

MAGNIFICENT HUMANITY (MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS)
POPE LEO'S LETTER TO THE CHURCH
CHAPTER FOUR. NUMBERS 157 – 180.

The rest of Chapter Four deals with a) the transformation of work which will come about because of new technologies, and b) the importance of families as the backbone of society. It also discusses c) new forms of slavery and acknowledges **that it took eighteen centuries for the Church to recognise that slavery was fully incompatible with “the dignity of every human being created in the image of God.”** (No.176, p.156)

When discussing work, Pope Leo writes, that for more than eighty years development has been measured by Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but these measurements “almost always systematically neglect aspects essential to the overall wellbeing of people and the environment”(No.159,p.142) New measurements will need to take into consideration the dignity of work, shared prosperity and the vital importance of protecting the environment. “While the world’s wealth has grown in absolute terms, it is **increasingly concentrated in fewer hands, widening inequalities both within and between countries. There are a few who have too much and too many who have little.** Scientific and technological advances, even in the medical field are not easily accessible to the vast majority of people.” (No. 161, p. 143/144) It is the task of **politicians** worldwide to endorse strategies that promote the common good, dignified work and social inclusion. Only in this way can peace be widespread, inclusive and sustainable. Economies and technologies that challenge imbalances and include transparency and accountability, inclusion and access “do not put a curb on innovation, instead they make it **civilised and humane.**” (No. 166, p.146)

“The family is a primary social good...it is the first environment in which all persons develop their potential, become aware of their dignity and learn the earliest forms of truth and goodness, internalizing the habits that prepare them for life in society.” (165, p.146/7) The family, however, is affected by economic and technological changes that reshape the nature of work. “**The State** has the duty to support business activity by fostering conditions favourable to employment, promoting work where it is lacking and defending it in times of crises, since it is a primary good for families and for society.” (No.168, p.148)

Work, however, must take into account the dignity of the human person. “A significant part of the digital economy’s functioning relies on the silent work of millions of people engaged in largely unseen activities.....In many cases these workers are **young people predominantly women**, working under demanding conditions for minimal wages.... The even **harsher work of extracting the resources required** often using children and adolescents working in dangerous conditions, results in their bodies being scarred and injured.” (No. 173, p.152/3) If AI technology promises emancipation, yet produces new forms of global subordination and slavery, it stands in contradiction to the core teaching of Jesus about each of us, without exception, being infinitely loved by God. Pope Leo writes frankly when he says, “Yet we cannot deny or diminish the delay with which both society

and the Church came to denounce the scourge of slavery....This constitutes **a wound in Christian memory**, one from which we cannot consider ourselves detached. It is impossible not to feel **deep sorrow**.” (No.176, p.156) With proper reflection and safeguards, control “of the digital environment can be transformed from a space of exploitation into one of protection, prevention and the promotion of human dignity.” (No. 179, p. 158)