

Magnifica Humanitas (simplified)

What Does Pope Leo's Message Mean for AI in Our Catholic School?

Pope Leo XIV's message in a nutshell

Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* asks us to consider an important question:

“Is AI helping us become more fully human?”

Pope Leo does not ask us to fear artificial intelligence. He recognises that technology can **educate, connect, heal and serve humanity**. However, he reminds us that AI must always remain a **tool in the service of people** — never something that replaces human dignity, relationships, conscience or responsibility.

KEEP THE HUMAN PERSON AT THE CENTRE

For a Catholic school, this means remembering that every child is:

- created in the **image and likeness of God**
- worthy of dignity and respect
- more than a test result or collection of data
- capable of creativity, imagination, love and moral decision-making
- formed through relationships, experiences, mistakes and learning.

AI can process information.

AI cannot replace the human person.

AI does not experience friendship, love, forgiveness, faith or responsibility in the way human beings do.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR LEARNING?

Pope Leo reminds us that **real education takes time**.

AI can give students an answer very quickly. But sometimes the most important part of learning is the **thinking, questioning and struggling to work something out**.

So we should ask:

“What is the child learning by doing this?”

Rather than simply:

“Can AI do this for the child?”

We want students to use AI to:

- ✓ generate ideas
- ✓ explore possibilities
- ✓ receive feedback
- ✓ ask questions
- ✓ understand difficult concepts
- ✓ develop digital literacy

But students still need to:

- ✓ think critically
- ✓ question information
- ✓ check sources
- ✓ solve problems
- ✓ develop their own ideas
- ✓ communicate in their own voice
- ✓ make ethical decisions
- ✓ learn from mistakes.

Pope Leo particularly encourages schools to teach students **when and why AI should NOT be used**.

THE ROLE OF THE TEACHER

AI may provide information, suggestions or feedback, but it cannot replace the teacher's role in **knowing, accompanying, encouraging and challenging each child**.

Our role is to help students develop:

Knowledge + Critical Thinking + Character + Faith + Wisdom

Pope Leo calls for teachers to receive ongoing formation so that they can help students use new technologies **responsibly, critically and creatively**.

FIVE QUESTIONS FOR OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Before using AI, ask:

1. Does this put the child first?

Does it respect the dignity and individuality of every student?

2. Does it enhance learning?

Will students actually learn more — or are we simply making the task easier?

3. Does it develop thinking?

Are students still questioning, reasoning, creating and making decisions?

4. Does it strengthen relationships?

Are we using technology to support human connection rather than replace it?

5. Does it serve the common good?

Is our use of AI fair, responsible, inclusive and respectful of others?

OUR CATHOLIC CHALLENGE

Pope Leo offers us a powerful image from the Bible: **the Tower of Babel and the rebuilding of Jerusalem.**

The question is not simply *“How powerful can our technology become?”*

The question is:

“What are we building?”

Are we building a school where technology makes life **more human, more just and more connected?**

Or are we allowing technology to make human thinking, relationships and responsibility less important?

OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLE

Use AI to support human flourishing — never to replace what makes us human.

AI should serve the learner.

AI should serve the teacher.

AI should serve the community.

And ultimately, our technology should serve the common good.

“Does AI make human life on earth ‘more human’?”

This is the question Pope Leo invites us to keep asking.

For Catholic educators, this means:

Don’t simply ask what AI can do.

Ask what AI should do — and what must always remain uniquely human.