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MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS

An ethical-anthropological analysis of education in the age of artificial intelligence

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Uma análise ético-antropológica da educação na era da inteligência artificial

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Abstract
Drawing on documents of the Social Doctrine of the Church and adopting an ethical-anthropological approach, this article examines the contributions of the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, promulgated by Pope Leo XIV on May 15, 2026, within the context of the ethical challenges posed by the expansion of generative artificial intelligence. Based on bibliographic and documentary research, the study investigates how the encyclical reaffirms human dignity as the foundation of ethical reflection and education amid technological advancement. To this end, it addresses the historical development of the Social Doctrine of the Church, the central tenets of *Magnifica Humanitas*, and its understanding of how human dignity should be safeguarded in the age of artificial intelligence. The article concludes that the document advances a conception of technology subordinated to the common good and guided by the ethical-anthropological centrality of the human person.

Keywords: *Magnifica Humanitas*. Pope Leo XIV. Artificial intelligence. Education. Social Doctrine of the Church.

Resumo
O artigo analisa, a partir dos documentos da Doutrina Social da Igreja e sob uma chave ético-antropológica, as contribuições da encíclica *Magnifica Humanitas: sobre a salvaguarda da pessoa humana*, promulgada pelo Papa Leão XIV em 15 de maio de 2026, situando-a no contexto dos desafios éticos suscitados pela expansão das inteligências artificiais generativas. A pesquisa, de natureza bibliográfica e documental, investiga como a encíclica reafirma a dignidade da pessoa humana como fundamento da reflexão ética e da educação diante do avanço tecnológico. Para tanto, aborda a evolução histórica da Doutrina Social da Igreja, os principais fundamentos da *Magnifica Humanitas* e sua compreensão acerca da preservação da dignidade humana na era da inteligência artificial. Conclui-se que o documento propõe uma

concepção de tecnologia subordinada ao bem comum e orientada pela centralidade ético-antropológica da pessoa humana.

Palavras-chave: *Magnifica Humanitas*. Papa Leão XIV. Inteligência Artificial. Educação. Doutrina Social da Igreja.

1 INTRODUCTION

This article aims to analyze the contributions of the Encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, promulgated by Pope Leo XIV on May 15, 2026, to the field of education. The document belongs to the social Magisterium of the Catholic Church and reflects on the dignity of the human person in the age of artificial intelligence.

Magnifica Humanitas is the first encyclical of Leo XIV's pontificate. Its subject matter demonstrates the pontiff's attention to the pressing issues of the present day. In recent years, the proliferation of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) has brought significant advances to the world of work, including the field of education.

Nevertheless, the use of generative artificial intelligence has prompted debate, particularly around the following question: how can it be used in an ethically responsible manner? Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* broadens this inquiry by shifting the focus from technology to the human person, reaffirmed as the center of all ethical reflection. The document therefore raises a more comprehensive question: how can generative artificial intelligence be used while safeguarding the dignity of the human person? The encyclical does not reject generative AI; rather, it seeks to subordinate its use to the preservation of human dignity.

Methodologically, the study is grounded in bibliographic and documentary research. It analyzes the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* in comparison with other documents that form part of the historical development of the Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC). It is important to emphasize that the study offers an interpretation in light of the Catholic Magisterium without invoking theological arguments, which, although relevant, fall outside its scope. Its approach to education nevertheless arises from the ethical-anthropological framework of the SDC rather than from categories specific to pedagogical theories.

Accordingly, the study seeks to contribute to the debate on the use of generative AI in education from the ethical-anthropological perspective offered by the encyclical. It articulates two inseparable dimensions: the moral orientation of technology toward the common good and the promotion of human development (the ethical dimension), and the understanding of the human person as a bearer of dignity and rights (the anthropological dimension). This is not, therefore, an analysis of techniques and methods for using GenAI, but an inquiry into how the dignity of the human person can be safeguarded in the current technological context.

To achieve this objective, the article is divided into two main sections, in addition to the introduction and conclusion: 1) The Social Doctrine of the Church: a historical overview; and 2) *Magnifica Humanitas*: artificial intelligence, education, and human dignity.

2 THE SOCIAL DOCTRINE OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC) comprises teachings found in papal social encyclicals and in continental, national, and regional episcopal documents. Conceptually, *Doctrine* designates a coherent *corpus* of principles for reflection and directives for action that emerged with the Industrial Revolution and are expressed in papal encyclicals. *Social* refers to the formal and institutionalized relationships of life in society, whether in the economic, political, or cultural sphere. *Church*, in turn, locates this normative body within the Catholic institution as it is present in society (Alves, 2020).

Historically, the Social Doctrine of the Church was inaugurated with the publication of the encyclical *Rerum Novarum* (1891) by Pope Leo XIII (1810-1903, pope from 1878). The document was promulgated in the context of the Second Industrial Revolution and the consolidation of the capitalist system. This period saw crucial changes in the organization of work that directly transformed social relations in the Western world.

According to José Dias, the central concern of *Rerum Novarum* was to recognize the "labor question" as an ethical and anthropological problem, not merely an economic one. The document criticized both the individualism of the liberal system, which turns the human being into a commodity, and socialist collectivism, which would suppress individuality in the name of the State (Dias, 2025).

In *Rerum Novarum*, the dignity of the human person became the Catholic Church's interpretive key not only for understanding social transformations but also for offering guidance to the faithful. The need to guarantee labor rights and proper working conditions was among the document's principal themes. It also affirmed that private property is a natural right, but that its social function must be exercised for the common good. The State must therefore intervene when necessary to protect the most vulnerable and promote social justice.

More generally, *Rerum Novarum* maintained that changes in personal attitudes were insufficient to secure justice and solidarity in society; organized action was needed to influence legislation and bring about structural change (Peña, 2014). In other words, its proposal was not limited to action within the Church but extended to transformations in civil society.

To mark the fortieth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Pius XI (1857-1939, pope from 1922) promulgated the encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*. Issued in a different historical context, marked by the rise of totalitarian regimes and the 1929 economic crisis that shook much of the world, the document broadened Catholic social reflection by establishing two principles: subsidiarity and solidarity (Dias, 2025).

Subsidiarity is one of the most prominent principles of the SDC, since the dignity of the human person cannot be promoted without care for the family and for other social, economic, and cultural associations. This concern received particular attention in response to totalitarian regimes that suppressed the various spheres of life in society (Alves, 2020).

The principle of solidarity, in turn, is defined by the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* as follows:

> The principle of solidarity requires the men and women of our time to cultivate a greater awareness of their debt to the society of which they are part. They are indebted for the conditions that make human existence possible and for the indivisible and indispensable legacy made up of culture, scientific and technological knowledge, material and immaterial goods, and everything produced by human history[1] (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2011, no. 195).

These two principles "constitute the ethical core of Christian democracy, which seeks to balance freedom and justice" (Dias, 2025, p. 212)[2]. They are not isolated within the social perspective of the SDC; on the contrary, they converge to give unity to its central commitment: the defense of human dignity.

Other encyclicals commemorating the publication of *Rerum Novarum* were promulgated throughout the twentieth century. These include *Mater et Magistra*, by John XXIII (1881-1963, pope from 1958), published on the sixtieth anniversary of the encyclical; the Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens*, by Paul VI (1897-1978, pope from 1963), marking its eightieth anniversary; *Laborem Exercens*, by John Paul II (1920-2005, pope from 1978), on the ninetieth anniversary; and finally *Centesimus Annus*, also by John Paul II, published on the centenary of *Rerum Novarum* (Alves, 2020).

[1] O princípio da solidariedade implica que os homens do nosso tempo cultivem uma maior consciência do débito que têm para com a sociedade em que estão inseridos: são devedores daquelas condições que tornam possível a existência humana, como do patrimônio, indivisível e indispensável, constituído de cultura, do conhecimento científico e tecnológico, dos bens materiais e imateriais, de tudo aquilo que a história da humanidade produziu (Pontifício Conselho Justiça e Paz, 2011, n. 195).

[2] "formam o núcleo ético da democracia cristã, que busca equilibrar liberdade e justiça" (Dias, 2025, p. 212).

The encyclical *Mater et Magistra*, published by Pope John XXIII on May 15, 1961, updated *Rerum Novarum*. Its guidelines stressed the need to balance citizens' initiative with State action, while insisting that work, if it is to be dignified, requires fair remuneration (Leo XIV, 2026).

When Pope Paul VI published the Apostolic Letter *Octogesima Adveniens* on May 14, 1971, he sought to rethink the Church's presence in a post-industrial society marked by new forms of poverty and growing urbanization. The document's central concern is the need for Christians to act against social injustice (Leo XIV, 2026).

Pope John Paul II's encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, published on May 1, 1991, addressed issues of particular importance at the time, such as the collapse of the Soviet regime and the unchecked marginalization of the poor in the capitalist world. The document sought to affirm the potential of the free market, provided that it is subordinated to the moral law and guided by the principle of solidarity, so that the weakest are not sacrificed to the logic of profit (Leo XIV, 2026).

In addition to the documents commemorating *Rerum Novarum*, Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical *Caritas in Veritate* deserves mention. Written in the context of the 2008 economic crisis, it sought to offer theological responses to the economic and moral imbalances afflicting the international system. In the text, Benedict XVI "proposes that economics and politics be permeated by the logic of gift, understanding the market not merely as a sphere of exchange but as a place of trust and reciprocity" (Dias, 2025, p. 232)[3].

With regard to the pontificate of Pope Francis (1936-2025, pope from 2013), two encyclicals are important to the development of the SDC: *Laudato Si'* and *Fratelli Tutti*. The former, published in 2015, was the first papal encyclical devoted to ecological questions. Its central argument is the need to preserve our *common home*, planet Earth. Concern for the environment was not separated from the social question, for "exposure to atmospheric pollutants produces a wide range of health effects, particularly among the poor" (Pope Francis, 2015, p. 20)[4].

In *Fratelli Tutti*, a document written during the COVID-19 pandemic, Pope Francis embraced "fraternity as the structuring foundation of social coexistence and political

[3] "propõe que a economia e a política sejam permeadas pela lógica do dom, entendendo o mercado não apenas como espaço de troca, mas como lugar de confiança e reciprocidade" (Dias, 2025, p. 232).
[4] "A exposição aos poluentes atmosféricos produz uma vasta gama de efeitos sobre a saúde, particularmente aos mais pobres" (Papa Francisco, 2015, p. 20).

organization" (Dias, 2025, p. 234)[5]. To address the problems of the contemporary world, he proposed:

> [...] it is not necessary to think of a personal authority. It should, however, provide at least for the creation of more effective global organizations, endowed with authority to secure the global common good, eradicate hunger and poverty, and ensure the just defense of fundamental human rights (Pope Francis, 2020, p. 101)[6].

Taken together, the texts mentioned above give substance to what has become known as the Social Doctrine of the Church. In their respective periods, these documents sought, in light of the Catholic Magisterium, to respond to the principal problems of their time: the condition of workers, totalitarian ideologies, post-industrial society, financial crises, climate issues, and humanity's destiny under globalization.

Leo XIV's first encyclical belongs within this history of publications. By issuing *Magnifica Humanitas*, the pontiff, like his predecessors, sought to respond to contemporary social challenges, particularly the consolidation of artificial intelligence and the impact of these technologies on human life.

3 *MAGNIFICA HUMANITAS*: ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, EDUCATION, AND HUMAN DIGNITY

Among Catholic Church documents on artificial intelligence, the first devoted specifically to the subject was the Doctrinal Note *Antiqua et Nova*, issued by the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education in January 2025. Broadly speaking, the document addresses the relationship between human and artificial intelligence and affirms the need for an ethics centered on human dignity (*Antiqua et Nova*, 2025).

The introduction to *Antiqua et Nova* explains that AI was created, among other purposes, to imitate human intelligence. Unlike many other human creations, it can be trained on the products of human creativity and generate new artifacts at a speed and level of quality that often

[5] "fraternidade como fundamento estruturante da convivência social e da organização política" (Dias, 2025, p. 234).
[6] [...] não se deve necessariamente pensar numa autoridade pessoal. Mas deveria prever pelo menos a criação de organizações mundiais mais eficazes, dotadas de autoridade para assegurar o bem comum mundial, a erradicação da fome e da miséria e a justa defesa dos direitos humanos fundamentais (Papa Francisco, 2020, p. 101).

equal or surpass human capacities, as in the production of texts or images. Precisely because of these attributes, ethical debate in the public sphere has become urgent (*Antiqua et Nova*, 2025).

The document also emphasizes that, because AI is designed to learn and make certain choices autonomously, adapt to new situations, and provide solutions not foreseen by its programmers, ethical responsibility and safety have become necessary matters of reflection for society as a whole. This development compels humanity to consider its own place and role in the world (*Antiqua et Nova*, 2025).

Without question, however, the document's chief contribution was to reinforce the unmistakable differences between artificial "intelligence" and human intelligence.

> Although AI is an extraordinary technological achievement capable of imitating certain operations associated with rationality, it functions only by performing tasks, reaching goals, or making decisions on the basis of quantitative data and computational logic. [...] Even when AI processes and simulates some expressions of intelligence, it remains fundamentally confined to a logical-mathematical domain, which imposes intrinsic limitations. Human intelligence, by contrast, develops organically throughout a person's physical and psychological growth and is shaped by countless embodied experiences; AI lacks the capacity to evolve in this way (*Antiqua et Nova*, 2025, nos. 30-31)[7].

In many cases, what one finds is a fetishization of artificial intelligence. This perspective tends to ignore the ethical and humanitarian questions raised by the spread of these technologies. However effectively they may reproduce data, perform mathematical operations, and generate texts in very little time, they are still incapable of genuine thought and moral judgment.

Antiqua et Nova laid the groundwork for the Church's discussion of artificial intelligence. The principal Catholic doctrinal treatment of the topic, however, is the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, published on May 15, 2026. The document is divided into five main chapters: 1) *A Dynamic Approach Faithful to the Gospel*; 2) *Foundations and Principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church*; 3) *Technology and Dominance. The Grandeur of Humanity in*

[7] Embora a IA seja uma extraordinária conquista tecnológica, capaz de imitar algumas operações associadas à racionalidade, ela opera apenas executando tarefas, alcançando objetivos ou tomando decisões com base em dados quantitativos e lógica computacional. [...] contudo, ainda que a IA elabore e simule algumas expressões da inteligência, ela permanece fundamentalmente confinada a um âmbito lógico-matemático, que lhe impõe limitações intrínsecas. Enquanto a inteligência humana se desenvolve continuamente de forma orgânica ao longo do crescimento físico e psicológico da pessoa, sendo moldada por uma infinidade de experiências vividas corporalmente, a IA carece da capacidade de evoluir nesse sentido (*Antiqua et Nova,* 2025, n. 30-31).

Light of the Promises of AI; 4) *Safeguarding Humanity at a Time of Transformation. Truth, Work, Freedom*; and 5) *The Culture of Power and the Civilization of Love*.

The introduction employs two biblical images through which to consider the contemporary world: the Tower of Babel, as a symbol of technology driven by pride and the pursuit of power; and Nehemiah's rebuilding of Jerusalem, as a symbol of cooperation and shared responsibility. For the pontiff, the central question regarding technology is whether it will be used to build a Tower of Babel or to rebuild Jerusalem.

The first chapter revisits the history of the Social Doctrine of the Church, presenting it not as a fixed set of rules but as a series of responses to the paradigms of particular historical moments. It highlights the dialogue between the Christian worldview, philosophy, and the human sciences, as well as the Church's continuing effort to respond to the problems of its time.

The second chapter presents the principles of the Social Doctrine of the Church: 1) the common good; 2) the universal destination of goods; 3) subsidiarity; 4) solidarity; and 5) social justice. The document stresses that these principles are necessary for reflecting on and guiding the use of generative AI so that it does not create further exclusion and social inequality.

The third chapter contains the core of the analysis. Although it acknowledges the benefits of generative AI for medicine, education, environmental preservation, and many other fields, the document recognizes that its varied risks must also be considered, including the concentration of technological power, the manipulation of information, and, above all, the reduction of the human person to data.

The fourth chapter resumes the preceding discussion and reaffirms truth as a common good indispensable to the preservation of democracy, social trust, and the formation of public opinion. It also insists that the automation of work must not turn workers into disposable subjects. Without the preservation of freedom, new forms of technological slavery may emerge.

The final chapter broadens the reflection by addressing international relations. It criticizes the technological arms race and the militarization of artificial intelligence. The pontiff proposes a culture of peace as the path toward dialogue, democracy, diplomacy, and solidarity among peoples. Peace, therefore, must never be treated as negotiable.

The effects of technology reverberate across many areas of social life, including education, economics, culture, and politics. As Andréia Gripp observes, the internet has ceased to be a “mere instrument, a vehicle for transmitting information (a means), and has acquired the

status of an environment, a new continent in which individuals in different parts of the world become points in a global network" (Gripp, 2023, p. 25)[8].

Recognizing the distinctive features of the current context, the encyclical proposes an *educational alliance for the digital age* as one of the means of safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence. Education is understood as decisive for preserving the human person: "At a time when truth is frequently subordinated to particular interests and communication strategies, education assumes decisive importance" (Leo XIV, 2026, no. 139)[9].

Leo XIV's analysis rests on the understanding that our hyperconnected society is trapped in a culture of immediacy and hyperstimulation that results in fatigue, boredom, and apathy. Contrary to this imposed logic, the formative process always requires time to mature and a path marked by restraint and patience (Leo XIV, 2026).

It is important to situate the sociotechnical setting to which the encyclical responds. This context can be characterized through the concept of the informational paradigm, which, according to Zanon (2018), has five fundamental features. First, information becomes the raw material and primary source of value in informational activities. Second, the effects of new technologies have a pervasive capacity to shape every process of individual and collective existence. Third, network logic structures what is unstructured, to the point that remaining outside the network becomes a disadvantage. Fourth, flexibility allows organizations and institutions to be reorganized at the level of their components. Fifth, specific technologies increasingly converge within a deeply integrated system.

Within this same informational paradigm, the information society, as the prevailing social arrangement, challenges more elaborate forms of rational formation. Rational formation requires time, whereas contemporary life is marked by the rapid circulation of information, the ephemerality of content, and immediate consumption. As Byung-Chul Han writes:

> Rationality also requires time. Rational decisions are built over the long term. They are preceded by reflection that extends beyond the present moment into both the past and the future. This temporal extension characterizes rationality. In the information society, we simply have no time for rational action (Han, 2022, p. 36)[10].

[8] "mero instrumento, de veículo transmissor de informações (meios), para assumir *status* de ambiente, novo continente, no qual indivíduos em diversas partes do mundo se tornam um ponto da rede mundial" (Gripp, 2023, p. 25).
[9] "Em uma época em que a verdade está frequentemente submetida a interesses e estratégias comunicativas, o mundo da educação assume uma importância decisiva" (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 139).
[10] A racionalidade também requer tempo. Decisões racionais são construídas a longo prazo. Uma reflexão as precede que se estende para além do momento no passado e no futuro. Essa extensão temporal caracteriza a racionalidade. Na sociedade da informação, simplesmente não temos tempo para ação racional (Han, 2022, p. 36).

The spread of generative AI intensifies this diagnosis. By exponentially expanding the production, circulation, and consumption of content, these technologies may reinforce the logic of instantaneity and replace reflection with immediacy. It is precisely in this sociotechnical context, even without engaging directly with Byung-Chul Han, that *Magnifica Humanitas* advances its proposal:

> We must educate ourselves to fast from AI and protect our young people from the promises of the perfect machine, from that subtle seduction which seems to make human thought useless precisely when it is most needed. [...] At the same time, children, adolescents, and young people must be taught to identify manipulation, defend their own dignity, and respect the dignity of others, including in digital environments (Leo XIV, 2026, nos. 140, 142)[11].

The Church has proceeded from the premise that its presence in the digital environment cannot be limited to artwork and videos on social media. It must instead help educate people in the proper use of media and foster a critical view of social and communicative processes in order to strengthen a network of solidarity (Gripp, 2023).

In *Magnifica Humanitas*, schools are regarded as places where new generations learn to ask questions about the meaning of life and the dignity of the human person. It is therefore unsurprising that parents and guardians look to schools as allies in the education of young people (Leo XIV, 2026). Yet while schools are understood as environments in which young people can reflect on their lives and broaden their knowledge of the world, the encyclical identifies three major challenges they face: 1) the *sociopolitical challenge*; 2) the *pedagogical challenge*; and 3) the *intellectual and sapiential challenge*.

The *sociopolitical challenge* concerns the profound inequalities that persist across different regions of the world, particularly in access to basic schooling and higher education. In many countries, moreover, the State has yet to invest significantly enough to guarantee quality education for the population. If the State continues to be absent from educational provision, formative opportunities will depend on private institutions, which naturally require families to have stable financial resources (Leo XIV, 2026).

To address this sociopolitical problem, the pontiff states that it is "necessary to recognize and support the contribution of the many Catholic educational initiatives which,

[11] Devemos nos educar ao jejum da IA e proteger os nossos jovens das promessas da máquina perfeita, daquela sutil sedução que parece tornar o pensamento humano inútil precisamente quando é mais necessário. [...] Ao mesmo tempo, é necessário educar as crianças, os adolescentes e os jovens para que aprendam a identificar as manipulações, a defender a sua dignidade e a respeitar a dos outros, inclusive nos ambientes digitais (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 140; n. 142).

although privately run, ensure an inclusive welcome for children and young people" (Leo XIV, 2026, no. 144)[12]. From this perspective, guaranteeing access to education is an expression of promoting the dignity of the human person, since exclusion from formative processes undermines the exercise of other fundamental rights.

With regard to the *pedagogical challenge*, the encyclical observes that many educational systems struggle to keep pace with change and consequently to provide students with an integral education. The accelerated development of information technologies and generative AI has raised new questions about schools, their physical spaces, teaching and assessment methods, and even the role of the teacher (Leo XIV, 2026).

The response to this challenge lies in teachers' continuing education throughout their professional careers, so that they can engage with new technologies. In this way, they will be able to help students use such technologies critically and creatively rather than submitting passively to their influence (Leo XIV, 2026).

The third challenge, which is *intellectual* and *sapiential*, concerns the need for vigilance regarding ready-made information that has replaced the exercise of investigation and reflection. Fragmented forms of knowledge have multiplied, making it more difficult to understand the whole (Leo XIV, 2026). Perhaps the most striking aspect of this challenge appears in the following passage:

> Many educators already perceive signs of possible dehumanization: people "know many things" but struggle to preserve a horizon of meaning and give direction to their own lives, in part because they are unable to relate information to knowledge (Leo XIV, 2026, no. 146)[13].

This issue is not confined to the school environment. It extends beyond school walls, although it is also present within them. The pontiff defends an ethical proposal centered on the need to "promote a genuine hygiene of attention, with rhythms that make room for silence, in-depth study, reading, and thoughtful debate. Without these elements, inner freedom may be compromised" (Leo XIV, 2026, no. 146)[14].

[12] "necessário reconhecer e apoiar a contribuição de muitas obras educativas católicas que, mesmo sendo instituições privadas, garantem um acolhimento inclusivo a crianças e jovens" (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 144).
[13] Muitos educadores já percebem sinais de uma possível desumanização, em que as pessoas 'sabem muitas coisas', mas têm dificuldade em conservar o horizonte de sentido e orientar a própria vida, também devido à incapacidade de relacionar informações e conhecimentos (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 146).
[14] "promover uma verdadeira higiene da atenção: ritmo que prevejam silêncio, estudo aprofundado, leitura, debate ponderado. Sem esses elementos, a liberdade interior pode ficar comprometida" (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 146).

It is also important to note that, when considering the digital world and the spread of generative AI, the pope speaks not as a technical mediator but as an interlocutor who defends human dignity and promotes a culture of peace. The social concern is intertwined with the digital problem: "The Church is an important actor in the social processes of digital media culture, with the mission of enlightening consciences and defending the poor" (Gripp, 2023, p. 110)[15].

Accordingly, the contribution of *Magnifica Humanitas* does not lie in offering an instruction manual for the ethical use of generative AI, but in ethically and anthropologically reorienting the use of such technologies toward the promotion of human dignity. "Schools are not called to keep pace with the digital world, but to offer what the digital realm cannot provide on its own: shared time for learning and relationships of trust" (Leo XIV, 2026, no. 147)[16]. Rather than proposing a technicist solution aimed at optimizing teachers' work through technology, the encyclical interprets the formative environment as a space with a distinctive temporality of its own.

