes, in concrete terms, the measure of our relationship with God and with others. Justice, however, concerns not only the behavior of individuals, but also the way in which the structures of society are organized. In this regard, [the Second Vatican Council](#) reminds us that every institution is called to serve the dignity of all. [105] Social justice is, therefore, characterized by the capacity of a social, economic and political system — particularly the weakest — to live a truly dignified life, without leaving anyone behind.

78. The recent Magisterium has insisted that social justice begins with the least among us. [Saint John Paul II](#) called for the poor [106] that must guide both personal and societal choices, while [Pope Francis](#) denounced a system that generates ever new forms of exclusion. From this perspective, social justice requires us to look at individ-

with the most vulnerable: the poor, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of violence existential peripheries.

79. The idea of “social justice” helps us recognize that injustices do not arise solely from the wrong structures, mechanisms and economic and cultural systems that produce inequality almost automatically. Structures of sin [108] that oppose God’s will and require a commitment to personal and social justice is not merely about the fairer distribution of resources or the correction of current injustices, but a broader dimension. It aims to mend broken bonds and reintegrate those who have been excluded, taking into account injustices, such as wars, colonialism, racial or gender discrimination, violence against entire peoples and restoring dignity and a voice to those who have been ignored, fostering processes of healing for collective wounds, abolishing discriminatory laws and practices, and providing concrete support to those who still bear the consequences.

80. In this day and age, social justice must also grapple with the environment shaped by digital technologies. Networks, platforms and artificial intelligence systems are changing the way we obtain information, communicate and interact. Justice demands that we prevent the emergence of new forms of exclusion and deprivation of freedom or denied access to basic technologies, communities exposed to invasive surveillance and social groups that perpetuate prejudice and discrimination. In the digital age, a just social order guarantees everyone the right to privacy, protects the youngest and weakest members of society, combats hate and misinformation and subjects digital activities to public oversight, so that the guiding principle is not solely profit but the dignity of every person and the common good.

81. A litmus test for social justice today is the treatment of migrants, refugees and those forced to move because of climate change and environmental disasters. The way a society treats them reveals whether its sense of justice is based on solidarity and fraternity. [Pope Francis](#) urged us to see migrants not simply as a problem to be managed, but as a living reality. [109] They are people with dignity, resources and dreams, who have the right to be treated with respect and to become active members of the societies that welcome them. Social justice in this area entails at least two components. On one hand, this means protecting the rightful hopes of those forced to leave by ensuring safe and legal pathways to receiving them, and genuine pathways to integration. On the other hand, it means promoting the right to peace and security by addressing the root causes that force people to migrate, including those linked to climate change. When these rights are respected, migration can become an opportunity for encounter and solidarity between peoples.

Integral human development

82. In his Encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, [Paul VI](#) affirmed that development is authentic only if it is “foster the development of each man and of the whole man.” [110] In the decades that followed, the Social Catechism reflected on this expression in order to indicate the practical ways in which the noble principles — the universal destination of goods, subsidiarity, solidarity and social justice — are implemented in real life. Integral human development means a process in which the growth of individuals and peoples encompasses all dimensions of existence and well-being, and extends to subsequent generations as well.

83. For individuals as well as for nations, development is both a duty and a right. Minimum conditions are necessary for a person and people to flourish in accord with their dignity, without being kept in a state of dependence or deprivation of necessary goods. Development is truly human when it places people at the center instead of the accumulation of wealth. It concerns peoples as well as individuals. Justice demands the recognition of the rights of society and the responsibility toward future generations. Development is not truly human if it increases consumption for

burdens onto others, or relegates entire regions to subordinate roles, preventing them from realizing the integral when it is not limited to the economic sphere, but promotes quality of life in its spiritual, cultural dimensions, while respecting our common home, the diversity of peoples and their ways of life. [112]

84. Today, the concept of integral human development is a benchmark for the evaluation of integral ecclesial development, an indispensable dimension of the Church's Social Doctrine. Indeed, the quality of development is measured toward people and the care of our common home, and to promote dignified living conditions, access to relations, care of creation and consideration for future generations. It follows that true progress is not won by degrading ecosystems, shifting costs onto the most disadvantaged communities, or compromising the future who will follow us.

85. Seen in this light, integral human development is the framework through which we can interpret the challenges those brought about by the digital revolution. Technological innovations, including artificial intelligence, can foster participation and justice or exacerbate inequality, control and exclusion. For this reason, they must be questioned: Do they truly help individuals and peoples to become more humane and fraternal, while respecting the future generations? It is here that the principles of Social Doctrine become concrete criteria for discernment, which will be addressed in the following chapters.

An examen for the Church

86. In conclusion, I would like to touch on a point that is particularly close to my heart. Social Doctrine is not only for society; it is also an examination of conscience for the Church — a home and school of communion in which the principles outlined in this chapter are applied, especially within its own structures. In the ecclesial context, the form of a synodal approach for mission at the service of the Kingdom. Indeed, the Church is the “community of synodality and mission.” [113] This requires attention to the way decisions are taken and responsibilities are shared. *Document of the Synod* identifies a culture of transparency, accountability and evaluation as key practices. [114]

87. With this in mind, subsidiarity becomes the guiding principle for governance and pastoral life. It involves trusting the faithful and intermediary ecclesial organizations as they carry out their responsibilities, valuing their forms of participation and avoiding paternalism that suffocates evangelical freedom. In practical terms, the participation of the baptized and their shared responsibility in the mission are achieved through genuine, rather than merely nominal, involvement.

88. For the Christian community, solidarity finds its source in the mystery of Christ and is nourished by communion in faith and the Sacraments: Baptism and Confirmation unite us in Christ, so that we receive the Holy Spirit, one heart and one soul (cf. *Eph 4:4; Acts 4:32*). The Eucharist, which is the sacrament of unity, is the source of Christ and teaches us how to share. The diverse sensibilities present in the Church and the strong communion of persons are a source of richness if they remain anchored in the certainty that unity is a gift received and shared.

89. Living out justice in the Church means purifying ecclesial relationships and structures from distortions of transparency and abuse of power. In this regard, listening to the victims of spiritual, economic, institutional abuse, as well as abuses of conscience, is an integral part of a journey toward justice, which includes a process of reparation and taking steps to prevent it from happening again. Every power is at the service of communion and the service of the People of God. This ministry of service is expressed not only through our faith celebrations and in the adoption of a synodal style, but also in the concrete sharing of goods. Following the example of the early Church, resources need to be shared so that no one among us may be in need (cf. *Acts 4:34*), and so that their

mission of proclaiming the Gospel to the poorest. Regular assessments of the exercise of ministerial re encouraged, not as judgments on individuals, but as tools for learning and correction oriented toward r we are open to the action of the Holy Spirit will these principles of Social Doctrine become incarnate in Church will be able to bear credible witness to society that seeking the common good together, with sh: not a utopia, but a real possibility. [117]

CHAPTER THREE

TECHNOLOGY AND DOMINANCE.

THE GRANDEUR OF HUMANITY IN LIGHT OF THE PROMISES OF AI

90. Having recalled the principles that shine a light on Social Doctrine, I would now like to focus on cert shape our way of living today. The biblical image accompanying these reflections is that of a building p the Tower of Babel, where collective effort follows a plan that dominates and ultimately dehumanizes (c there are the ruins of Jerusalem, which under Nehemiah's direction are rebuilt piece by piece as a proje 2–6). We are called to reflect on the great “construction sites” of our era and ask: What are we building' rapidly transforms languages, relationships, institutions and forms of power, we believers must and can and in what manner, so as to safeguard and value the grandeur of humanity that has been given to us ; for our future but also for our present, since artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies are a

91. I am convinced that the concrete way of living out social relationships in the light of the Gospel is nc remains a task entrusted, from generation to generation, to the Christian community. Under the guidanc allows herself to be enlightened by God's word, reads the signs of the times and creatively seeks new v peoples and nations to become ever more conformed to the demands of the Kingdom of God. [118] Fo members of the Church not to be afraid of the present challenges, but to listen to one another and firm building a more humane and fraternal society.

The technocratic paradigm and digital power

92. In his Encyclical *Laudato Si'*, [Pope Francis](#) denounced the growing dominance of a technocratic pa world: the tendency to let the logic of efficiency, control and profit alone shape personal, social and eco clear that technology is not simply a tool. When it becomes the standard by which everything is judged, and what can be discarded, reducing creation to an object of exploitation and human beings to mere cc greater efficiency.

93. This paradigm has spread rapidly in recent years, fueled in part by the expansion of artificial intellig nanotechnology, robotics and biotechnology. In themselves, these innovations can greatly serve integr of our common home. Yet precisely because of their power, they can also hasten the expansion of the t therefore require a new spiritual, ethical and political framework. More power does not necessarily impl the words of Romano Guardini remain relevant: “Contemporary man has not been trained to use power

94. The danger of humanity becoming a victim of its own achievements was already clearly recognized “the most extraordinary scientific progress, the most astounding technical feats and the most amazing e accompanied by authentic moral and social progress, will in the long run go against man.” [121] For thi: valuable in itself — requires careful discernment of the anthropological vision that guides it and the end

development advances without a corresponding ethical and social progress, the result may be an increase in humanity: “having more” without “being more.” In such a scenario, there is a risk that individuals will be the outcomes they produce. [122]

95. Here, we must recognize another crucial aspect, which I have noted earlier. In many cases within the digital platforms, infrastructure, data and computing power does not rest with States, but with major economic entities effectively set the conditions for access, determine the rules of visibility and shape the very possibilities. If such power is concentrated in the hands of a few, it tends to become opaque and evade public oversight. These forms of development that give rise to new dependencies, exclusions, manipulations and inequalities.

96. Faced with this concentration of power in the digital world, the criteria for judgment and discernment are the principles of Social Doctrine: the inalienable dignity of the human person, the common good, the universal subsidiarity, solidarity and social justice. They demand that we assess whether the power of digital infrastructure fosters participation and responsibility, protects the vulnerable, ensures fair access to opportunities and resources for all. On this basis, we can now examine more closely what artificial intelligence is, the possibilities it offers and its limits.

Artificial intelligence

97. It is not my intention here to offer a comprehensive treatment of artificial intelligence, nor to give an exhaustive literature, since authoritative contributions already exist, including within the ecclesial context. [123] I will focus on the essential elements for a moral and social discernment that safeguards the primacy of the human person. It must always be human intelligence, with its conscience and freedom, that guides technical innovations and their risks and limits.

98. It is appropriate to preface this discussion with two considerations. First, any statement regarding AI must be given the remarkable pace at which these systems are developing. Second, all of us, including those with a limited understanding of their actual functioning. Indeed, current AI systems are more “cultivated” than “designed”; they do not design every detail, but instead create a framework within which the intelligence “grows.” As a result, functions such as the internal representations and computational processes of these systems — remain, at present, largely unknown. There is an urgent need for a twofold commitment: on the one hand, a deepening of scientific research; on the other, a renewed spiritual discernment.

99. It is not possible to provide a single, comprehensive definition of AI. What can be stated, however, is that there is a common misconception of equating this type of “intelligence” with that of human beings. These systems merely imitate human intelligence. In doing so, they often surpass human intelligence in speed and computational capacity, or in many fields. Yet this power remains entirely tied to data processing. So-called artificial intelligences do not possess a body, do not feel joy or pain, do not mature through relationships and do not know from within. Responsibility means nothing to them. Nor do they have a moral conscience, since they do not judge good and evil, grasp the meaning of situations, or bear responsibility for consequences. They may imitate language, behavior and analytical skills, and understanding, but they do not understand what they produce, for they lack the affective, relational and experiential growth which human beings grow in wisdom. Even when these tools are described as capable of “learning,” that learning is not that of a human person. It is not the experience of those who allow themselves to be shaped by life and its challenges, mistakes, forgiveness and fidelity. Rather, it is a form of statistical adaptation based on data and feedback. This process does not imply inner growth.

A valuable tool that requires vigilance

100. In light of what has been said, we can better understand why AI can be a valuable tool and, at the measured and vigilant approach. In recent years, its private use has expanded significantly, prompting opportunities it offers and the risks tied to its rapid spread. In personal use, three aspects in particular ease with which results are obtained, the impression of objectivity and the simulation of human communication with which information, complex analyses, media content and practical assistance can be accessed and they can also encourage excessive reliance and the search for ready-made answers, and weaken the apparent objectivity of the responses and suggestions these systems provide can lead us to overlook the assumptions of those who designed and trained them, with all their strengths and limitations. The artificial communication — words of advice, empathy, friendship and even love — can be engaging and at times less discerning users, it can also be misleading, creating the illusion of a relationship with a real person simulated, they do not build genuine relationships, but only their appearance. The artificial imitation of communication is particularly risky when it enters contexts where real relationships and emotional bonds are lacking. Here a person may believe they are communicating with another person, but rather that they may gradually lose their human connections.

101. Broadening our perspective to the use of AI in society, we see that it is now embedded in decision-making sectors and at multiple levels: in communication, management and control. The gains in efficiency and services are clear, yet rapidly and uncritically adopting them exposes us to a range of risks, including their environmental impact. Current AI systems require enormous amounts of energy and water, significantly increasing emissions, and place heavy demands on natural resources. As their complexity increases, especially in large models, the need for computing power and storage capacity grows too, which requires an extensive network of data centers and energy-intensive infrastructure. For this reason, it is essential to develop more sustainable AI to reduce environmental impact and help protect our common home. [124]

Responsibility, transparency and the governance of AI

102. The use of AI is never a purely technical matter: when it enters processes that affect people's lives, status and freedom. Important and sensitive decisions — concerning employment, credit, access to public services, reputation — risk being fully delegated to automated systems that do not know “compassion, mercy, forgiveness, that people are able to change,” [125] and can therefore give rise to new forms of exclusion. There are also risks of manipulation of information or violations of privacy. Yet there is also a subtler danger, for when AI systems are not fair and objective, they end up reflecting and reinforcing the stereotypes or ideological bias of their designers.

103. Indeed, entrusting an algorithm in practice with the power to select who is worthy or not, without a human judgment, is to hand over the task of redefining the boundaries of human possibilities. In this process, it is not just empathy toward those excluded, which can, after all, be simulated. The exclusion of the vulnerable, the loss of neutrality and objectivity, against which it becomes difficult to raise objections. In this way, injustice grows. Mercy and forgiveness — understood not as mere appearances but as real political actions — gradually disappear.

104. From this follows a simple but compelling consequence: we cannot consider AI to be morally neutral. It embodies choices and priorities through what it measures, ignores and optimizes, and how it classifies people. It is designed or used in a way that treats some lives as less worthy, or excludes them without the possibility of appeal. It is a tool “to be used well,” since it has already introduced criteria that contradict the inalienable dignity of the human person. Ethical discernment cannot be limited to asking whether we are using a system for good or bad purposes. It is about how the system is designed and what vision of the human person and society is embedded in the data and models.

105. For AI to respect human dignity and truly serve the common good, responsibility must be clearly defined and assigned to those who design and develop these systems to those who use them and rely on them for concrete decisions. If the internal processes leading to a result remain opaque, making it harder to assign responsibility and ensure accountability becomes crucial: the possibility of identifying who must “account” for decisions, justify the necessity, challenge them and remedy any harm caused. [127]

106. Calling for prudence, rigorous evaluation and even, at times, a slower pace in adopting AI does not mean that it is an exercise of responsible care for the human family. This need is all the more urgent given the frenetic speed of technological growth and the slower development of awareness, norms, safeguards and institutional effects. It is not enough to invoke ethics in the abstract; robust legal frameworks, independent oversight and a system that does not abdicate its responsibility are required. Otherwise, change will be governed only by those who present it as necessary and inevitable, ultimately imposing rules shaped by those who control data, information and algorithms.

107. We cannot be satisfied with merely calling for the moralization of machines — the so-called “alignment” — without also having the courage to insist on a further condition: the possibility of openly discussing the ethical implications of AI and subjecting them to shared standards of social justice. Otherwise, those who control AI will impose their will and become the invisible infrastructure of these systems. A more moral AI is not enough if that morality is defined by those who control it. It is a more active political involvement that is capable of slowing things down when everything is accelerating, creating opportunities for communities still to be able to participate and ask questions.

108. In fact, as with every major technological shift, AI tends to amplify the power of those who already have expertise and access to data. In light of the common good and the universal destination of goods, this is not acceptable, but highly influential groups can shape information and consumption patterns, influence democratic processes and dynamics to their own advantage, undermining social justice and solidarity among peoples. For this reason, AI, especially when it touches on public goods and fundamental rights, must be guided by clear criteria and ethical principles of participation and subsidiarity. Communities and intermediary organizations must not be reduced to passive recipients elsewhere; they must be able to contribute to discernment and oversight. Moreover, ownership of data must be in many hands but must be appropriately regulated. Data is the product of many contributors and should not be hoarded or entrusted to a select few. It is necessary to think creatively in order to manage data as a common good through participation, as [Saint John Paul II](#) already suggested regarding collective goods. [128]

109. The principles of Social Doctrine offer a framework for understanding this new reality. In a world where economic and regulatory influence remain in the hands of a few, to speak of the common good means exposing this economic and political asymmetry and naming the new monopolies of AI. To speak of the universal destination of goods means ways of ensuring universal access to both technologies and the education needed to use them. To speak of solidarity means the ability of communities to make choices and corrections, rather than confining their role to mere oversight that has been set elsewhere. To speak of solidarity obliges us to recognize the hidden, often exploited workers, and to ensure they are not subjected to them. To speak of justice requires questioning the global distribution of power that decides who in fact can trade and who is subjected to them. Likewise, it means acknowledging that social justice is not only a goal to be safeguarded and deployed, but a condition that must shape their very design from the outset.

110. Finally, I would like to employ the expression “to disarm,” which is close to my heart. Disarming AI means disarming “armed” competition, which today is not limited simply to the military context, but is also an economic and technological race for ever more powerful algorithms and larger datasets, driven by the desire to secure geopolitical advantage. To disarm means discrediting the assumption that technical power automatically confers the right to govern.

rejecting technology, but preventing it from dominating humanity. It means freeing technology from moral discussion and debate, therefore making it human-friendly and restoring it to the plurality of human culture today is not only ethical or technical. It is ecological in the deepest sense, for it concerns a new dimension already an environment in which we are immersed, as well as a force with which we must engage. For insufficient; it must be disarmed, welcoming and accessible.

111. I wish to address a special appeal to those who develop artificial intelligence. In one sense, technical human participation in the divine act of creation. Developers, therefore, bear a particular ethical and spiritual design choice reflects a vision of humanity. Just as the creator of an artistic or literary work must consider developers are called to embed values in their projects with due seriousness: with transparency, respect for communities and careful attention to ensuring that what is being cultivated is a genuine good.

What must not be lost

112. Having considered the issues of responsibility and governance of AI, we must now return to our central question: how to safeguard our humanity? The risk extends beyond the misuse of certain technologies. More gravely, the dominant paradigm in which we are immersed, and that is amplified by the digital revolution and AI, threatens to reduce that vision, the fullness of life is equated with having more, reducing weakness, eliminating uncertainty and inefficiency becomes the ultimate measure of value, human beings are tempted to see themselves as a person rather than as persons called to relationship and communion.

113. In reality, elevating any single dimension of human existence to an absolute is always a mistake. It is not from scarcity; even unchecked growth can give rise to impoverishment. In an ecosystem, balance is disrupted at the expense of others; in human life, something similar occurs when one faculty claims to be the measure of all things. Intelligence, when absolutized, overshadows other essential dimensions of life, such as affection, the will to care, and the capacity for relationship. Similarly, technical power, if left unbalanced, does not make us more capable; it makes us more isolated and excluded. This critical point does not oppose intelligence, but serves as a reminder that intelligence is always referential, its true purpose of serving life and the human person is lost.

114. The quality of a civilization is measured not by the power of its means, but by the care it is able to offer to others as a face not merely as a function. The ability to care for one another is a fundamental dimension learned and mastered through lived experience. Reading stories to a child, offering company to an elderly person, and gestures so that it is welcoming are simple gestures often rooted in family life. They teach us to value care as a fundamental human activity and to recognize others as persons worthy of attention. Technology can also support this mutual care between people through tools that help us anticipate and organize things, without undermining human freedom and judgment. All people are subjects of relationships and responsible for their own decisions.

Underlying narratives: transhumanism and posthumanism

115. In an attempt to shed light on the cultural assumptions accompanying the ongoing digital revolution, we draw attention to certain currents of thought that interpret progress as surpassing the human condition, and use the labels of transhumanism and posthumanism. These perspectives form the ideological background present in contemporary culture, they celebrate technological power and occupy the collective imagination in a simplified form, especially in the media and popular culture, to foster enthusiasm for new technologies through a futuristic vision of an “enhanced human being” or “

116. Transhumanism and posthumanism encompass a range of currents and sensibilities, making it difficult to define in an unambiguous way. They can be likened to an archipelago of conceptual “islands,” distinct yet connected.

assumptions, namely the central role of technology and the aspiration to transcend the limits of the human condition. Transhumanism envisions the enhancement of human beings through technologies — such as biomedicine and algorithms — with the aim of increasing performance and capabilities. Posthumanism, especially in its more radical forms, goes further: it challenges anthropocentrism and envisions a hybridization of human beings, machines and technology, crossing the threshold where humanity surpasses itself in a new evolutionary stage. Even when such ideas remain largely theoretical, they gain relevance by altering the collective imagination and thereby influence social, economic and political choices.

117. From the perspective of the Church's Social Doctrine, the key issue is not the use of technology as such, but the way it is used. If the human being is treated as something to be perfected or surpassed, it becomes easier to accept less desirable or less worthy. In the name of progress, "necessary sacrifices" may begin to be justified, and the human person becomes vulnerable in pursuit of a supposed optimization of the species. In this regard, the aforementioned warning is a call for foresight: indeed, scientific and technological advances, when detached from moral and social progress, can become a double-edged sword. [130] For this reason, a clear distinction must be made. It is one thing to integrate technology within a human framework, and quite another to be guided by an outlook that devalues human limits and promises a purely technical future.

The limit, the heart and the grandeur of the human person

118. Our relationship with life seems to be in crisis today. Everything that appears as a "limit" — incapacity, vulnerability — tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected, rather than as a reality through which we open ourselves to relationship. And yet we must remember that humanity flourishes not *despite* limitations, but *because* of them. The faith offers a perspective on reality that helps us recognize what we call the "contingency" of the things of this world. While we strive to alleviate the suffering that marks human life, it is also wise to acknowledge our fundamental finitude. In particular, Christian faith, without oversimplification, proposes that we live, in our ambiguity and limitation, interpreting it in the light of our original and fundamental relationship with God." [131]

119. It is precisely within our limitations that the following find a place: compassion, as well as a sincere generosity that can emerge even in the midst of darkness and failure; spiritual experience and the worst moments when our limits become tangible: when we face rejection, when we suffer the illness or loss of a loved one, or our own weakness or failure. Mysteriously, it is precisely in such moments that we can discover a new closeness of others and encounter the presence of the Lord.

120. Even when limitations are experienced as inner suffering, human wisdom teaches us not to deny or eliminate suffering entirely would mean, in the end, extinguishing love and desire as well. Those who learn through trial and suffering; and over the years, we carry within us lessons that leave their mark like scars shaped by freedom and failure, dreams and disappointments. It is only thanks to the interplay of these experiences in the soul that occur within us, allowing us to sense the richness of our humanity. [132] To renounce this adventure in the name of a presumed transcendence of all limits, could mean many things, but it would no longer be human.

121. The moral corruption of our limitations as created beings — namely the evil that clearly agitates the human condition, at times reaching extreme forms of inhumanity. Yet even these painful expressions of our limitations can be rekindled, with God's grace, along paths of conversion and reconciliation. As Viktor Frankl rightly observed, "Even when persons dehumanize themselves and bring about tragedy, a small light continues to shine and can be rekindled, with God's grace, along paths of conversion and reconciliation. As Viktor Frankl rightly observed, we have come to know man as he really is. After all, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz, yet that being who entered those gas chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or the *Shema Yisrael* on his lips."

122. Finitude, when truly accepted, does not diminish us but opens us to recognizing the face of God because we experience limits — vulnerability, suffering and failure — we can recognize the inviolable dignity of our own and that of others. In this same experience, we remain capable of intuiting a fraternity greater than injustice as a scandal. Authentic culture and art preserve this spark, resisting the normalization of evil. It is taken on an almost prophetic significance: Beethoven's Ninth Symphony can be seen as a desire for universal dehumanization; *Schindler's List* as a call not to consign the past to oblivion.

123. History does not appear solely as a record of human violence, but also as evidence that humanity can act to protect our shared life. Over the past two centuries, this can be seen in several emblematic achievements: the International Committee of the Red Cross (1863), whose operational neutrality ensures compassionate care; the abolition of slavery, which represented not only a legal shift but a transformation of conscience; the United Nations (1945) and the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (1948), which articulated a shared global common ideal, the universality of human dignity; and the *1951 Refugee Convention*, which recognizes persecution and danger. In each of these cases, the desire for good took concrete shape in public and legal practices — capable of limiting the abuse of power and defending the vulnerable. Yet none of these developments encountered resistance, narrow interests or cultural inertia. Moral progress almost always unfolds through struggle, often marked by setbacks. We need only think of stalled peace processes or the slow implementation of reforms. The very fragility of these achievements highlights how precious the responsibility is of those who initiate and sustain them.

124. Certain events make it clear that history can also change when individuals truly take the dignity of their movement in the United States of America, closely associated with the testimony of Martin Luther King Jr. in Africa following the release of Nelson Mandela and his decision not to surrender the future to hatred. In other parts of the world, courageous and generous women have also stood out, including Saint Laura Montoya, Saint Teresa of Calcutta, Skłodowska-Curie, Maria Montessori, Elisabeth Elliot, Wangari Maathai, Benazir Bhutto and countless others. Their commitment has contributed to making history more humane.

125. Alongside these public signs, there is a more hidden but decisive story. We see it in religious communities in poor and dangerous places. We also see it in the martyrs of fraternity and justice, such as Saint Maximilian Kolbe and Blessed Enrique Angelelli; and in those witnesses who embodied the hope of the Gospel in the most harsh, often inhumane conditions, such as Venerable Francis-Xavier Nguyễn Văn Thuận. Above all, it is the "little people of life" who care for, educate, accompany and comfort without fanfare, such as parents, nurses, doctors, and volunteers, alongside an elderly person or an outcast. Their testimony demonstrates that goodness does not advance through force, but through perseverance, memory and interior conversion necessary to begin anew, even after defeat.

126. It is this intertwining of just institutions, credible witnesses and daily fidelity that sustains hope and prevents technological progress without allowing the heart to regress. For this reason, humanity — in all its grandeur — can never be replaced or surpassed. We can embrace the technological progress that alleviates suffering and suffering, provided that we do not abandon the very essence of our humanity, namely the capacity for relationship and care. A key question: if an authentic "more than human" exists, where is it to be found? The Christian faith answers: in the fulfillment that does not arise from a technological divinization, but through God's grace received in Christ.

The authentic "more than human": grace and Christian humanism

127. The expression "more than human" is not an exclusive domain of technological promise. For centuries, humanity has maintained that human beings are not confined by the boundaries of their own nature; rather, they are called to transcend them.

through an escape from reality or a contempt for their limitations, but through their fulfillment in love. Faith is the “beyond,” which originates as a gift from God. This transformation is a work of the Holy Spirit. As the process of elevation and transformation “surpasses every capability of created nature,” [134] for an infinite nature from the life of God. [135] Nevertheless, it remains possible to enter into the heart of that infinity through the limitations of this world. The one who makes this passage possible can only be the Eternal; it is God himself who overcomes the “infinite” disproportion. [136] In him, the re-creation of the human person in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new” (2

128. When we embrace the possibility of transcending ourselves through God’s grace, we do not deny our humanity. On the contrary, as [Pope Francis](#) explained, “We become fully human when we become more than human; we go beyond ourselves in order to attain the fullest truth of our being.” [137] Herein lies the radical departure that saves humanity is not enhanced self-sufficiency, but a relationship that liberates, a communion that transcends that which merely classifies and optimizes what already exists can, however unintentionally, become an obstacle. For a machine, an error is a flaw to be corrected; for a person, however, an error can be a catalyst for profound change. The future is not calculable, but depends on one’s freedom — elevated by the inexhaustible grace of God — and on the

Two cities and two loves

129. Christian humanism does not reject science or technology, but embraces them with gratitude and a higher vocation. The creative intelligence of humanity is a gift that can alleviate suffering and open up new paths ordered toward the common good, justice, the care of the vulnerable and creation. In this sense, the true challenge is not between enthusiasm and fear, but between two paths of development: a progress that serves individuals and people, and another that leads them to the mentality of power. Ultimately, the key question remains the one posed by [Saint John Paul II](#): “Does the earth become ‘more human’ in every aspect of that life? Does it make it more worthy of man?” [138] If the answer is yes, it is an opportunity to be embraced responsibly, on a path of patient, shared reconstruction, akin to the rebuilding in the Book of Nehemiah. If, however, power grows while the heart withers and human bonds fray, then we are reminded of the Tower of Babel — a construction that is grandiose, yet fundamentally dehumanizing.

