

Magnifica Humanitas

5 POWERFUL QUOTES FROM POPE LEO XIV'S FIRST ENCYCLICAL, *MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS*



Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, offers a sweeping reflection on the human person in the age of rapid technological change, especially in the rise of artificial intelligence (AI). As the document addresses questions of dignity, justice, and moral responsibility, it speaks directly to the challenges of modern life, grounding its vision in the timeless truth of the Gospel. From the meaning of true human progress to the ethical demands of new technologies, Leo XIV calls the Church and the world to a renewed sense of solidarity and hope.

Here are five powerful quotes from Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical—words that illuminate the Catholic Church's vision for human dignity, ethical AI, and the future of a more faithful, Christ-centered world.

1 In the era of artificial intelligence, when human dignity is threatened by new forms of dehumanization, ours is the pressing duty to remain profoundly human. We must lovingly safeguard the grandeur of humanity bestowed upon us and revealed in its fullness in Christ, the splendor of which no machine can ever replace. True progress always stems from a heart open to others, an intelligence willing to listen, and a will that seeks what unites rather than what separates. (MH 15)

Leo XIV frames the Christian response to artificial intelligence not with fear but with a return to what it means to be truly human. Real progress is not measured by power, speed, or efficiency but by our ability to live in communion with others—listening with openness, seeking wisdom, and choosing unity over division.

Technology can grow in strength and sophistication, but it cannot replace what makes us most human. It is love—rooted in being created in the image of God and lived out in relationship—that reveals our true dignity and gives meaning to all progress.

2 The Church reminds us, with a firm yet humble voice, that true fulfillment is not achieved by eliminating weakness but through harmonious growth. It is found where freedom and responsibility are intertwined with mutual care and true solidarity, and where progress is measured by the dignity of each person and the good of all peoples. (MH 12)

Leo XIV reminds us that true fulfillment is not found in technological “perfection” or in trying to eliminate every human limitation. From a Catholic perspective, real growth is about becoming more fully human before God.

Our weaknesses do not remove our dignity; they are part of our human condition, which Christ heals and redeems. True progress is not measured by power, control, or performance but by how we love, serve others, and faithfully respect the dignity each person holds from being created in the image of God.

- 3 This is the blessing we implore from God; and the task that stands before us is that of being builders of communion, rather than architects of Babel. We are to be servants of the coming Kingdom, instead of lords of towers destined for ruin. (MH 16)

One of Leo XIV's clearest and most significant biblical images in his encyclical is the story of the Tower of Babel (see Genesis 11:1–9). In this account, humanity tries to build a great city and tower through pride and self-reliance; however, instead of unity, the vain pursuit leads to confusion and division, as people can no longer understand one another.

Pope Leo uses this image in the encyclical to show what happens when human power grows without humility or love. He warns that even modern social and technological systems can take on a “Babel-like” character if they are not rooted in God and ordered toward the good of others.

In contrast, he calls Christians to build true communion. He encourages us to build communities shaped by love of God

and neighbor and directed toward God's Kingdom rather than human pride.

- 4 No one can single-handedly bear the weight of the challenges the world is facing, just as no one is so weak that they cannot play their part, for “power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12:9). (MH 13)

This is a reminder that the future of our world isn't built on governments or technology companies: It's built in ordinary lives, lived faithfully. Pope Leo wants to remind us that, like every person, you have real dignity and a God-given mission. No matter how simple or hidden your daily work may seem, you are not irrelevant, and you are not powerless. The choices you make, the integrity you bring to your work, the way you treat people, the good you do in small, unseen moments—all of it matters in God's plan.

We do not do this alone. As St. Paul reminds us, we can do all things through him who strengthens us (see Philippians 4:13). With Christ's grace, even the smallest acts of love and responsibility become part of building a more human, more hopeful world.

- 5 Let us not be afraid to get our hands dirty on the “construction site” of our time. (MH 16)

What does Pope Leo XIV want us to do about all of this?

Let us invest in education, beginning with ourselves! We all need to learn how to engage with the digital world in a human way, as an integral part of our education in the faith and in a life lived according to the Gospel. Indeed, we must consider the digital world as a new continent to be evangelized, one that requires generous missionaries who are mature in the faith. In a particular way, we need adults to rediscover their vocation as artisans of education, prepared to work patiently each day, with the support of extensive and shared educational partnerships. (MH 238)

The Church does not call us to passivity or withdrawal. In the spirit of the Gospel, the world (especially in this age shaped by AI and rapid change) is not something to simply watch from a distance; it's something we're called to help shape with wisdom and love. As Christians, we are meant to participate in the real life of society—our culture, technology, politics, and education—bringing the light of Christ into it. Rather than retreating into isolation, we are invited to be present in the world as faithful witnesses, working for what is true and good.

Where can I find *Magnifica Humanitas*?

The full text of *Magnifica Humanitas* can be found on the Vatican's website:



Additional explanatory infographics about *Magnifica Humanitas* are available from the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development:

