

of the Holy Father to the World Economic Forum 2025 (14 January 2025)

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

[Davos-Klosters (Switzerland), 20-24 January 2025]

The theme of this year's annual meeting of the World Economic Forum, "Collaboration for the Intelligent Age", provides a good opportunity to reflect on Artificial Intelligence as a tool not only for cooperation but also to bring peoples together.

The Christian tradition regards the gift of intelligence as an essential aspect of the human person created "in the image of God". At the same time, the Catholic Church has always been a protagonist and a supporter of the advancement of science, technology, the arts, and other forms of human endeavours, considering them to be areas of "collaboration of man and woman with God in perfecting the visible creation" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 378).

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AI is intended to imitate the human intelligence that designed it, thus posing a unique set of questions and challenges. Unlike many other human inventions, AI is trained on the results of human creativity, which enables it to generate new artefacts with a skill level and speed that often rival or surpasses human capabilities, raising critical concerns about its impact on humanity's role in the world. Furthermore, the results that AI can produce are almost indistinguishable from those of human beings, raising questions about its effect on the growing crisis of truth in the public forum. Moreover, this technology is designed to learn and make certain choices autonomously, adapting to new situations and providing answers not foreseen by its programmers, thus raising fundamental questions about ethical responsibility, human safety,

and the broader implications of these developments for society.

While AI is an extraordinary technological achievement capable of imitating certain outputs associated with human intelligence, this technology "makes a technical choice among several possibilities based either on well-defined criteria or on statistical inferences. Human beings, however, not only choose, but in their hearts are capable of deciding" (Address at the G7 Session on Artificial Intelligence, Borgo Egnazia (Puglia) 14 June 2024).

Indeed, the very use of the word "intelligence" in connection with AI is a misnomer, since AI is not an artificial form of human intelligence but a product of it. When used correctly, AI assists the human person in fulfilling his or her vocation, in freedom and responsibility.

As with all other human activity and technological development, AI must be ordered to the human person and become part of efforts to achieve "greater justice, more extensive fraternity and a more humane order of social relations", which are "more valuable than advances in the technical field" (Gaudium et Spes,35;cf.Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2293).

There is, however, the risk that AI will be used to advance the "technocratic paradigm", which perceives all the world's problems as solvable through technological means alone. Within this paradigm, human dignity and fraternity are frequently subordinated in the pursuit of efficiency, as though reality, goodness, and truth inherently emanate from technological and economic power. Yet human dignity must never be violated for the sake of efficiency. Technological developments that do not improve life for everyone, but instead create or worsen inequalities and conflicts, cannot be called true progress. For this reason, AI should be placed at the service of a healthier, more human, more social and more integral development.

Progress marked by the dawn of AI calls for a rediscovery of the importance of community and a renewed commitment to care for the common home entrusted to us by God. To navigate the complexities of AI, governments and businesses must exercise due diligence and vigilance. They must critically evaluate the individual applications of AI in particular contexts in order to determine whether its use promotes human dignity, the vocation of the human person, and the common good. As with many technologies, the effects of the various uses of AI may not always be predictable from their inception. As the application of AI and its social impact become clearer over time, appropriate responses should be made at all levels of society, according to the principle of subsidiarity, with individual users, families, civil society, corporations, institutions, governments, and international organizations working at their proper levels to ensure that AI is directed to the good of all. Today, there are significant challenges and opportunities when AI is placed within a framework of relational intelligence, where everyone shares responsibility for the integral well-being of others.

With these sentiments, I offer my prayerful good wishes for the deliberations of the Forum, and upon all taking part I willingly invoke an abundance of divine blessings.

From the Vatican, 14 January 2025

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