130. Questioning this alternative path of progress and how we interpret and live it is ultimately a matter of the way we understand and shape relationships, work and institutions, in practice reveals our fundamental values and what we hold most dear. This is a love that guides us as to what we truly cherish, both as individuals and as a community. Saint Augustine described human history as a struggle between two loves, which give rise to two ways of living together — or two “cities,” as it were: on the one hand, the love of God and neighbor; on the other, the love of self. “Two loves have built two cities: the earthly city, the love of self even to the contempt of God; the heavenly city, the love of God and neighbor to the contempt of self.” [139] As throughout history, these two loves continue to contend for dominance in our world. The Tower of Babel or the rebuilding of Jerusalem begins within each one of us.

CHAPTER FOUR

SAFEGUARDING HUMANITY AT A TIME OF TRANSFORMATION

TRUTH, WORK, FREEDOM

131. Having outlined the context in which the challenge of technological transformation is situated, especially in the face of transhumanist and posthumanist currents, we cannot remain at the level of general analysis alone. We must focus on our everyday actions and social relationships. For this reason, we must focus on certain areas in which the consequences are particularly concrete, and at times tragic. In light of the principles of the Church’s Social

invites us to rediscover truth as a common good, to protect the dignity of work and to safeguard freedom and commercialization.

Truth as a common good

Truth and democracy

132. The use of digital platforms and AI systems is driving profound changes in public and political communication. Dialogue and participation are often used to construct distorted narratives and blur the boundaries between facts with opinions. Disinformation did not begin with AI, yet today it finds a powerful amplifier in AI. The images and videos exposes people to biased or misleading perspectives. This problem has both cultural and political dimensions. The quality of public communication depends directly on social trust and, in turn, shapes it. At the same time, it is free from centralized or automated control. In public discourse, the truth of facts has a rational dimension, a need for checking of sources and responsible argumentation. Moreover, it is deeply relational, built through bonds of trust as well as an honest exchange with others and with the world. Only the shared pursuit of the veracity of facts can provide a solid foundation for just communication.

133. Those who command powerful technological and economic resources, along with substantial human and intellectual capabilities for influencing cultural change. Ultimately, they can influence a significant number of people about humanity, the world, the meaning of existence, the family and even God. This is pure power that overtly imposes what it wishes others to accept as true. At its root lies a deeper and often unrecognized problem: man is wrongly convinced that he is the sole author of himself, his life and society. This is a presumption closed in upon himself.” [140] Consequently, people believe that they can construct reality, and that what they see corresponds to what is true. [Saint John Paul II](#) reflected on the consequences of this “crisis of truth,” going to the idea of a universal truth about the good, knowable by human reason, is lost, inevitably the notion of core values. In such a context, universally valid truths, which precede us and which conscience must accept, are no longer valid. [Francis](#) to ask with realism: “What is law without the conviction, born of age-old reflection and great wisdom, that is sacred and inviolable?” To which he concluded: “If society is to have a future, it must respect the truth and adhere to that truth. Murder is not wrong simply because it is socially unacceptable and punished by law, but because it is a non-negotiable truth attained by the use of reason and accepted in conscience. A society is noble and just when it pursues the truth and its adherence to the most basic of truths.” [142]

134. The search for truth is an essential element of democracy, which is itself a means of contributing to the public good. When questions about what is true lose their appeal, and a pragmatism takes hold that is content with what appears, democratic life is weakened. After all, democracy does not consist of rules and procedures alone, but a commitment to the facts and a genuine commitment to the good of individuals and society as a whole. Indifference leads surely, to a descent into totalitarianism. As the philosopher Hannah Arendt wrote, the ideal subjects of a democracy are not those who are ideologically convinced, but rather “people for whom the distinction between fact and fiction (i.e., the distinction between true and false (i.e., the standards of thought) no longer exist.” [143]

Communication and the collective imagination

135. In view of this, it is important to recall that communication “is not only the transmission of information, but also a culture.” [144] The content that circulates within digital environments shapes how people perceive the world. The virtual collective consciousness images and narratives that direct our desires and influence our daily choices. “The virtual world,” [145] since what originates online now becomes a part of people’s lives, especially of the

136. For this reason, those who control digital platforms and means of communication have a considerable imagination and to present a particular vision of reality as desirable. Such power should be constantly checked with respect for human dignity, so that the culture fostered on the internet does not become an instrument of homogenization or dominance, but rather a setting in which inner freedom and critical thought can mature.

Toward an ecology of communication

137. Our first task is neither to demonize nor idolize technological tools, but to utilize them on the basis that truth is a common good and not the property of those with power or influence. We must therefore promote communication. On the level of public policy, this entails establishing norms so that the decision-making process in development becomes more transparent and protects personal data. Regarding social and cultural aspects of intermediary organizations, serious journalism and forums for debate, where reasoned argumentation has weight than immediate reaction. For families and schools, there is a growing need for new educational programs concerning the proper and critical use of digital tools, AI and online commercial and financial platforms. The main challenge lies in the integration of knowledge, cultivating both the capacity to connect and synthesize knowledge of complexity, and the skills necessary to verify facts.

138. Christian communities, too, are called to commit themselves to transparency in communication and action. Sadly, this has not always been the case. We have witnessed with shame the emergence of painful truths about the Church and ecclesial realities. In particular, some journalists, driven by a passion for truth, have played a crucial role in bringing injustices and abuses to light. To them, I wish to repeat the words that [Pope Francis](#) used in speaking to them: "I thank you for what you tell us about what goes wrong in the Church, for helping us not to sweep it under the carpet, and for the victims of abuse." [146] Yet vigilance and transparency remain first and foremost a grave responsibility. We must not wait for others to compel us to confront uncomfortable truths about ourselves.

An educational alliance for the digital age

139. In an era when truth is often distorted in order to serve particular interests and communication strategy assumes decisive importance. Yet rapid technological transformations reveal just how unprepared we are. The pervasiveness of digital media fosters a culture of immediacy and hyper-stimulation, which gives rise to concerns concerning the effort required for seeking the truth.

140. Education, by contrast, is a long journey requiring patience, and therefore needs time for developing a reality beyond appearances. This is a fundamental issue because every technology shapes those who use it. The use of AI, then, involves teaching them to decide when and for what purpose it ought *not* to be used. The ease with which answers or summaries can be obtained risks extinguishing the desire to ask questions, which is a process that Plato wrote, the deepest and most important things are learned only after much time and effort, by engaging with "striking upon" ideas and experiences together like flint until the spark of understanding is kindled within. We must learn how to exercise restraint in the use of AI and to protect our young people from the promise of the perfect world which renders human thought seemingly superfluous precisely when it is most needed.

141. In recent years, psychological and psychiatric literature has documented with growing insistence that exposure to digital devices and social media can negatively impact sleep, attention span, control of emotions during the most vulnerable stages of life, at times with tragic consequences. This is further aggravated by degrading content that offends sensibility, to pornographic and hypersexualized material, to messages that manipulate emotions, and to proposals that normalize risky behavior. Online phenomena such as grooming, blackr

minors are not uncommon, and are made more insidious by the use of fake profiles, algorithms that facilitate tools capable of manipulating images and videos. Having a personal mobile device at too early an age without supervision can exacerbate young people's vulnerabilities, foster addiction and expose them to isolation as well as to pressures to share intimate images or sensitive information.

142. It is difficult for parents by themselves to resist the influence of business models that monetize attention. It is essential to form an alliance among policy-makers, educational institutions and families that is capable of accomplishing this task. Far-sighted public policies are needed to oppose the immediate interests of platforms, which often conflict with the wellbeing of minors. In this regard, interventions by legislators are appropriate for setting providers accountable rather than shifting the whole burden of control onto families, and for providing support in the face of online sexual exploitation and violence. Thus children and adolescents, who are entrusted to our care, are our precious treasure. [148] At the same time, it is also necessary to teach children, adolescents and young people to resist manipulation, defend their dignity and respect that of others in digital environments. [149]

The central role of schools

143. School is the place where new generations can learn to seek and love the truth, to reflect on the meaning and dignity of every person. For this reason, many parents, who want their children to grow in the capacity to think critically and embrace solid values, place great expectations on schools as valuable partners. However, parents have the primary and inalienable right to choose the kind of education and formation for their children in accordance with their moral, cultural and religious convictions. Today, the world of education faces a number of urgent challenges.

144. The first challenge is socio-political. Both within individual nations and across different regions of the world, there are persistent concerns concerning access to basic education and higher studies. In many nations, Governments have limited resources for guaranteeing a quality education for all, whether by adequately supporting the public schools or by creating institutions that offer this essential service. When a substantial portion of education, at various levels, is privatized, access to schooling may become overly dependent on families' financial means, especially in the absence of social safety nets. In the face of this risk, it is nevertheless important to acknowledge and encourage the contribution of the private institutions which ensure inclusive access for children and young people of every background, even when public circumstances would not otherwise allow it.

145. The second major challenge is pedagogical. Many educational systems struggle to keep pace with the rapid development of students. The advance of information technologies and AI is rapidly rendering curricula and teaching methods of a different era. Meanwhile, the organization of schools, physical spaces, evaluation methods and the role of teachers need to be rethought in order to promote an authentically integral education that addresses every dimension of the human person. The ongoing formation of teachers throughout their professional lives, so that they can engage positively with students and help them to use technologies responsibly, critically and creatively, rather than passively succumbing to their influence, is a priority.

146. The third major challenge is intellectual and concerns knowledge. Without careful attention, an education for truth may emerge, in which an incessant flow of information replaces the essential exercise of research and reflection. If knowledge becomes increasingly fragmented, it becomes difficult to grasp reality as a whole, to ask profound questions and to develop authentic, critical and creative thought. Many educators already report signs of dehumanization, with students "knowing many things" but struggling to find direction in their lives, partly due to an inability to connect information with a sense of purpose. A genuinely healthy attitude is needed, requiring rhythms that incorporate silence, reflection and judicious analysis, for without these elements inner freedom may be compromised.

147. The Church's Social Doctrine invites families, schools, Christian communities and public institutions to form an alliance. This takes shape when fundamental principles are translated into educational goals, including moderation and limits; recognition of the rights of others and of future generations to enjoy the goods that have been made available by human ingenuity; freedom and responsibility; and a sense of transcendence and the call to follow the pace of the digital world, but to offer that which the digital sphere by itself cannot provide: learning and developing trustworthy relationships.

The dignity of work at a time of digital transition

The value of work

148. Since the emergence of her Social Doctrine, beginning with *Rerum Novarum*, the Church has emphasized the need to combat all forms of exploitation. Above all, however, the Magisterium has recognized its understanding of the entire social question, since it is through their work that individuals develop many dimensions of this, we can understand the great intuition of Saint Benedict of Nursia, who united prayer and work, as the human response to God's call. Created in the image of the Creator, our own work in some way contributes to the progress of society and the common good, put to good use the capabilities we have received, in support of our families, engage in cooperative relationships and, through listening and dialogue, learn to do what one could achieve alone.

149. For these reasons, work is not simply an instrument; it expresses and enhances the dignity of our human condition, a normal path toward maturity, development and personal fulfillment. In this regard, fire at times may be necessary in emergencies, but it cannot become the sole response, since the goal is to enlighten through his or her own work. [151]

150. Today, the convergence of automation, robotics and AI is rapidly transforming the very structure of work, bringing great improvements for everyone. In reality, however, the "new ways" of working are not necessarily based on increasing productivity by taking over mundane tasks, it frequently forces workers to adapt to the speed and demands of machines being designed to support those who work. As a result, contrary to the advertised benefits of technology, it can paradoxically de-skill workers, subject them to automated surveillance and relegate them to a need to keep up with the pace of technology can erode workers' sense of *agency* and stifle the innovation they bring to their work." [152] Precisely in order to avoid this drift, it is necessary to design systems that are based on human dignity and not solely on performance.

The problem of unemployment

151. Saint John Paul II recognized that unemployment is a grave evil. Indeed, when it reaches massive proportions, it becomes a social calamity that especially requires the State to exercise responsibility. [153] Today, amid the "fourth industrial revolution," the problem is even more acute, as innovation is often pursued solely for reducing costs and increasing profits. [154] This creates a legitimate fear of a significant and rapid contraction in available jobs that would create a chain reaction throughout people and local economies. In many sectors, this can already be seen in new forms of job insecurity and in outsized remuneration for a highly specialized minority alongside declining wages for a large portion of the workforce.

152. It is certainly desirable for technology to relieve humans of arduous, repetitive or dangerous tasks that are not for human activity. Yet, the protection of employment opportunities and the irreplaceable role of the individual worker must not be forgotten.

rule. The pursuit of greater profits cannot justify choices that systematically sacrifice jobs, because the means, and the economic order must remain subordinate to human dignity and the common good.

153. At the same time, we must acknowledge that every real transition involves discontinuities, for it is sometimes conflictual. Consequently, no single model of change or universal solution exists, since there are different effects in different places. Wealthy societies automate rapidly and chaotically, reducing the need for a vast human labor force and institutional friction. Vast regions of the world, by contrast, remain trapped in hybrid human labor and partial technologies coexist without achieving genuine transformation. These areas become hotbeds of instability and forced migration. Therefore, solutions must be sought at national and local intermediary communities. We need adaptive tools, including well-structured models, local initiatives, and rights of access to essential goods. While not pursuing an abstract harmony, we must build concrete foundations for the time of transformation.

154. Work remains a fundamental dimension of the human experience, for not only is it a means of sustenance, expression, relationships and contributing to the community. Therefore, the problems related to work extend to family survival. A society that guarantees employment to only a small fraction of the population, despite economic development, risks exposing many to forced inactivity, a lack of responsibility and the absence of daily human and cultural impoverishment. This creates a paradox of material progress and anthropological regressions as foundations of a just and stable social peace. For this reason, the Church's Social Doctrine insists that work has high priority for public policies and economic processes, serving as a criterion for evaluating the human condition. [155] Moreover, in those parts of the world where work tends to diminish or change radically due to technological processes outside of democratic control, we must rethink the nature of work and its connection to citizenship so that it does not jeopardize social participation.

155. In light of this conviction, we can better appreciate the history of the Church's Social Doctrine after World War II, which emerged from that tradition, including associations, trade unions, cooperatives and welfare organizations that decisively to improving labor legislation, protecting the most vulnerable and promoting more humane conditions. However, these instruments are no longer sufficient by themselves in the face of the transformations driven by AI and the competitiveness that is rarely concerned with social sustainability. New collaborative efforts are needed between labor organizations, the business world and the scientific community in order to develop rapidly adequate legal and social protections, including at the international level. [157] Labor unions, which the Church has consistently supported, must be open to new types of employment and the corresponding needs of workers, in order to represent and defend their interests. In bold decisions, the prospect of greater poverty and inequality looms large, which would leave many individuals and communities surrounded by the machines and automated systems that have replaced them.