As Byung-Chul Han argues in *Favor fechar os olhos* (*Please Close Your Eyes*), neoliberal society is organized around the "time of the self," conditioned by the logic of production and the pursuit of ever-new demands; it is therefore an individualized time (Han, 2024). This perspective prevents the collective dimension from entering the formative horizon because it is concerned solely with efficiency and productivity.

It is possible, however, to understand schools through a form of temporality that Byung-Chul Han calls the "time of the other," which can neither be accelerated nor characterized by work or performance (Han, 2024). The school environment should thus be understood in terms of its own distinctive time, centered on the other as a being endowed with dignity.

From this perspective, *Magnifica Humanitas* can contribute to thinking about education in the age of generative AI: what kind of human formation becomes possible when not only work but also judgment, memory, and, above all, the time required for thought are delegated to machines? If, as Byung-Chul Han (2024) argues, we live under a regime that knows no closure, only an endless and directionless continuation in which we no longer know how to conclude, decide, and bring things to an end, perhaps the role of the school is precisely the opposite: to teach the art of ending.

[15] "A Igreja é um importante sujeito no processo social na cultura midiática digital, com a missão de iluminar as consciências e defender o pobre" (Gripp, 2023, p. 110).
[16] "A escola não é chamada a acompanhar a velocidade do mundo digital, mas a oferecer aquilo que o digital, por si só, não consegue: tempo partilhado para aprender e relações de confiança" (Leão XIV, 2026, n. 147).

This does not deny that generative AI may influence educational techniques or methods. The purpose of education, however, must remain the same: to guarantee students access to historically accumulated knowledge so that they may understand themselves and others as bearers of rights and dignity.

Only after recognizing the inviolability of human dignity should discussion turn to the technical uses of generative AI. In other words, before teaching how to use these technologies, it is necessary to form people capable of understanding that the human person remains the foundation, criterion, and end of all technological development.

4 CONCLUSION

This article aimed to analyze the contributions of Pope Leo XIV's Encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* to the field of education. Methodologically, the study employed bibliographic and documentary research to analyze this source in dialogue with other documents of the Social Doctrine of the Church and their respective historical periods.

The study showed that, since the nineteenth century, the SDC has sought to respond to the social and economic problems of each era. From the labor question that emerged in the context of the Second Industrial Revolution to the recurring challenges posed by the spread of generative AI, the pontiffs have endeavored to offer ethical principles capable of guiding societies through the preservation of human dignity.

In the specific case of *Magnifica Humanitas*, its principal contribution does not lie in establishing technical rules for the use of generative AI. The document's originality consists in shifting the debate from a strictly technical framework to an ethical-anthropological perspective, recognizing that technology, as a human product, must be used to safeguard the human person.

Precisely because of the current situation, education assumes a central role. In a society marked by acceleration, instantaneity, and hyperstimulation, schools must be defended as spaces of systematized knowledge, culture, reflection, and formation in ethical responsibility. The task is not merely to prepare individuals to operate new technologies, but first to form people capable of directing technology according to ethical and humanizing values that prevent the human person from being reduced to a resource or a data point.

Magnifica Humanitas invites reflection not simply on what artificial intelligence can do, but on the kind of humanity that can be formed in a world increasingly mediated by it. The

document's contribution thus consists in reaffirming that technology finds meaning only when it remains subordinate to the dignity of the human person.

Finally, this article was limited to an ethical-anthropological analysis of the contributions of *Magnifica Humanitas* to education in light of the Catholic Church's social Magisterium. This focus made it possible to deepen the understanding of the encyclical's implications for education in the age of generative AI, but it does not exhaust the document's possible fields of study.

Several avenues of investigation therefore remain open. *Magnifica Humanitas* reflects on work, economics, democracy, communication, the international governance of artificial intelligence, and contemporary culture. The encyclical is thus a relevant source for researchers in the Humanities, offering an ethical-anthropological interpretation of contemporary sociotechnical transformations.

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