

MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS & HEAVEN'S LOGIC

On Pope Leo XIV's Encyclical on Artificial Intelligence

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

In order ... discern how to navigate responsibly the era of AI, I would like to bring to mind two scenes from the Bible: **the construction of the Tower of Babel** (cf. Gen 11:1-9) and **the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem** (cf. Neh 2-6). (MH 7)

On the one hand, there is the Tower of Babel, where collective effort follows a plan that dominates and ultimately dehumanizes (cf. Gen 11:1-9). On the other hand, there are the ruins of Jerusalem, which under Nehemiah's direction are rebuilt piece by piece as a project of shared responsibility (cf. Neh 2-6). **We are called to reflect on the great "construction sites" of our era and ask: What are we building?** (MH 90)

More gravely, the pervasive technocratic paradigm in which we are immersed, and that is amplified by **the digital revolution and AI, threatens to normalize an anti-human vision**. In that vision, the fullness of life is equated with having more, reducing weakness, eliminating uncertainty and exerting total control. **When efficiency becomes the ultimate measure of value, human beings are tempted to see themselves as a project to be optimized rather than as persons called to relationship and communion**. (MH 112)

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

The Tower of Babel shows Human Logic. Life becomes about doing more, having more, controlling more, and hiding weakness. People are valued for what they can produce, how fast they can perform, and how useful they are.

Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem shows Heaven's Logic. Life is rebuilt through real relationships, service, shared responsibility, and care. It begins with what is broken and asks people to carry their part together. People matter because of who they are, and not just for what they can do.

WHAT IT MEANS

In Magnifica Humanitas, Pope Leo XIV sees two possible futures for AI:

One is a new *Babel*, where technology helps us work faster, solve problems, and accomplish amazing things, but slowly becomes **more about speed, control, and performance than people**.

The other is a *new Jerusalem*, where technology serves human dignity, strengthens relationships, and helps communities flourish. Heaven's Logic reminds us that **real progress is not just doing more or controlling everything, but becoming more human**: growing in wisdom, serving others, and using technology to strengthen, not replace, real human connection.

GREATNESS SERVES: Greater Power should lead to Greater Service

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

Does AI "make human life on earth 'more human' in every aspect of that life? Does it make it more worthy of man?" If the answer is yes, then we can recognize it as an opportunity to be embraced responsibly, on a path of patient, shared reconstruction, akin to the rebuilding of Jerusalem narrated in the Book of Nehemiah. If, however, power grows while the heart withers and human bonds fray, then we are faced with a new form of Babel – a construction that is grandiose, yet fundamentally dehumanizing. (MH 129)

The Christian tradition has maintained that we are not confined by the boundaries of their own nature; rather, **we are called to self-transcendence, not through an escape from reality or a contempt for our limitations, but through our fulfillment in love**. (MH 127)

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

AI has abilities we've never seen before. It can create, translate, organize, predict, and solve problems at incredible speed. **Pope Leo XIV isn't saying this greatness is bad. He's asking what it's for. Heaven's Logic says greater power means a greater call to serve.** AI is truly great when it protects dignity, supports the vulnerable, and builds stronger communities.

WHAT IT MEANS

AI can help doctors, students, workers, families, and communities do things that once seemed impossible. **But the question is not just, "What can AI do?" The better question is, "Who is it helping?"** If AI makes life faster but people become lonelier, weaker, or easier to control, that is Babel. If AI helps people learn, heal, connect, and serve, that is Jerusalem. Greatness Serves means powerful tools should make us more human, not less.

BROKEN IS BLESSED: Wisdom is born of Weakness

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

It is one thing to integrate technology within a human-centered, relational vision; it is quite another to be guided by an outlook that devalues human limits and promises a purely technical form of "salvation."... **Everything that appears as a "limit" – incapacity, illness, old age, suffering, vulnerability – tends to be seen primarily as a defect to be corrected, rather than as a reality through which our humanity matures and opens itself to relationship.** And yet we must remember that humanity flourishes not despite limitations, but often through them. ... (MH 117-118)

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

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

AI is good when it can remove obstacles, reduce suffering, and solve problems in ways we've never seen before. **Pope Leo XIV is warning that AI becomes dangerous when it convinces us that every weakness, limit, illness, vulnerability, or struggle, is simply a problem to eliminate.** Heaven's Logic says wisdom is not gained by avoiding every hardship, but by learning from it. Broken Is Blessed means our limits can become places where God forms compassion, humility, love, and wisdom. **We do not grow despite every struggle. Often, we grow because of it.**

WHAT IT MEANS

AI can help us heal, learn, communicate, and carry heavy burdens. But it can also tempt us to believe that life should have no waiting, no mistakes, no weakness, and no suffering. **Pope Leo XIV reminds us that wisdom does not come from having every problem solved instantly.** It comes from walking through failure, disappointment, sacrifice, and uncertainty without losing our heart. The struggles we would rather avoid often teach us patience, resilience, empathy, and what really matters. **Broken Is Blessed means our scars are not just signs that we were hurt. They can become places where wisdom grows, relationships deepen, and God's grace makes us more fully human.**

I AM LAST: People Over Progress

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

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

We can embrace the technological progress that alleviates suffering and unlocks new possibilities, provided that we do not abandon the very essence of our humanity, namely the capacity for relationship and love. This leads to a crucial question: if an authentic "more than human" exists, where is it to be found? The Christian faith answers that question by pointing to a fulfillment that does not arise from a technological divinization, but through God's grace received in Christ. (MH 126)

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

I Am Last means moving beyond ourselves and learning to put God first and others before ourselves. **Pope Leo XIV warns that technology can tempt us to prioritize speed, success, and getting things done, while overlooking the people who need our time, attention, and care most.** A truly human society is measured not by what it can achieve, but by how it cares for the weak, the vulnerable, the forgotten, and the least. AI serves Heaven's Logic when it helps us love and serve others more deeply, just as Jesus shows us.