156. At this time of transition, it is not enough to react only when jobs disappear; we must oversee the transition. A viable path is, first of all, to establish social criteria for innovation. Here, every introduction of automation must be accompanied by verifiable measures to protect the employment, retraining and participation of workers. In this way, technology must be used to free up human time and capabilities, rather than producing exclusion. Second, we need proactive policies for training and professional transitions accessible to all, ensuring that the cost of adaptation does not fall disproportionately on the most vulnerable. Third, there needs to be a corporate commitment to include quality and dignity of work among its indicators of success. Finally, in the present, innovation can serve as an ally of safer, more creative and dignified work; without them, innovation becomes an accelerator of injustice.

An economy that values dignity

157. The labor market is one area in which the risks associated with new technologies more clearly emerge. Remember that economic freedom is not absolute; it must always be measured against the common good. Entrepreneurial initiative can indeed be a true vocation, generating wealth and improving lives, rather than only on profit. This is possible when it recognizes that the creation of dignified, valuable jobs are an essential part of a just society. [158]

158. With prophetic spirit, [Pope Francis](#) warned against an economic freedom proclaimed in words alone but in which many from benefiting from it. [159] Economic models that exalt efficiency and individual success often neglect the needs of people or in those with slower development paths as useless or inconvenient, as if their futures depend on pace with the “winners.” In reality, a just society requires a vigilant State and civil institutions that are capable of ensuring the mentality of efficiency, and of ensuring that resources, creative solutions and regulations favor the most vulnerable. Waiting for the benefits of growth to reach the poor “eventually,” decisions need to be taken to ensure that the benefits reach the outset. The experience of recent decades shows that in economic and financial crises, it is always the most vulnerable who suffer while the theories that promise automatic general prosperity often prove to be illusory.

159. It is important to move beyond the current metrics of development — which for more than eighty years have been based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP) — since these metrics almost systematically neglect aspects essential to the well-being of people and the environment. The development of parameters and metrics complementary to GDP is crucial for conducting analyses, political and economic decision-making and establishing regional, national and international policies. The introduction of new parameters will allow for a comprehensive and timely assessment of how legislative and policy decisions affect the dignity of work, shared prosperity, inequality reduction and environmental protection. It will also affect educational processes, mindsets and public opinion, as well as peace, which is only authentic when based on justice.

160. In recent years, finance has increased in importance and has undergone significant innovation, driven by digital technologies and cryptocurrencies. The reflections and observations contained in the teaching of my predecessors, particularly the encyclicals, highlighted how the financial intermediation sector, “when operating without the necessary anthropological and ethical constraints, not only produced manifest abuses and injustice, but also demonstrated a capacity to create systemic and structural inequalities. It is likewise the case that income from capital risks replacing income from labor, which is often confined to the interests of the system’s primary interests. Yet savings transformed into credit for the real economy, thereby creating benefits for the most vulnerable. Savings must remain central for development and the investments that must accompany ongoing transitions. The social role of finance is irreplaceable. Finance for its own sake is fundamentally different from finance aimed at the development of the real economy.”

161. This perspective needs to become part of a broader view of global dynamics. While the world’s wealth is increasingly concentrated in fewer hands, widening inequalities both within and between countries. “We have too much, and too many who have little, that is the logic of today.” [162] Scientific and technological advances are not easily accessible to the vast majority of people, as was dramatically demonstrated during the recent pandemic. Many countries spend heavily on superfluous interventions or dreams of individual enhancement accessible only to a small elite, while they lack the essential equipment needed to save millions of human lives. To think that new technologies will automatically solve these problems is to ignore the evidence. Unless transformations at the design stage prioritize the prevention of new and structural inequalities, progress will inevitably produce structural inequalities. Today, justice requires access to the benefits of knowledge, tools and opportunities.

162. Just laws and methods of redistribution are certainly necessary for correcting imbalances, including burden on the weakest and ask for more from those with greater resources. However, the pursuit of social justice is considered a separate issue that follows only after the production of wealth, as if the economy existed first and politicians only intervening afterwards in order to distribute it. Indeed, justice concerns every phase of economic activity: from acquisition to financing, and from production to consumption; every choice has moral consequences. [164]

163. More than ever, in the age of AI and robotics, it is no longer possible to rely solely on the market. The state has the task of orientating economies and technologies to the common good, promoting dignified work, and the distribution of the benefits of innovation. Since many economic decisions transcend national borders, there is a need for international cooperation capable of defining common strategies, especially in favor of the most vulnerable countries, to promote development and overcome welfare dependency. The thinking behind these choices is the immeasurable value of the common good and a world truly governed for everyone. The interdependence between peace and development, as [VI](#) prophetically wrote in 1967, [165] remains applicable today, for prosperity contributes to building and maintaining peace, widespread, inclusive and sustainable.

164. In practical terms, in the age of AI and robotics, ensuring that the economy favors human dignity requires firm action. First, transparency and accountability: when data and algorithms influence credit distribution, services and opportunities, it is necessary that decisions be understandable, contestable and subject to appeal, and not reduced to mere profiles. Second, inclusion and access: the benefits of innovation must be paired with investments in infrastructure and essential services to ensure that technology does not widen the gap between those who have and those who do not. Finally, measures to ensure equity: taxation, social protection and industrial policies must correct the imbalance and concentration of wealth and power. Indeed, these criteria do not constitute a curb on innovation; instead, they ensure a more humane economy.

Families and young people: the social conditions for hope

165. The family is a primary social good. Founded on the enduring union between a man and a woman, it is where all persons develop their potential, become aware of their dignity and learn the earliest forms of truth and moral habits that prepare them for life in society. [166] As the first natural society, endowed with foundational and irreplaceable cell of every community organization. [167] Consequently, when political projects and economic policies reduce the family to a marginal or secondary role, the authentic growth of the entire social body is compromised.

166. The family, however, is a fragile social good immediately affected by the economic and technological changes in the nature of work. It thus requires cultural, juridical and economic support. The devastating impact of unbalanced family structures is well known. In the short term, it may seem advantageous to reduce labor costs or increase productivity, but in the long term this undermines the very foundations of social coexistence. While technological successes are celebrated, the family is progressively eroded, as if by a silent virus.

167. For young people, job insecurity is particularly devastating. As the Bishops of the United States of America have noted, it is not merely a source of income but a crucial sphere in which identity is formed, friendships and relationships are built, responsibilities are learned and one's vocation is discerned. [169] When access to work is hindered by inadequate systems of training or structural barriers, many young people find the path to their human dignity blocked. The need to change jobs several times over the course of life requires that continuous updating and retraining be provided so that generations can competently and independently face the risks of an economic environment that is both dynamic and uncertain. [170]

168. This gives rise to a specific public responsibility. The State has the duty to support business activity to employment, promoting work where it is lacking and defending it in times of crisis, since it is a primary responsibility. [171] Particularly in an age of continuous technological transformation, we need a political creativity that places the family and coming generations at the center; otherwise our economic progress will translate into new forms of precarity.

169. Supporting families and young people in this transition requires choices that make stability feasible. Policies need to promote continuity and the quality of employment, countering insecurity as a normal condition. First, measures are needed to create realistic paths for entry into the workforce and for professional growth. Second, measures are needed to ensure that, without a proper balance between work, leisure and rest, families are weakened and young people struggle to fulfill their social responsibility. Furthermore, it is essential to invest in accessible education and retraining, so that the pressure of the digital economy does not become a harsh selection between those who are able to update their skills and those who are not. Social ties must be supported, with networks and educational communities that accompany life choices and prevent giving rise to loneliness or addictions. If implemented, these technological transformations can be navigated and used to build the future, which is what makes a society prosperous.

Protecting freedom against dependencies and commercialization

Dependencies and societal control

170. Having reflected on truth and education, work and families, we must now consider the impact of the digital economy on freedom, addressing risks to both the mental health of individuals and broader social challenges. The success of the “digital attention economy” should not be underestimated, since platforms and services are often designed to capture attention, exploiting their vulnerabilities and weakening their inner freedom. When business models thrive, the person is treated as a means rather than as an end; those who design or finance such systems bear a responsibility that is often ignored. There is an urgent need to promote technologies that strengthen interior freedom by fostering digital literacy and the protection of minors, thus countering models that exploit vulnerability.

171. A further risk, less visible but no less serious, is that of social control made possible by the massive use of algorithmic systems. When every action—movements, purchases, relationships and preferences—leaves a digital trace, it emerges, namely the power to profile, predict and influence behavior, often without individuals being fully aware. These systems are used to make decisions affecting concrete opportunities — such as access to credit, employment or insurance — with the risk of undermining freedom and discriminating against the most vulnerable. Furthermore, control is exercised not only through prohibitions, but also through the architecture of visibility: what is amplified or rendered invisible, what is highlighted or hidden, shapes opinions and choices, fostering conformity and self-censorship. For this reason, freedom in the digital age is not only an interiority but also a public concern. It calls for clear rules, transparency, the possibility of recourse and the regulation of intrusive technologies, so that technology will remain at the service of the human person and not become a tool of control over consciences.

172. At the root of these problems lies a technocratic and post-humanist mentality that tends to regard individuals as beings to be manipulated or a resource to be optimized, [172] removing all safeguards against the unchecked pursuit of efficiency, rather than respect for freedom and human dignity. Some post-humanist currents even go so far as to subordinate human beings, subordinate to the interests of elites who consider themselves superior. This troubling perspective becomes even more serious when combined with technological tools that exponentially increase the capacity for control and surveillance, and structural indebtedness, which keep entire peoples in conditions of dependence, reflect the same mental models of subordination akin to slavery.

Breaking the chains of new forms of slavery

173. This distorted view of the human person is reflected today in various forms of servitude directly linked in the world of AI is immaterial or magical. Every seemingly immediate and flawless response is the result involving vast networks of natural resources, energy infrastructure and, above all, people. A significant part of its functioning relies on the silent work of millions of people engaged in essential yet largely unseen activities such as data training and content moderation, often involving disturbing material. In many cases, these workers are women, working under demanding conditions for minimal wages. Added to this invisible labor is the even greater resources required for the production of the devices and microprocessors on which AI depends. In some cases, adolescents work in dangerous conditions, crushing the materials from which rare earth elements are extracted. People are scarred, injured and worn down so that computational flow may continue uninterrupted. From social media platforms, messaging systems, anonymous payment methods and profiling techniques in order to identify victims of trafficking — very often minors — reducing men and women to “data” to be tracked and “packaged” into the same digital circuits that support much of the global economy. This reality deeply challenges the moral principle enough to invoke efficiency, nor to celebrate the benefits of innovation, if they are built on a chain of exploitation hidden. If technology promises emancipation, yet produces new forms of global subordination, it stands in violation of the principle of human dignity.

174. The fight against new forms of slavery is a decisive test for the ethical discernment of AI and digital technologies. The tradition inaugurated by [Leo XIII](#), the Church renews her firm condemnation of all forms of slavery, including that of persons. She likewise highlights the urgent need for reflection and action that keep the inalienable dignity of the common good, as both the focus and goal of society, as well as the guiding criteria for every personal, social and political action. In this ethical and humanizing reflection, the growing power of digital systems could lead us toward new alternatives rather than those of the past that we now deplore, while we continue to present ourselves as “advanced” and “modern.”

175. Human trafficking must be recognized as a contemporary form of slavery and a grave violation of human dignity. To firmly, or tolerating these practices in any way, is in some way to become complicit in today’s sins, which were forbidden when slavery was being concealed and justified. [173]

176. In the development of her doctrine, the Church has gradually come to a deeper awareness of the truth that past events cannot be judged anachronistically, as though the moral criteria that matured over time were not applicable. Neither can we deny or diminish the delay with which both society and the Church came to denounce trafficking and the Middle Ages many individuals and even ecclesiastical institutions had slaves. Already in the early modern period the See of Rome, responding to requests from Sovereigns, intervened several times in order to regulate and, in certain cases, the enslavement of “infidels.” [174] It was only in the nineteenth century that a formal condemnation of slavery was clearly articulated, notably under [Pope Leo XIII](#). [175] This development confirms the Church’s growth in understanding the perennial truths of Revelation that she safeguards. Although trafficking was a practice — given that slavery was long tolerated before being unequivocally condemned — there has been a constant throughout history of the dignity of every human being, created in the image of God, even if it took eight centuries of incompatibility with slavery to be explicitly recognized. This constitutes a wound in Christian memory, one that we carry with ourselves detached. [176] It is impossible not to feel deep sorrow when contemplating the immense suffering of so many in stark contrast to their immeasurable dignity as persons infinitely loved by the Lord. For this, we humbly and sincerely ask for pardon.

177. This is why the memory of past complicity and blindness in the face of the injustice of slavery we have learned must be translated into discernment and responsibility in the present. If we want to avoid the future for having failed to respect the treasure of human dignity that is required by our faith, it falls to us firmly, trafficking in its many forms and, together with all who are committed to this cause, to support cooperation, protection, liberation and rehabilitation.

178. Even today, colonialism assumes new forms. It no longer dominates only bodies, but appropriates and turns into exploitable information. Entire regions, especially those marked by structural fragility and limited growth, are subjected to a new mindset of extraction: that of health data, epidemiological profiles, genetic maps and so on. These have become the new “rare earths” of power: vital data which, once aggregated and analyzed, can be used to guide investment strategies, anticipate crises and, above all, determine who and what is deemed to matter. This data of entire peoples — often collected under the pretext of aid, research or innovation — possess a power for they can shape needs and markets. They can also decide, before others, to whom medicines, investments are allocated. Here lies one of the most urgent moral challenges of our time: to ensure that shared knowledge is an instrument rather than an instrument of dominance. This requires restoring to individuals not only the data that describe them but also the power to decide how it is used, by whom and for whose benefit. Otherwise, the digital age will not be post-colonial.

179. New forms of slavery are fueled by economic chains and digital infrastructures. Therefore, action to reform the supply chains that underpin the technological industry and the digital economy need to become more ethical. First, competitive advantage is built upon hidden exploitation. Second, companies and investors need to adopt ethical verification (due diligence), placing among their priorities the protection of workers, the fight against corruption and an assessment of the social impact of data-driven business models. Furthermore, digital platforms must cooperate with authorities and civil society to prevent communication, payment and profiling tools from becoming channels of exploitation of victims. When such efforts converge, the digital environment can be transformed from a space of exploitation to one of prevention and the promotion of human dignity.

