

MAGNIFICENT HUMANITY (MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS)

POPE LEO'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH

CHAPTER FOUR. NUMBERS 131 – 156.

Safeguarding Humanity at a Time of Transformation.

Truth, Work, Freedom.

Pope Leo writes, “Our first task is neither to demonize nor idolize technological tools, but to utilize them on the basis of a fundamental principle, namely **that truth is a common good and not the property of those with power or influence**”. (No. 137, p.125) False text messages and false videos are widespread. These text messages and images are not just irritating they can influence a significant number of people concerning the truth about the world. “In view of this, it is important to recall that communication **is not only the transmission of information, but it is also the creation of a culture**...since what originates online now becomes a part of people's lives, especially of the youngest”. (No. 135, p. 124) It influences thoughts, feelings and behaviour. For this reason, **public policy** needs to establish norms that protect individuals. Also, **families and schools** need ongoing **education** on the proper use of digital tools. “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.....These devices can increase 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”. (No.141, p.128/9) Children and adolescents need to be protected from violent or degrading content. They are “precious treasures” (No.142, p.129) who have been entrusted to us and it is our privilege to help them grow into adults who are happy, trustworthy, well balanced and capable of giving and receiving genuine love.

Serious journalism also has an important part to play in communicating the truth.

Pope Francis applied this to the Church itself when speaking to journalists. He said, “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 voice you have given to the victims of abuse”. (No.138, p.126)

Another aspect of the fourth industrial revolution (AI) and the innovations it is bringing about through automation and robotics is how **this will impact on the structure of work**. “The Church's Social Doctrine insists that access to work for all must be a high priority for **public policies and economic processes**”. (No. 154, p.138) The ‘new ways’ of working are not necessarily better. “one viable path is, first of all, to establish social criteria for innovation. Here every introduction of automation and AI should be

accompanied by verifiable measures to protect the employment, retraining and participation of workers....We need proactive policies ensuring that the cost of adaptation does not fall solely on individuals....also there needs to be a corporate commitment to include quality and dignity of work among its indicators of success.” (No.156, p.140) Quality and dignity of work will be one way that the words of Jesus in John’s gospel can become a reality, “I have come that you may have life and have it to the full”. (Jn. 10:10)