WHAT IT MEANS

AI can save time, answer questions, organize schedules, and make life more convenient. That's helpful. **Pope Leo XIV challenges us to ask what we do with the time, power, and convenience we gain. Do we become more focused on ourselves, or more attentive to others?** The people who most need us often slow us down: a struggling friend, an elderly grandparent, a child who needs patience, a co-worker having a rough day.

I Am Last means choosing people over convenience and relationships over efficiency. If AI frees us up to care, listen, serve, and love, it helps build up Jerusalem. If it makes us more self-focused or less attentive to those in need, it starts to look more like Babel.

ESCAPE THE ECHO: Free to Think and Free to Choose

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

In recent years, **psychological and psychiatric literature has documented with growing insistence how early and unsupervised exposure to digital devices and social media can negatively** impact sleep, attention span, control of emotions and relationships, especially during the most vulnerable stages of life, at times with tragic consequences. This is further aggravated by easy access to violent or degrading content that offends sensibility, to pornographic and hypersexualized material, to messages that trivialize the body and emotions, and to proposals that normalize risky behavior. Online phenomena such as grooming, blackmail and the sexual exploitation of minors are not uncommon, and are made more insidious by the use of fake profiles, algorithms that facilitate dangerous contact, and AI tools capable of manipulating images and videos. **Having a personal mobile device at too early an age and using it without adult supervision can exacerbate young people's vulnerabilities, foster addiction and expose them to isolation, bullying and cyberbullying, as well as to pressures to share intimate images or sensitive information.** (MH 141)

Let us remain faithful to the truth! Living amid incessant flows of information, opinions and images, we know how easy it can be to influence decisions and preferences through increasingly sophisticated algorithms. **It is imperative to cultivate hearts that love the truth, prefer what's right despite the most appealing content and pursue wisdom rather than immediate results.** (MH 237)

The pervasiveness of digital media fosters a culture of immediacy and hyper-stimulation, which gives rise to fatigue, boredom and apathy concerning the effort required for seeking the truth. (MH 139)

Let us cultivate relationships! The digital culture multiplies connections and offers new opportunities for interaction; yet, the human heart retains an irrevocable need for genuine closeness. **I invite everyone to cherish places and times where physical presence remains crucial, such as shared meals, Christian community gatherings, time spent with the lonely and serving the poor.** ...[This is] the criterion for evaluating the anthropological models offered by contemporary culture. (MH 239)

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

AI can give us information, entertainment, opinions, and content made just for us. Pope Leo XIV isn't saying this is bad. It can help people learn, communicate, solve problems, and open new possibilities. But he also warns that it can shape our desires, influence our choices, and trap us in an echo chamber where we hear only what is easy, popular, entertaining, or already agrees with us.

Escape the Echo means refusing to let algorithms control us. Jesus calls us to love truth more than comfort, wisdom more than quick answers, and reality more than illusion. Pope Leo XIV reminds us that a healthy heart prefers what is right over what is merely appealing and pursues wisdom over immediate results. **Being Christian is not about consuming endless content or chasing constant stimulation. It is about becoming free:** free to seek what is true, choose what is good, and love God and others. Real wisdom takes patience, discernment, courage, and the willingness to follow Christ instead of simply following the crowd.

WHAT IT MEANS

AI can recommend videos, shape our feeds, answer questions, and learn exactly what keeps our attention. That's useful. **But Pope Leo XIV warns us that constant scrolling, endless notifications, non-stop stimulation, and instant answers can slowly reshape how we think and live.** We can lose our ability to focus, become impatient with anything requiring effort, and stop caring about the hard work of seeking what is true. We can feel tired, distracted, anxious, bored, and emotionally drained while still reaching for more content. Young people are especially vulnerable to addiction, cyberbullying, harmful content, fake profiles, manipulation, unhealthy comparisons, and pressure to share things that should stay private. **Escape the Echo means learning to think before reacting, checking facts before sharing, and refusing to let an algorithm decide what matters most.** It means not always being on your phone, having real conversations, sharing meals with family, spending time with your spiritual family, checking in on someone who is lonely, and serving those in need. If AI helps us seek truth, build real friendships, protect our hearts, and engage the real world, it helps build Jerusalem. If it keeps us distracted, isolated, manipulated, or trapped in endless content, it looks more like Babel.

GOOD MORNING MIDNIGHT: Discernment Over Despair

WHAT POPE LEO XIV WROTE

[In her *Magnificat*,] Mary suddenly sees all of history through the lens of God's revelation. **Nothing has changed around her; the socio-political situation of her time remains the same... Yet, everything has changed within her, and this allows her to see what is invisible.** God "takes the part of the lowly. His plan is one that is often hidden beneath the opaque context of human events that see 'the proud, the mighty and the rich' triumph. Yet his secret strength is destined in the end to be revealed." (MH 243)

HEAVEN'S LOGIC

Pope Leo XIV calls us to discernment, not panic. AI can do much good when guided by truth, dignity, justice, and love. **Good Morning Midnight means seeing the darkness clearly without letting it win.**

WHAT IT MEANS

AI can be scary: fake images, job changes, dependence on technology, manipulation, and loneliness. But **Pope Leo XIV calls us to wisdom, not fear.** AI becomes Babel if it makes us less human. But if it helps people to better learn, heal, and connect, then it's helping us build up Jerusalem.