A shared responsibility

180. The various areas just considered— the search for the truth in public life, education in the digital environment, the fragility of families and new forms of slavery—are not isolated phenomena. Rather, they reflect a common reality: namely that if technology becomes the ultimate criterion, the human person risks being reduced to data and a commodity. If, however, technology is integrated with a wise perspective, it can become an instrument of human development.

181. From this perspective, the Social Doctrine of the Church calls for a shared responsibility. It asks that we exercise foresight: by institutions capable of regulating without stifling, and protecting without taking over; by businesses that measure dignity as measures of success; by intermediary organizations and educational communities that rebuild the moral fabric of citizens who cultivate responsibility, moderation, discernment and a sense of truth. Only in this way can technology be an instrument of human development, rather than becoming a source of exclusion and dominance. And only in this way can technology be recognized as authentic, because it is measured against the inviolable dignity of every man and woman.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE CULTURE OF POWER AND THE CIVILIZATION OF LOVE

182. Having considered how AI is transforming certain aspects of life and society, in particular the serious issue of war, we must now turn our attention to the yet more tragic issue of war. Here the question is not merely the risk that technology, detached from ethics and responsibility, will render decisions about life and death

present the use of force as an immediate and viable option. In an increasingly interdependent world, peace is not a luxury, but a prerequisite for the universal common good and a test of the moral maturity of peoples, especially of those who bear the responsibility for governing.

183. The digital revolution is changing the nature of conflict. Alongside conventional warfare, there are new forms of information manipulation, campaigns of influence and the automation of strategic decisions. AI acts as a double-edged sword, with processes, particularly within a context where many technologies are intrinsically ambivalent. Consequently, while AI can be rapidly repurposed for offense, and the fine line between protection and aggression becomes blurred, AI in defense and protection of civilians, it can also lower the threshold for the use of force, shield people from harm, and reduce the enemy in which the enemy is reduced to a statistic and the victim to “collateral damage.” Faced with these transitions, we must reaffirm the principles of Social Doctrine — the dignity of the person, the common good, the universal destination of goods, and the promotion of justice — for they are criteria for judging whether technologies truly serve humanity or are subjugating it. We must uphold these principles as guidelines for our decision-making.

184. In this chapter, therefore, I will compare two opposing approaches, which I have already evoked in the Introduction. On the one hand, there is the temptation of constructing the Tower of Babel, relying on power and speed. On the other, patience is required in order to rebuild Jerusalem “piece by piece,” as in the time of Nehemiah, by safeguarding the common good.

185. If we examine global dynamics, we can recognize more clearly the spread of a culture of power and violence. The modern Babel can be seen not only in the globalized technocratic paradigm, but also in the resurgence of imperialisms, between powers that wish to preserve their supremacy, and those that aspire to seize the reins of power. Moreover, there seems to be no limit to the race — driven by a dehumanizing quest for evermore powerful technologies or to secure control over them. Yet, despite this downward spiral, we can see the emergence of a humanity that is striving to remain human and working to build the holy city of coexistence and peace. It is a city of builders and clumsy architects of this city, capable of generous gestures but lacking an overall vision. The city is visible and less spectacular, and awaits a better understanding and greater coordination so that it may fulfill its responsibility of every community, from families to States, and the relations between Nations. It is this place, this construction site of hope, that we call the “civilization of love.”

The civilization of love in the digital age

186. When [Saint Paul VI](#) coined the phrase “the civilization of love,” [\[177\]](#) the world was in the midst of severe economic instability. In that context, the Church proposed an alternative path to that of ideological confrontation and envisioned a social order in which justice and charity are intertwined and love becomes the guiding principle of cultural life. Today, we must resolutely recover this vision, for the civilization of love is no naïve utopia, but a reality that consists in translating charity into structures of justice, giving institutional form to fraternity and regarding all peoples — as allies necessary for building the common good. As the Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* reminds us, it is capable of becoming a culture and a norm, and thereby of bringing about a stable international order, transforming coexistence into a community with a shared future. [\[178\]](#)

187. This insight proves even more fundamental in the current context of digital transformation. Digital technologies and the development of AI create increasingly tighter bonds, linking — in real time — decisions made in one place to their consequences elsewhere. In this sense, the words of [the Second Vatican Council](#) on the growing interdependence of peoples are timely, for the common good is taking on an increasingly universal dimension, with rights and duties cor-

[179] The project for a civilization of love, therefore, must undertake the task of transforming this imposed and chosen solidarity. This is the guiding principle for technological processes: it is not enough for artificiality to be efficient or connected; it must also serve to build a universal human family, with shared rights and duties and a real opportunity for encounter and mutual care.

The culture of power

188. In our time, a culture of power is taking hold, in which the availability of resources and the ability to set the agenda and criteria for decision-making. In this way, the common good of humanity is relegated to the background. The tragedy of peoples at war is reduced to a secondary consideration in relation to strategic interests. This changes relationships and behaviors, and grows by normalizing war, pursuing ever-greater military power through unilateralism and fueling a false realism that insists that there is no alternative.

The normalization of war

189. In 1965, the words of [Saint Paul VI](#) resounded powerfully at the UN General Assembly: “Never again must we acknowledge that, despite the desires and declarations for peace, the past sixty years have been characterized by brutality, often affecting civilian populations on a massive scale, leading to the death of innocent victims, massive destabilization and long-lasting wounds. Nevertheless, in public discourse, there was a widespread conviction that war was the last resort, subject to strict ethical and legal limits, and always oriented toward a political vision of peace.” In the immediate post-First World War period, a turning point occurred after the Second World War: peace was established in international order, as attested in particular by the United Nations Charter, with the intention to “save suffering and the scourge of war.” [181] Likewise, many national constitutions restricted the use of force to extreme and exceptional circumstances. During the Cold War, despite the existence of serious conflicts, there remained the awareness that a new world order would be achieved at all costs.

190. Today, however, we are witnessing a real paradigm shift in public discourse and in decisions regarding the revival of war as an instrument of international politics, while the very ethical principles that had previously eroded. Regional conflicts that drag on over time, escalating tensions and reciprocal threats are becoming new forms of conflict driven by the desire for territorial expansion that were thought to be overcome. They are now being shaped and conditioned by polarizing media narratives, which are often amplified by algorithms that promote confrontation.

191. We are also witnessing a disconcerting loss of historical memory, as first-hand accounts of the horrors of war are disappearing. This leads to a selective or distorted rewriting of the past, in a context where fake news and propaganda obscure the lessons that have been learned. Without a living memory of the horrors of war, political decisions are made in the name of power alone, without any consideration for the long-term consequences.

192. To all of this, the media and digital dimensions are adding new and decisive elements. Communication technologies, information environments and algorithms that reward conflict can magnify polarization and resentment, making shared discernment more difficult. Thus, war is not only fought, but also culturally conditioned through social media mentality, disinformation and fear. When historical memory fades and the ethical principles that protect peace are weakened, it becomes easier to justify violence as necessary, inevitable or even “sanitized.” It is slipping into a violent culture of power, where peace no longer appears as a responsibility to be taken care of in conflicts. Today, more than ever, without prejudice to the right to self-defense in the strictest sense, it is the “just war” theory, which has all too often been used to justify any kind of war, is now outdated. [182] Human

and capable tools for promoting human life and resolving conflicts, such as dialogue, diplomacy and for violence and weapons reflects a relational poverty that always has disastrous consequences for civilian

Force without limits

193. The growth of the military-industrial complex has become a defining feature of the current political sector in the economy of various countries. The close link between economic interests, the military apparatus produces an “armed nation,” in which war appears as a natural extension of politics, and the arms market driving force behind military decisions. Nor can we ignore the enormous economic interests behind war countries that supply weapons, profit from a market that thrives precisely on conflicts. In this sense, they contribute to fueling tensions in various regions of the world.

194. Military arsenals are receiving renewed attention. In the past, recognition of the threat posed by war to humanity had promoted paths toward *détente* and disarmament negotiations. Unfortunately, the rapid evolution of nuclear arsenals — including the prospect of its “tactical” use — makes the use of such weapons in this context, the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which came into force in 2021 with the entry into force of the Treaty, is an important step. However, it risks remaining largely symbolic since the major nuclear powers have a widespread yet erroneous belief that nuclear deterrence is an indispensable prerequisite for security. The arms race, which is hard to control and accompanied by the gradual dismantling of nuclear reduction agreements and development of “miniaturized” weapons, that make their use seem like a more viable option.

195. The same logic applies to conventional warfare. Military force, weak diplomatic initiatives and the lack of international law contribute to conflicts that tend to become protracted, with extremely high human and environmental costs. It is easier to start than to stop it, and yet, discussion on conflict prevention remains tragically marginal.

196. The situation is further destabilized by the presence of new armed operatives, such as jihadist groups and networks that mark the end of the State’s monopoly on the use of force. Often these groups intertwine with concrete economic interests, transforming war into a “way of life” for entire generations of young people. Victory is no longer a definitive victory, but the perpetuation of conflict as a source of power and income.

Weapons and artificial intelligence

197. The above-mentioned scenario is linked to the unceasing development of weapons systems, particularly autonomous weapons systems. See has recently observed that the growing ease with which autonomous weapons systems can be developed and less subject to human control. This violates the principle that armed force should be used only as a means of self-defense. [183] For this reason, the development and use of AI in warfare must be subject to the moral guarantee respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life and to avoid a race to develop such arms. [184]

198. Sometimes there is talk of “artificial moral agents,” as if machines were able to distinguish between right and wrong with more consistency than a human being. Yet moral judgment cannot be reduced to calculation, for it involves conscience and the recognition of the other as a person. Therefore, it is not permissible to entrust lethal or otherwise destructive systems. No algorithm can make war morally acceptable. AI does not remove the intrinsic inhumanity of war, but it makes it about conflict more quickly and render it more impersonal, lowering the threshold for resorting to violence. AI also makes prediction and thus reducing victims to data. In this way, it will accustom us to the idea that violence is being optimized. This does not diminish the importance of instilling, as far as possible, values and sound judgment in young people, so that they can contribute to a moral ecosystem in which humans are better able to listen to their conscience and allowing AI models to establish appropriate boundaries.

199. It is not enough to invoke a generic type of ethics. Concrete criteria for discernment must be established. The first criterion concerns personal responsibility. When a decision to strike becomes automated or opaque, the risk of error increases. For this reason, the chain of responsibility must be identifiable and verifiable; those who design, train, and operate such systems must be held accountable for their decisions. The second criterion pertains to the moral timeframe for decision-making. To expedite the decision-making processes, speed and efficiency should never be the supreme motivating factor. The third criterion is the identification and protection of civilians. Any technology that dehumanizes the face of human beings lowers the moral threshold of conflict. Target selection and the use of force must not discriminate against non-combatants, nor ignore the impact on defenseless populations.

200. These criteria give rise to certain non-negotiable requirements. First, all systems used in a war must allow for the possibility of retracing and reconstructing decision-making processes, so that accountability and blame are not completely obscured. The decision to use lethal force cannot be delegated to opaque or automated processes, but must remain under the direct and responsible human control. Finally, it is imperative to establish a shared framework — also at the international level — to govern the technological arms race and ensure robust protection for civilians and the infrastructures necessary for the functioning of societies.

The crisis of multilateralism

201. The culture of power also stems from the crisis of the multilateral system. The institutions established to promote a common future for all peoples and a global common good appear to have been weakened. This is due also to a frequent lack of shared will to support and reform them, or to recognize their moral authority. The system is regressing from the significant turning point of the twentieth century. After 1989, the collapse of communism was followed by a predominantly economic globalization, which lacked an adequate political framework capable of ensuring peace. An almost blind faith was placed in the ability of the markets to generate prosperity, democracy, and peace, automatically generating unity and peace, globalization has provoked fundamentalist, identity-based nationalism, which is a far cry from genuine multilateralism; instead, what has appeared is a disorderly and conflict-ridden world with a sense of mistrust.

202. What has also re-emerged is the temptation to forge a collective identity in opposition to an enemy. The party that portrays itself as a victim entitled to retribution. The reduction of complex issues into simplistic categories of “us or them” — facilitates decisions that are often irresponsible and undermine mutual trust among nations. The moral principle is thus replaced by the claim that “might makes right.” Consequently, tribunals that are competent for settling international disputes and dealing with war crimes are often weakened or bypassed, with devastating ramifications for political culture.

203. In this context, peacebuilding has been relegated to a secondary role. Cooperation for development, conflict prevention and the establishment of mutual trust are neglected in the name of power politics. The achievement of a just and lasting peace is also being compromised. Indeed, the principle of proportionality in responding to aggression, the protection of human rights, essential goods, and respect for the lives of civilians, especially children, come to be regarded as naïve idealism.

A supposed political realism

204. We live at a time of significant spiritual and cultural blindness. A false pragmatism urges us to sever ties with the past, were possible to inaugurate a kind of “new creation” detached from the past. Even those who cite the end of this historical nihilism, mistakenly believing that the atrocities of the twentieth century can never happen again, are wrong. The dynamics are re-emerging under new guises. The mentality of armed equilibrium and deterrence appears, however, in contrast to the two-sided dynamic of the Cold War, the proliferation of operatives and battle lines is becoming increasingly fragile. Escalating conflicts lead to asymmetric and “hybrid” wars, fought not only on the battlefield but also in the digital realm.

economic, financial and cyber fronts, where disinformation and campaigns that feed people's fears are In many countries, including those in the Global South, increased military spending is presented as the future or perceived threats. Meanwhile, the real cost falls on the poorest, who see resources for health being reduced.

205. At the core of these issues is a false realism, based not only on the prevailing mentality of force, but anthropological belief that war is an inevitable part of human nature. It is said that things have always had pauses, and that it will always be so! As a result, the concern is no longer the search for peace — which has been a reference on the international stage — but rather how and when to take military action. This same argument is irresponsible not to prepare for conflict. I would argue, however, that what is truly irresponsible is *Realpolitik* that sows in consciences and in society an attitude of resignation to the inevitability of war, and dismisses or ignores irrational positions that ignore the risks at stake. In fact, peace is neither a naïve hope nor merely the always possible as the fruit of justice and charity.

206. In such a climate, nihilism and pragmatism become intertwined and end up normalizing grave errors. Identity-based fanaticism ally themselves with irrational economic policies, while politics often turns to narrow opponents, and systematically cultivating fears and resentments. Thus, diversity is increasingly perceived for possession, a will to dominate, hegemonic ambitions, abuses of power and a fear of those who are in the environment in which new conflicts can develop almost imperceptibly. [186]

207. This, then, is the fertile ground for new wars that are perhaps even more dangerous than those of the past. They disregard all ethical limits. What was once considered unacceptable can now be carried out almost without international response is increasingly influenced more by the interests of individual Governments than by global situations. Decisions now seem to be driven almost exclusively by economic calculations, justified through manufactured enthusiasm and “dreams” that inevitably shatter, generating frustration and further violence. If one believes that nothing is genuinely true and that principles are hollow words, then the fuse in their hearts is lit for aggression.

208. In these situations, the issue of concrete safeguards to prevent future violence remains an open question. It justifies conflict, a dangerous pathway opens up, in that what seems unthinkable today may become the name of utility or security. In countries marked by serious social tensions, we cannot rule out the possibility of considering armed conflict as an effective way of diverting attention from domestic problems and a cynical

209. A particular responsibility rests on the shoulders of those who work in the field of research. All the scientists, business owners, investors, academic authorities, politicians and others — must work with a responsible mindset, while maintaining an acute awareness of the broader context of the technological advancements those related to AI. When people limit themselves to looking only at their own sector, they may deceive themselves by performing actions that are morally neutral and avoid questions about the ultimate ends that guide certain risks — risk cooperating — perhaps unknowingly — with questionable projects that fuel new forms of violence,

Building the civilization of love

210. The construction of a world in a state of perpetual conflict is an evil and must be named for what it is. The current situation may seem bleak or pessimistic, yet I consider it necessary to do so. The Christian perspective denouncing evil. We view history in the light of the crucified and risen Lord, to whom the Father has given the earth” (Mt 28:18). We do not consider the present as a predetermined fate, but an opportunity for personal

Moreover, we believe in the power of the Kingdom, which grows from the tiny size of a mustard seed, and grows (cf. *Mk* 4:26-32). While the tumult of confusion is all around us, goodness grows silently from the Isaiah: “Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?” (*Is* 43:19).

211. A closer analysis of history confirms this. Even in the darkest nights, the Lord raises up men and women who persevere in doing good, who protect the vulnerable and open pathways to reconciliation. The memory of the oft-forgotten peacemakers, show us that grace does not magically eliminate conflict, but instead it is an astonishing creativity in doing good. Christians see the darkness and acknowledge it for what it is, not passively, for they know the light and understand that the darkness has not overcome it and cannot defeat it even when suffering seems to have the last word, Christians serve the good and are sustained by a faith that has both meaning and direction.

We can all do our part

212. At this point, however, a subtle temptation may emerge, namely the thought that the problems are so great that our choices, therefore, cannot make a difference. This is a polite form of resignation, often disguised as pragmatism, that everyone has the same power to make a difference. There are those who govern, make investment decisions, do research, educate, produce or provide information, and then there are those who only seem to live their lives. We all have our own areas for action, and it is precisely there — and nowhere else — that we must reject the mentality of force (even if only through indifference, cynicism, lies or hatred), or to preserve the minimum of moderation, closeness and care).

213. The twentieth-century Catholic author J.R.R. Tolkien, in the words of a protagonist in one of his novels, says this way: “It is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those who are in need of it: to uproot the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till.” [187] We must not arise from a single or spectacular gesture, but from the sum total of small and steadfast acts of fidelity to the good and the rejection of dehumanization. For this reason, it is worthwhile pausing to reflect on some aspects of how we, each in our own way, are building the civilization of love. Without presuming to exhaust this theme, I would like to propose five principles of responsibility: the need to disarm words, building peace through justice, adopting the perspective of victims, and reviving dialogue and multilateralism.

The need to disarm words

214. The first contribution we can make toward a more humane civilization is to be mindful of our words and how they help to disarm the world.” [188] Words have enormous power, something we experience in our daily interactions. Our words can change our mood for better or for worse. “Peace begins with each one of us: in the way we live and the way we speak about others. In this sense, the way we communicate is of fundamental importance: we must say what we mean, we must reject the paradigm of war.” [189] We must all, therefore, examine our consciences regarding the prejudices we have and the explicit or implicit aggression that lies within them. We have a real opportunity for good each time we speak the truth, offer wise advice, support those in need of comfort, denounce injustice, and give a voice to the voiceless.

Building peace through justice

215. All of us, at every level, can contribute to building the foundation of peace, which is justice. We do not seek peace — such as an absence of conflict at any cost — but instead, the true peace born of justice. “There exist

the justice of the individual and the peace of everyone.” [190] Commenting on the psalm verse “justice 84:11), Saint Augustine wrote: “There is no one who shuns the desire for peace, yet not everyone is will perform the works of justice, keeping in mind that justice and peace have embraced; they are not at odds. Do you set yourself against justice? Here, for example, is justice telling you not to steal, but you pay no heed; or you have a deaf ear; not to do to others what you would not want done to yourself; not to say about your neighbor what you have said about yourself... Do you therefore wish to attain peace? Then practice justice!” [191] Let us never

Adopting the perspective of victims

216. There are times when, in order to remain human, we must set aside our reservations and take a stand to remain neutral, nor is it enough merely to claim that we are not complicit. [192] When we witness the destruction of hospitals, schools or vital infrastructure, and violence that affects children, we are confronted with a painful event. For this reason, we cannot limit ourselves to the level of abstract analysis. [Pope Francis](#) encouraged us to go to those who suffer, look at their faces, listen to their stories and acknowledge their wounds. Painful events call on the former to recount the facts, the latter to bear witness to lived experiences.

217. Giving space to the perspectives and voices of victims through communication and education helps to reject the normalization of evil inherent in war, and generally in all forms of violence. It helps us to reject the normalization of coexistence where dignity is violated; and to restore to victims the dignity of being recognized and heard. [194] Paying attention to the conviction that, apart from violent minorities, humanity does not desire war. In a particular way, the memory for victims. As [Saint Paul VI](#) recalled, the Church feels she must make her own both the voice of the living who still bear wounds today, so that their cries may become an appeal for peace in new conflicts. [195]

Cultivating a healthy realism

218. We are in need of a healthy realism that avoids both political idealism and cynicism. There is a kind of realism that preserve its own worldview, tends to choose facts selectively, distorting and renaming them. Its proponents are constructed to fit their own convictions. Conversely, there is also a debased form of realism that confuses force with reality, arguing that since force prevails, it will always prevail. Authentic realism does not give up on changing things, but it identifies interests, fears, constraints and power dynamics, precisely in order to determine what can be achieved and needed to achieve it. It does not reduce politics to morality; neither does it surrender to violence. Instead, it seeks peace more than a mere word, through credible institutions, verifiable guarantees, patient negotiations, and the protection of civilians.

Reviving dialogue

219. In order to build the civilization of love, we must engage in dialogue, for this is the primary means by which nations, and it is the alternative to open conflict. On the eve of the Second World War, [Pius XII](#) affirmed that whereas with war everything can be lost. He insisted that people must return to speaking with one another through persevering dialogue always opens up the possibility of an honorable solution. [196]

220. Indeed, dialogue is an ordinary part of human life and does not only concern relations between States. It is an attitude that seeks to forge bonds of fraternity built on listening, an open demeanor, making time for each other. For if we experience authentic encounters with others, with those who are different, strangers become friends, and it is more difficult even to imagine war.

221. At the political level, there is an urgent need to shift from the “culture of power” to a genuine “culture of dialogue” and diplomacy become the standard means of resolving conflicts. Giorgio La Pira expressed the hope for peace by the method of peace: the method of negotiation, of encounter, of convergence, that is, the authentic awareness that all peoples share a common future demands that the “culture of negotiation” become a cultural commitment, capable of gradually leading humanity away from the cycle of violence.

222. To those who have the honor and responsibility of governing, I would like to repeat the words that the Holy See has often said: “The peoples of our world desire peace, and to their leaders I appeal with all my heart: Let us negotiate! War is never inevitable. Weapons can and must be silenced, for they do not resolve problems. Those who make history are the peacemakers, not those who sow seeds of suffering. Our neighbors are not foreign human beings; not criminals to be hated, but other men and women with whom we can speak. Let us reject the typical of that mindset of violence that divides the world into those who are good and those who are evil.”

223. In rejecting the mindset of violence, interreligious dialogue plays a decisive role, because at the heart of it is a message of peace. [199] Whereas those who use the name of God to legitimize terrorism, violence or war in the name of religion means attacking religion itself. [200] The “spirit of Assisi,” evoked by [Saint Pope Francis](#) — for example, through his dialogue with the Grand Imam of Al-Azhar — shows that belief in authentic sources of their particular spiritual traditions, where there is no room for “sanctified hatred.”

The necessity of diplomacy and multilateralism

224. In international relations, dialogue is an irreplaceable diplomatic tool for preventing conflicts and resolving them. In the face of the impulsive broadcasts, aggressive rhetoric and power politics that characterize our time, “the vociferous demands with all parties, including those interlocutors considered less ‘convenient’ or not considered legitimized, every ounce of humility and patience should be employed in order to nurture even the faintest signs of peace, so as to advance the process of peace.”

225. Cyberspace too has become a battleground. Cyberattacks, data manipulation and campaigns of information warfare, of AI, can destabilize entire countries even before open armed conflict erupts. Moreover, in this area, the risks are often uncertain. When it is unclear who carried out an attack, the risk of disproportionate reaction, miscarriage of justice. For this reason, diplomacy must be capable of operating effectively in this new environment, negotiating with digital technologies, in order to protect civilians and the most vulnerable from “invisible” yet real forms of violence.

226. International organizations, particularly the United Nations, are essential instruments for promoting peace and foster dialogue among nations and promote the peaceful resolution of conflicts, the integral development of the most vulnerable, disarmament and the care of creation. Through such efforts, the international community can defend the rights of refugees and minorities, reallocate resources from military spending to human development. The Holy See supports and accompanies these endeavors, while also recognizing that the current international political system reveal the need for profound reforms. This is not simply a question of technical solutions and convictions and values that also concerns the ethical foundations of nations makes it more difficult to dialogue for the common good. [202]

227. In the international context, the Holy See’s diplomacy adopts the Gospel’s principle of mercy as a guiding action. This is one of the ways in which the Holy See places itself at the service of humanity, thereby acting in the name of charity and truth, defending the dignity of every person and speaking up on behalf of the poor,

way, papal diplomacy expresses the catholicity of the Church and contributes to the building of a civilization where technologies can be oriented toward the common good.

Praying and hoping

228. These avenues for exercising responsibility are sustained by prayer, and in turn nourish prayer. Inspiration primarily comes “from God, God who loves us all, unconditionally.” [203] It is a gift given by Jesus to his disciples. “Peace be with you! It is the peace of the risen Christ. A peace that is unarmed and disarming, humble and gentle.” In his words, I greeted the Church and the world on the day of my election to the See of Peter. I wish to repeat these words to pray for this gift. Let us never tire of praying for peace and of committing ourselves to achieving it in our lives.

CONCLUSION

229. “Let each builder choose with care how to build” (1 Cor 3:10). With these words, Saint Paul encourages us to preserve unity. Dear brothers and sisters, we have reflected on the world we are building, and we ask you to help us safeguard the human person in the era of artificial intelligence. At the end of this reflection, I would like to propose a program of Christian life with which we can navigate this epochal change in the light of the Gospel. This program consists in contemplating God’s plan, living ecclesial unity by partaking of the Eucharist, building a world centered on the human person in union with the Blessed Virgin Mary.

The Word became flesh

230. Our world is filled with attempts to seize control of markets and spheres of influence, often shrouded in seductive ideologies. Yet our hearts yearn for an approach that is wise and benevolent, akin to that which the Virgin Mary when she proclaims that God’s mercy extends in every generation to those who fear him. [205] This plea is present throughout history today, even amid the rapid and unsettling changes brought by algorithms and global connectivity. It is a compass in the digital era for living our lives according to the Gospel.

231. At the heart of everything is the mystery of the Incarnation, the Word who became flesh and dwelt among us, poor and vulnerable, evokes the flesh of so many brothers and sisters stripped of their dignity and reduced to a state of poverty. In the Lord’s closeness, the gift of peace enters into the world in a paradoxical way. It does so through the poverty of the poor, is awakened when we allow ourselves to be moved by the tears of the little ones, the fragility of the elderly, the struggle of those who fight against the evil they do not wish to commit. [207] In this wounded yet beloved world, the true humanity of a life fulfilled through openness and communion, which leads us to desire that his will be done. [208]

232. In the promises of transhumanism and some posthumanist currents of thought, which seek an enhanced humanity, we recognize a yearning that is of concern to us, namely the need for a fuller life, less exposed to suffering. The Incarnation opens a different pathway. On the one hand, old and new ideologies alike urge humanity to embrace technology, and to rise above others by asserting dominance. Contrary to this, the mystery of the Son of God in our condition promises something quite different. The living God descends into our history in order to free us from our condition. He takes upon himself our weakness and transforms it into a setting for salvation. There is no moment in history more worthy of God. “According to the teaching of our faith, we have and adore, in our mysteries, a God who lives and travels in Judea, a God who dies on the cross, a dead God who lies in the tomb.” [210] The fullness of life is found in the ability to welcome this divine way of drawing near, of sharing the burden of the world, of being united within. “O wonder... man is God and this God-Man passes through all those stages, endures all those sufferings, and is glorified with all those who believe in him.”

them, deifies them in himself!" [211] What saves humanity is the divine love that descends into the most vulnerable and renews it from within.

233. For this reason, as a believer among believers, I invite everyone to contemplate, in the face of the *humanity* that shines a light also on the era of AI. In Christ, we are called to cooperate in the work of creating and observing of technological processes that limit our freedom and responsibility. [212] The dignity inscribed in the human face can also be seen in our capacity to reflect critically, choose and love freely, and form authentic relationships. However sophisticated, a human face that gives itself, or a conscience that discerns good from evil, a human face that asks to be gazed upon remains the center of our history. This human face is moving. It is the mystery of "recapitulation": the certainty that the Father has decreed to bring all things on earth, back to Christ, the one Head (cf. *Eph 1:10*). In this plan, nothing will be lost that is authentically human. All will be purified and reunited in the One, who gathers every fragment of life, every tear and every authentically human person from nothingness and delivering them, redeemed, to the Father.

