

MAGNIFICENT HUMANITY (MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS)

CHAPTER TWO

Foundations and Principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church

An Irish commentator, who knows a lot about the recent advances in artificial intelligence, said recently, “technology has no moral compass”. This has always been the case with any industrial advances that human beings have made over the centuries. Questions had to be asked about how the technology should be used, who would benefit from it and, perhaps more importantly, who would control it?

The answers to these questions depended on what people believed. If they believed that making money was the most important thing, the conditions and wages of employees were often poor. Pope Leo has written this letter to put before us (the Church) and all people of good faith, the principles that must guide the use of AI technology if the dignity and welfare of the human person is to be safeguarded. He writes “Human dignity does not depend on a person’s abilities, wealth or position in life, nor on the right or wrong choices made; instead, it is a gift that precedes and transcends each person, endowed by God as an expression of his unfailing love.” (No.50 p.57) The foundation of the *Social Doctrine of the Church*, is the belief that we are called to do what Jesus asked us to do, namely, to “love one another as I have loved you” (Jn. 13:34). This love finds concrete expression in the implementation of various “PRINCIPLES”, in our lives and in society. They include: The Common Good; The Universal Destination of Goods - “this principle reminds us that the earth’s goods - soil, water, air and natural resources – are given by God to the entire human family to sustain the lives of all” (No.65,p.69); Subsidiarity “the role of individuals, families, local communities...should not be supplanted by higher-level authorities” (No.68 p. 72); Solidarity; and Social Justice.

At the conclusion of Chapter Two, the Holy Father writes, “I would like to touch on a point that is particularly close to my heart. Social Doctrine is not merely a message addressed to society; it is also an examination of conscience for the Church.....In this regard, listening to the victims of spiritual, economic, institutional, sexual and power-based abuse, as well as abuses of conscience, is an integral part of a journey, which includes acknowledging the harm done, just reparation and taking steps to prevent it from happening again.” Nos. 86,89 pgs. 86,87)