One body in Christ

234. The spirituality that we need is a Eucharistic spirituality, that is, a spirituality of ecclesial unity in love. The Eucharist and the Mystery reveal God entering into our human condition and transforming it through the gift of himself. This is the Eucharist, in which the Lord gives himself and gathers the Church together, so that his offering becomes the source of new life. It is from this communion that Christian solidarity also arises, since "union with Christ is the source of life whom he gives himself." [213] As Saint Augustine explained to the new Christians of his local Church, "the sacrament of the unity of the faithful in Christ: 'What is seen is a mere physical likeness; what is grasped is the unity of the Body of Christ if you want to understand the body of Christ, listen to the Apostle Paul speaking to the faithful: *together we are one body* (cf. *1 Cor 12:27*). If you are the body and members of Christ, then it is your sacrament that is placed on the table. You receive the sacrament that you receive. You respond 'Amen,' and by responding in this way you assent to it. For you are the Body of Christ' and respond 'Amen.' Be then a member of the Body of Christ that your Amen may be true!" [214]

235. The "Amen" that we say in the liturgy, the Body we eat and the Blood we drink shape our entire lives. The Eucharist is a personal encounter with the Lord and yet never simply an act of individual piety." [215] In the Eucharist we see the reality that we "are the Church of Christ, his members, his body. We are brothers and sisters in him. In our diversity, we are one: *In Illo uno unum*." [216] The Eucharist opens us to justice and sharing, with a particular concern for those burdened by poverty or marginalization. And while new economic and technological networks can generate new dependencies, the Church — nourished by the Eucharist — is called to make visible a different paradigm of relationships. It connects, gives a voice to the invisible and ensures that processes are aimed at respecting people's

The construction site of our time

236. The spirituality I wish to commend is that of the "wise architect" who, driven by hope for the Kingdom of God, builds the world for the common good (cf. *1 Cor 3:10*). As I mentioned at the beginning of this reflection, [217] we must place our relationship with God at its center. Our rule must be the acceptance of human limitation and should be characterized by shared responsibility and a language characterized by the Gospel. At the end of the day, a civilization of love can be seen more clearly, and the construction site appears to be already up and running. We are many living stones solidly united to Christ the cornerstone (cf. *1 Pet 2:4-6*). In this task, we are called to avoid taking refuge in spiritual sentimentality or retreating into our own little worlds. We must be faithful to the relationships and love justice and peace.

237. Let us remain faithful to the truth! Living amid incessant flows of information, opinions and images influence decisions and preferences through increasingly sophisticated algorithms. [218] In this context that love the truth, prefer what is right despite the most appealing content and pursue wisdom rather than always keep before us the truth about God and humanity, just as Christ has revealed them to us. We must reject the technical view of humanity, as if reality were mere matter to be shaped according to selfish interests, without regard for the dignity of the human person. Instead, let us cultivate what [Pope Francis](#) called a “situated anthropocentrism,” [220] which recognizes the human person as embedded in a network of relationships with other living beings and with all of creation. Fidelity to the truth and the possibilities offered by technology within a framework marked by wisdom, which is capable of safeguarding the dignity of the human person and the future of our common home.

238. Let us invest in education, beginning with ourselves! We all need to learn how to engage with the digital world as an integral part of our education in the faith and in a life lived according to the Gospel. Indeed, we must continue to be evangelized, one that requires generous missionaries who are mature in the faith. In a world that must rediscover their vocation as artisans of education, prepared to work patiently each day, with the support of educational partnerships. Today, accompanying children and young people in using technology for development and helping them to recognize the risks and choose what fosters inner freedom, is a concrete form of charity. Teaching new generations that technological evolution does not follow a predetermined path, but can be guided by human responsibility, constitutes one of the most valuable services to the common good.

239. Let us cultivate relationships! In an era that favors speed and fragmentation, the human person still needs the recognition from attentive minds, kind words and hands capable of tenderness. The digital culture multiplies opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness. In times and places where physical presence remains crucial, such as shared meals, Christian community gatherings and serving the poor. These are signs of a humanity that continues to believe that every person's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. It is precisely this covenant between glory and fragility that becomes the criterion for evaluating anthropological models offered by contemporary culture.

240. Let us love justice and peace! The same technologies that facilitate communication and access to information can also exploit the most vulnerable, create new forms of slavery and derive profit from conflict. Every technological advance must include spiritual discernment and be an opportunity for assessing whether the advances in AI are promoting the common good, concentrating wealth and power in the hands of a select few. I would encourage a careful examination of the production, the working conditions hidden behind our devices and the mechanisms that profit from manipulation of time, practical ways of fostering fairness, participation and care for creation must be found. We proclaim the Gospel that came down from heaven to “create a new story here below.” For this reason, those who believe in the common good and justice will take the place of inequality, and that the industry of war will be replaced by the craft of peace.

241. As we look to the future, I would like to recall the image of Nehemiah whom we chose as our companion. Nehemiah heard the cry of a devastated city, brought that pain to prayer, discerned before God, asked for help, returned, organized the work, confronted internal and external resistance and rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem, brick by brick. In this era of digital transformation, I see in him a striking parable of our own vocation. We are not mere spectators of social and cultural fractures, nor mere commentators on what is crumbling, but men and women who are building construction sites of history — research laboratories, technology companies, schools, the media, institutions — in order to rebuild what has collapsed and protect what is threatened. Like Nehemiah, we too are called to

prayer and responsibility, so that, even when a technocratic mentality or partisan interests seem to prevail, there is a more fitting place to live.

242. The image of rebuilding Jerusalem evokes the New Testament promise of the holy city, which is a gift. In the Book of Revelation, the new Jerusalem descends as a gift for all God's people, "prepared as a city (Rev 21:2). The walls of Jerusalem are no longer defensive fortifications, but the precious adornments which Nehemiah guarded so diligently, remain permanently open to all nations. God's presence offers life in Eden, with its living water offered to the thirsty, and its tree of life whose leaves "are for the healing of the nations. In its fulfillment, this vision is set before us as an encouragement — a call to overcome our divisions and to follow the way of Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever.

The song of hope: the Magnificat

243. After having considered faith, which contemplates the Father's loving plan; love, which unites us in prayer, which sustains our actions in the world, the fourth pillar of this program for Christian life is prayer. Mary's commitment. Before Elizabeth who announces to her that she has become the mother of the Lord, Mary rejoices in joy. Her soul magnifies the Lord, and her spirit rejoices in God her Savior, for he chose a young, poor and lowly woman for a salvation. Mary suddenly sees all of history through the lens of this revelation. Nothing has changed and the situation of her time remains the same. The Romans continue to control her land, and her people are still suffering, but everything has changed within her, and this allows her to see what is invisible. God has *already* shown his power, *already* scattered the proud, cast down the mighty, lifted up the lowly, filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away handed. He has *already* helped Israel, his servant. God "takes the part of the lowly. His plan is one that is hidden in the opaque context of human events that see 'the proud, the mighty and the rich' triumph. Yet his secret strategy is revealed." [222]

244. The Blessed Virgin Mary not only teaches us to recognize God's invisible work, but also directs our vision. When humanity is broken and the world becomes distorted: the contrast between the humble and the powerful, the satiated and the hungry," teaching us "to look at the world from a lower position: through the eyes of the lowly; to view history through the eyes of the little ones, rather than through the perspective of the powerful; to view history from the viewpoint of the widow, the orphan, the stranger, the wounded child, the exile and the foreigner; thus becomes "poet and prophetess of Redemption," because on her lips is proclaimed "the strongest and most clearly articulated, the *Magnificat*; it is she who reveals the transformative vision of the Christian economy, the economy of God, which draws its origin and strength from Christianity." [224]

245. With the same faith as Mary, let us become "weavers of hope" in our world, sharing who we are and who we are becoming in the presence of Jesus may grow among us and his Kingdom take shape. In the humble fidelity of daily life, in the time in which the Holy Spirit brings about the civilization of love in our lives. Indeed, the Lord continues to give us every era the possibility of becoming part of salvation history in the light of the Incarnation. I entrust our future to the Woman of the *Magnificat*, that she may guide our steps through this time of change and preserve the Gospel, so that we may bear witness to the grandeur of humanity, in which God has made his dwelling.

Given in Rome, at Saint Peter's, on 15 May, in the year 2026, the second of my Pontificate.

- [1] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 22: AAS 58 (1966), 1
- [2] Cf. *ibid.*, 11: AAS 58 (1966), 1033-1034.
- [3] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 1: AAS 57 (1965), 5.
- [4] Cf. Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (15 May 1891), 22: ASS 23 (1890-1891), 653.
- [5] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 69: AAS 101 (2009), 702.
- [6] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 104: AAS 107 (2015), 888.
- [7] *Ibid.*
- [8] Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, I, 1, 1: CCSL 27, Turnhout 1981, 1.
- [9] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 183: AAS 105 (2013), 109.
- [10] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 36: AAS 58 (1966), of the Laity *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 7: AAS 58 (1966), 843-844.
- [11] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 44: AAS 58 (1966),
- [12] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 257; AAS 105 (2013), 112.
- [13] Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Letter issued "Motu Proprio" *Socialium Scientiarum* (1 January 1994):
- [14] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 61: AAS 107 (2015), 871.
- [15] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 41: AAS 80
- [16] Saint John Paul II, Apostolic Letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente* (10 November 1994), 35: AAS 87
- [17] *Address to the Members of the "Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice" Foundation* (17 May 2025):
- [18] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 222: AAS 105 (2013), 111
- [19] Cf. *ibid.*, 236: AAS 105 (2013), 1115; Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 215
- [20] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, 13: AAS 57 (1965),
- [21] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971), 4: AAS 63 (1971), 403.
- [22] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 243: AAS 105 (2013),
- [23] Cf. Pius XII, Apostolic Exhortation *Menti Nostrae* (23 September 1950): AAS 42 (1950), 657-702.
- [24] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 5: AAS 83 (1991), 799.
- [25] Pius XI, Encyclical Letter *Quadragesimo Anno* (15 May 1931), 39: AAS 23 (1931), 189; cf. Pius X Anniversary of "Rerum Novarum": AAS 33 (1941), 198.
- [26] Cf. Pius XII, *Address to the Sacred College of Cardinals and the Roman Prelature* (24 Decemb
- [27] Cf. Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Mater et Magistra* (15 May 1961), 2-3: AAS 53 (1961), 402

- [28] Cf. Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963), 87: AAS 55 (1963), 301.
- [29] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: AAS 58 (1966), 1042.
- [30] Cfr. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Declaration *Dignitatis Humanae*, 2: AAS 58 (1966), 930.
- [31] Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 14: AAS 59 (1967), 264.
- [32] *Ibid.*, 76: AAS 59 (1967), 299.
- [33] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* (14 May 1971), 4-7: AAS 63 (1971), 40.
- [34] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 36: AAS 80 (1988), 531.
- [35] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), 19: AAS 73 (1981), 600-602.
- [36] Cf. *ibid.*, 10: AAS 73 (1981), 600-602.
- [37] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 14: AAS 80 (1988), 531.
- [38] Cf. *ibid.*, 16: AAS 80 (1988), 531.
- [39] Cf. *ibid.*, 31-33: AAS 80 (1988), 555-559.
- [40] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 46: AAS 83 (1991), 850.
- [41] Cf. *ibid.*, 42: AAS 83 (1991), 844-846.
- [42] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 21: AAS 101 (2009), 656.
- [43] Cf. *ibid.*, 22: AAS 101 (2009), 657.
- [44] Cf. *ibid.*, 24: AAS 101 (2009), 658-659.
- [45] Cf. *ibid.*, 36: AAS 101 (2009), 671-672.
- [46] *Ibid.*, 2: AAS 101 (2009), 642.
- [47] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 198: AAS 105 (2013), 1013.
- [48] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 49: AAS 107 (2015), 866.
- [49] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 127: AAS 112 (2020), 1013.
- [50] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Dilexit Nos* (24 October 2024), 167: AAS 116 (2024), 1421.
- [51] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 24: AAS 58 (1966), 1042.
- [52] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 24: AAS 58 (1966), 1042.
- [53] *Ibid.*, 22: AAS 58 (1966), 1042.
- [54] Cf. Pontifical Council For Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 24: AAS 58 (1966), 1042.
- [55] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), 14: AAS 71 (1979), 284.
- [56] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 11: AAS 101 (2009), 647-648.

- [57] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), 31: AAS 85 (1993), 1159.
- [58] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: AAS 58 (1966), 1043-1044.
- [59] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 11: AAS 83 (1991), 806
- [60] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, Declaration *Dignitas Infinita* (2 April 2024), 7: AAS 116 (2024), 593-594.
- [61] Cf. *ibid.*, 8: AAS 116 (2024), 593-594.
- [62] *ibid.*, 1: AAS 116 (2024), 589-590.
- [63] Cf. Saint John Paul II, *Angelus with disabled people in the Cathedral of Osnabrück* (16 November 1980), *Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. III/2, Vatican City 1980, 1232.
- [64] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 152: AAS 112 (2020), 1043-1044.
- [65] Cf. Saint John Paul II, *Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations* (5 October 1997), *Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. XVIII/2, Vatican City 1998, 731.
- [66] Saint John Paul II, *Address to the 34th General Assembly of the United Nations* (2 October 1977), *Giovanni Paolo II*, vol. X/2, Vatican City 1978, 1043-1044.
- [67] Saint John Paul II, *Message for the 32nd World Day of Peace* (1 January 1999), 3: AAS 91 (1999), 1043-1044.
- [68] Cf. Saint John XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Pacem in Terris* (11 April 1963), 5: AAS 55 (1963), 259.
- [69] Saint Paul VI, *Message to the International Conference on Human Rights* (15 April 1968): AAS 70 (1968), 1043-1044.
- [70] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), 2: AAS 87 (1995), 408-427.
- [71] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 27: AAS 58 (1966), 1043-1044; Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), 80: AAS 85 (1993), 1197-1198; cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Evangelium Vitae* (25 March 1995), 7-28: AAS 87 (1995), 408-427.
- [72] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 208: AAS 112 (2020), 1043-1044.
- [73] Cf. *ibid.*, 209: AAS 112 (2020), 1043-1044.
- [74] *ibid.*, 23: AAS 112 (2020), 977. Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 220: AAS 105 (2013), 111.
- [75] Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation *Sacramentum Caritatis* (22 February 2007), 83: AAS 99 (2007), 1043-1044.
- [76] Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26, AAS 58 (1966), 1043-1044.
- [77] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 152: AAS 112 (2020), 1043-1044.
- [78] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 235: AAS 105 (2013), 111.
- [79] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 105: AAS 112 (2020), 1005.
- [80] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 38: AAS 80 (1987), 1043-1044.
- [81] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 220: AAS 105 (2013), 111.
- [82] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 16: AAS 112 (2020), 974.
- [83] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 16: AAS 112 (2020), 974.

- [84] Cf. Saint John Paul II, *Address to the 50th General Assembly of the United Nations* (5 October 1983), *Paolo II*, vol. XVIII/2, 735.
- [85] Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 17.
- [86] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 31: AAS 83 (1991), 831.
- [87] Saint John Paul II, *Homily during the Mass celebrated for farmers at Recife* (7 July 1980), 4: AAS 73 (1981), 831.
- [88] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), 19: AAS 73 (1981), 831.
- [89] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 93: AAS 107 (2015), 884; cf. Encyclical Letter *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 109: AAS 105 (2013), 109.
- [90] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 189: AAS 105 (2013), 109.
- [91] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, 17.
- [92] Cf. Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *Rerum Novarum* (15 May 1891), 26: ASS 23 (1890-1891), 656.
- [93] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 11: AAS 83 (1991), 806.
- [94] Cf. *ibid.*
- [95] Cf. *ibid.*, 48: AAS 83 (1991), 852-854.
- [96] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 169: AAS 112 (2020), 1028.
- [97] Cf. *ibid.*, 168: AAS 112 (2020), 1027-1028.
- [98] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 17: AAS 59 (1967), 264.
- [99] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 32 and 54: AAS 112 (2020), 980 and 988.
- [100] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 58: AAS 101 (2009), 693-694.
- [101] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 116: AAS 112 (2020), 1009.
- [102] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 38: AAS 80 (1988), 831.
- [103] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 116: AAS 112 (2020), 1009.
- [104] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 48: AAS 101 (2009), 685.
- [105] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 25: AAS 58 (1963), 823.
- [106] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 42: AAS 80 (1988), 831.
- [107] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 53: AAS 105 (2013), 109.
- [108] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* (30 December 1987), 36-37: AAS 80 (1988), 831.
- [109] Cf. Francis, *Message for the 110th World Day of Migrants and Refugees* (29 September 2024).
- [110] Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 14: AAS 59 (1967), 264.

- [111] Cf. *ibid.*, 17: AAS 59 (1967), 265-266; Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 12-1013.
- [112] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 14: AAS 59 (1967), 14; Francis, *Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See* (8 January 2007): AAS 99 (2007), 73; Francis, *Address to the Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum of the International Fund for Agricultural Development* (2017), 244-245.
- [113] *Final Document of the Second Session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops* (2018), 11.
- [114] Cf. *ibid.*, 11.
- [115] Cf. *ibid.*, 103-108.
- [116] Cf. *ibid.*, 100-101.
- [117] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 94: AAS 112 (2020), 1001.
- [118] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2004), 103-104.
- [119] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'*, (24 May 2015), 106-109: AAS 107 (2015), 889-891.
- [120] R. Guardini, *Das Ende der Neuzeit*, Würzburg 1951, 89.
- [121] Saint Paul VI, *Address on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the FAO* (16 November 1971), 10-11.
- [122] Cf. Francis, *Address to the Council for an Inclusive Capitalism* (11 November 2019): *L'Osservatore Romano* 2019, 8.
- [123] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith – Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua et Moderna* (2025), 159-210; Francis, *Message for the 57th World Day of Peace* (8 December 2023): AAS 116 (2023), 1001; Francis, *Message for the 58th World Day of Social Communications* (24 January 2024): AAS 116 (2024), 261-266; Francis, *Address to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences* (14 June 2024): AAS 116 (2024), 866-875; Inter Commission, *Quo vadis, humanitas? Thinking about Christian anthropology in the face of some scenarios on the future of humanity* (9 February 2026): AAS 117 (2026), 63.
- [124] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith – Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua et Moderna* (2025), 201.
- [125] Francis, *Address to Participants at the Meeting of the "Minerva Dialogues" promoted by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences* (27 March 2023): AAS 115 (2023), 465.
- [126] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith – Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua et Moderna* (2025), 178.
- [127] Cf. *ibid.*, 44-45: AAS 117 (2025), 179-180.
- [128] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 40: AAS 83 (1991), 84-85.
- [129] Cf. International Theological Commission, *Quo vadis, humanitas? Thinking about Christian anthropology in the face of some scenarios on the future of humanity* (9 February 2026), 63.

- [130] Cf. Saint Paul VI, *Discourse on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the FAO* (16 November 1975), 3.
- [131] International Theological Commission, *Quo vadis, humanitas? Thinking about Christian anthropological scenarios on the future of humanity* (9 February 2026), 3.
- [132] “If we devalue the heart, we also devalue what it means to speak from the heart, to act with the heart. If we fail to appreciate the specificity of the heart, we miss the messages that the mind alone cannot convey. We lose the richness of our encounters with others; we miss out on poetry. We also lose track of history and our own history is built with the heart. At the end of our lives, that alone will matter.” Francis, Encyclical Letter *Dilectissimi* (29 June 2024), AAS 116 (2024), 1372.
- [133] V. Frankl, *Man’s Search for Meaning. An Introduction to Logotherapy*, Boston 1963, 213.
- [134] Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I-II, q. 112, a. 1, co.; q. 114, a. 5, co.: ed. Leonina, V, 1909, 112.
- [135] Cf. *ibid.*, q. 114, a. 1, co.: ed. Leonina, VII, 344.
- [136] Cf. Saint Thomas Aquinas, *Super Boetium de Trinitate*, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3: ed. Leonina, L, Rome 1969, 7, a. 1, ad 3: ed. Leonina, IV, Rome 1888, 72.
- [137] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, (24 November 2013), 8: AAS 105 (2013), 102.
- [138] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Redemptor Hominis* (4 March 1979), 15: AAS 71 (1979), 286.
- [139] Saint Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, XIV, 28: CCSL 48, Turnhout 1955, 451.
- [140] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 34: AAS 101 (2009), 668-669.
- [141] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Veritatis Splendor* (6 August 1993), 32: AAS 85 (1993), 1156.
- [142] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 207: AAS 112 (2020), 1043.
- [143] H. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, III, New York 1962, 474.
- [144] *Address to Representatives of the Media* (12 May 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 681-682.
- [145] Benedict XVI, *Message for the 47th World Day of Social Communications* (24 January 2013): AAS 83 (2013), 102.
- [146] Francis, *Address on the occasion of the Conferral of the rank of Knight and Dame of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre to Mr Philip Pullella and Ms Valentina Alazraki* (13 November 2021): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 13 November 2021, 3.
- [147] Cf. Plato, *Letter VII*, 344b-c: ed. Souilhé, XIII/1, Paris 1931 (CUF, Série grecque 63), 54.
- [148] Cf. *Address to the Participants in the Conference “The Dignity of Children and Adolescents: Intelligence”* (13 November 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 13 November 2025, 3.
- [149] Cf. *Address to the members of the Advisory Board of the RCS Academy* (7 November 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 7 November 2025, 4.
- [150] Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens* (14 September 1981), 3: AAS 73 (1981), 102.
- [151] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si’* (24 May 2015), 128: AAS 107 (2015), 898.

- [152] Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith — Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua et Nova* 117 (2025), 188-189.
- [153] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Laborem Exercens*, (14 September 1981), 18: AAS 73 (1981), 891.
- [154] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 109: AAS 107 (2015), 891.
- [155] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 32: AAS 101 (2009), 666.
- [156] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2005), 200.
- [157] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 64: AAS 101 (2009), 698.
- [158] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 129: AAS 107 (2015), 899.
- [159] Cf. *ibid.*
- [160] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 108: AAS 112 (2020), 1006.
- [161] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith — Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, *Pecuniariae Quaestiones. Considerations for an Ethical Discernment Regarding some Aspects of the Financial System* (6 January 2018), 6: AAS 110 (2018), 772.
- [162] Francis, *Greeting to the staff of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)* (12 November 2009), 309. Cfr. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 22: AAS 101 (2009), 657.
- [163] Cf. *ibid.*, 36: AAS 101 (2009), 671-672.
- [164] Cf. Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 204: AAS 105 (2013), 1006.
- [165] Cf. Saint Paul VI, Encyclical Letter *Populorum Progressio* (26 March 1967), 87: AAS 59 (1967), 1006.
- [166] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Encyclical Letter *Centesimus Annus* (1 May 1991), 39: AAS 83 (1991), 84.
- [167] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2005), 200.
- [168] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Letter to Families *Gratissimam Sane* (2 February 1994), 17: AAS 86 (1994), 1006.
- [169] Cf. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Sons and Daughters of the Light: A Pastoral Plan for Young Adults* (12 November 1996), Washington D.C., 1996, I, 3.
- [170] Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (2005), 200.
- [171] Cf. *ibid.*, 214.
- [172] Cf. Francis, *Message for the Celebration of the 48th World Day of Youth for Peace* (8 December 2014), 71.
- [173] Cf. International Theological Commission, *Memory and Reconciliation: The Church and the Forgiveness of Crimes* (2000), 5.3.
- [174] As in the Papal Bulls *Sicut Dudum* (13 January 1435) and *Etsi Suscepti* (9 January 1442) of Eugenius IV and *Dum Diversas* (18 June 1452) and *Romanus Pontifex* (8 January 1455) of Nicholas V. Political and, at

- overcame the demands of the Gospel. The need for evangelization was frequently compromised or at the needs of worldly powers, thus relativizing the problematic incompatibility of slavery with the Christiana
- [175] Cf. Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter *In Plurimis* (5 May 1888), *Acta Leonis XIII*, VIII, Rome, 1889, 169-170. The Holy Office distinguished between the immoral and moral aspects of slavery, without fully condemn
- Office on various doubts of Monsignor Massaia, Vicar Apostolic in the country of the Galla*, April 1888.
- [176] Cf. Saint John Paul II, Bull *Incarnationis Mysterium* (29 November 1998), 11: AAS 91 (1999), 13-14.
- [177] Cf. Saint Paul VI, *Regina Caeli* (17 May 1970): *Insegnamenti di Paolo VI*, vol. VIII, 506.
- [178] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 183: AAS 112 (2020), 1033-1034.
- [179] Cf. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 26: AAS 58 (1963), 25-26.
- [180] Saint Paul VI, *Address to the 20th General Assembly of the United Nations* (4 October 1965): *Discorsi e Messaggi Pontifici*, 1965, 100-101.
- [181] United Nations, *United Nations Charter*, San Francisco (26 June 1945), Preamble.
- [182] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 258: AAS 112 (2020), 1061: "In recent years, slavery has been ostensibly 'justified.' *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* speaks of the possibility of legitimate force, which involves demonstrating that certain 'rigorous conditions of moral legitimacy' have been met. A broad interpretation of this potential right. In this way, some would also wrongly justify even 'preventive' force, which hardly avoid entailing 'evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.'"
- [183] Cf. Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith — Dicastery for Culture and Education, Note *Antiqua e Moderna* (2025), 202-203.
- [184] Cf. *ibid.*, 103: AAS 117 (2025), 204.
- [185] Cf. *Address to the Participants in the Plenary Session of the "Reunion of Aid Agencies for the World"* (26 June 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 847-849.
- [186] Cf. Francis, *Message for the 53rd World Day of Peace* (8 December 2019): AAS 112 (2020), 54-55.
- [187] J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Lord of the Rings. The Return of the King*, Part III, Book Five, Chapter IX, N 100-101.
- [188] *Address to Representatives of the Media*, (12 May 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 682.
- [189] *Ibid.*
- [190] Saint John Paul II, *Message for the 31st World Day of Peace*, (1 January 1998), 1: AAS 90 (1998), 1-2.
- [191] Saint Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos*, 84, 12: CCSL 39, Turnhout 1956, 1172-1173.
- [192] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Dilexit Nos* (24 October 2024), 22: AAS 116 (2024), 1375-1376.
- [193] Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 115: AAS 112 (2020), 1008-1009.
- [194] Cf. *ibid.*, 261: AAS 112 (2020), 1062.
- [195] Cf. Saint Paul VI, *Address to the 20th General Assembly of the United Nations* (4 October 1965): *Discorsi e Messaggi Pontifici*, 1965, 100-101.
- [196] Cf. Pius XII, Radio Message *A Grave Hour* (24 August 1939): AAS 31 (1939), 334.

- [197] Giorgio La Pira, *Riflessioni sul Concilio*. Address of Professor Giorgio La Pira, Mayor of Florence France”(Rome, 4 September 1962), Florence 1962, 6.
- [198] *Address to Participants in the Jubilee of Oriental Churches* (14 May 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 6
- [199] Cf. Francis, Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 271: AAS 112 (2020), 1066.
- [200] Cf. Francis, *Appeal for Peace at Assisi for the World Day of Prayer for Peace “Thirst for Peace Dialogue”* (20 September 2016): AAS 108 (2016), 1124.
- [201] Francis, *Address to Members of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See* (9 January 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 6
- [202] Cf. Francis, *Address to the Participants in the 38th Conference of the FAO* (20 June 2013): AAS 105 (2013), 1124
- [203] *First “Urbi et Orbi” Blessing* (8 May 2025): AAS 117 (2025), 660.
- [204] *Ibid.*
- [205] Cf. *Homily at First Vespers on the Solemnity of Mary the Most Holy Mother of God* (31 December 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 2 January 2026, 1-2.
- [206] Cf. *Homily of the Mass during the Day* (25 December 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 27 December 2025, 2.
- [207] Cf. *ibid.*
- [208] Cf. *Angelus on the Solemnity of the Epiphany* (6 January 2026): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 7 January 2026, 1.
- [209] Cf. *Homily of the Mass during the Night* (24 December 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 27 December 2025, 2.
- [210] P. de Bérulle, *Discours de l’état et des grandeurs de Jésus, Discours IV, Unité de Dieu en l’incarnation*, Paris 1856, col. 218.
- [211] *Ibid.*
- [212] Cf. *Address to the Conference “Artificial Intelligence and Care of Our Common Home”* (5 December 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 5 December 2025, 2.
- [213] Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Deus Caritas Est* (25 December 2005), 14: AAS 98 (2006), 228.
- [214] Saint Augustine, *Sermons*, 272: *In die Pentecostes ad infantem de sacramento*: PL 38, Paris 1841, 1124.
- [215] Benedict XVI, *Homily at the Mass of the Lord’s Supper* (21 April 2011): AAS 103 (2011), 321.
- [216] *Address to the Roma Curia for the Exchange of Christmas Greetings* (22 December 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 22 December 2025, 6-7.
- [217] Cf. above, nos. 11-14.
- [218] Cf. *Address to the Conference “The Dignity of Children and Adolescents in the Age of Artificial Intelligence”* (13 November 2025): *L’Osservatore Romano*, 13 November 2025, 3.
- [219] Cf. Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate* (29 June 2009), 34: AAS 101 (2009), 668-669.
- [220] Francis, Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate Deum* (4 October 2023), 67: AAS 115 (2023), 1059.

[221] Cf. *Angelus on the Solemnity of the Epiphany* (6 January 2026): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 7 Jan

[222] Benedict XVI, *General Audience* (15 February 2006): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 16 February 2006

[223] *Meditation on the occasion of the Prayer Vigil and Rosary for Peace* (11 October 2025): *L'Osservatore Romano*, 12 October 2025.

[224] Saint Paul VI, *Homily at the Marian Shrine of Our Lady of Bonaria*, (24 April 1970): AAS 62 (1970), 207-208.

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