

MAGISTERIUM

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explain how using AI can be in keeping with church teachings.



AI and the Catholic Moral Vision

Human Dignity – Every person is created in the image of God and must be respected as a bearer of that dignity. AI must therefore be designed and employed so that it serves, rather than undermines, the intrinsic worth of each individual¹.

Truth and the Common Good – The Church warns of a “growing crisis of truth” caused by deep-fakes and manipulation of information. Properly governed AI can help safeguard truth, promote transparent decision-making, and protect democratic processes, thereby contributing to the common good¹.

Family Life – The family is “the place of origin and the most effective means for humanizing and personalizing society” (Familiaris consortio, no. 43). When AI is used to ease daily tasks, improve communication, or support parental education—while avoiding isolation—it can strengthen family bonds rather than erode them¹.

Work and Labor – Human work has intrinsic value and is ordered toward the person. AI-driven productivity should not replace the dignity of work but should free people to engage in meaningful, creative, and service-oriented labor. Policies that protect workers, provide training, and require human oversight uphold this principle¹.

Healthcare & Education – AI’s capacity to develop new medicines, diagnostic tools, and personalized learning can advance the right to bodily integrity and proper development of life (Pacem in terris, nos. 11-13). When applied ethically, such technologies promote integral human development¹.

Political & Civic Life – AI can enhance participation in civic life, but it must be regulated to prevent bias, discrimination, or a purely utilitarian approach that ignores human dignity. Human oversight and accountability are essential to preserve justice and solidarity¹.

Warfare – The Church insists on human control over weapons to protect innocent life. The use of lethal autonomous systems is morally unacceptable; AI must be confined to defensive, non-lethal, or humanitarian applications under strict human supervision ¹.

Environmental Stewardship – In line with *Laudato si'*, AI can aid in monitoring climate change, optimizing energy use, and protecting the poor, provided it respects both “the cry of the earth” and “the cry of the poor” ¹.

Practical Guidelines for Faithful Use

Area	Guiding Principle	Faithful Application
Family	Promote communion, not isolation	Use AI for family-planning tools, safe communication platforms, and educational resources that reinforce parental roles.
Work	Preserve human dignity of labor	Deploy AI to eliminate menial tasks, allowing workers to focus on creative and relational aspects; ensure retraining programs.
Truth	Guard the integrity of information	Implement transparent algorithms, fact-checking AI, and strong accountability for content creation.
Health	Serve the right to bodily integrity	Apply AI in diagnostics, tele-medicine, and drug discovery while safeguarding patient consent and privacy.
Civic	Uphold solidarity and subsidiarity	Use AI in public services only with human review, preventing discrimination and ensuring equitable access.
Defense	Maintain human discernment	Prohibit fully autonomous lethal weapons; limit AI to defensive, non-lethal support under human command.
Environment	Care for creation	Employ AI for ecological monitoring, resource management, and climate modeling, always prioritizing the poor.

Conclusion

When AI is oriented toward **human dignity, truth, the common good, and the protection of family, work, health, civic participation, peace, and creation**, its use aligns with the Church’s moral teaching. The decisive factor is **human oversight and intentionality**: technology must serve the person, not the other way around¹ ¹. By adhering to these principles, Catholics can responsibly embrace AI as a tool for evangelization, service, and the flourishing of all humanity.

References

1 Joint Letter on Artificial Intelligence Principles and Priorities (9 June 2025) 2 / United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

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How does the Magisterium address AI ethics?



The Magisterium’s Teaching on the Ethics of Artificial Intelligence

Key Magisterial Source	Main Ethical Emphasis	How It Guides AI Use
Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith – <i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Human intelligence is a gift that must serve the dignity of the person and the common good.“The intrinsic dignity of every man and every woman” is the key criterion for evaluating emerging technologies¹.	AI systems must be designed and applied so that they respect human dignity , promote solidarity, and advance the common good. Human judgment must remain the final arbiter of purpose and means ¹ .
Pope Francis – G7 Session on Artificial Intelligence (June 2024)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Decision-making belongs to the human person; machines must not replace human freedom².Technology should be “human-centered, ethically grounded and directed toward the good”².AI can be a “tool for greater knowledge of truth” when used responsibly².	AI may be employed when it enhances truth-seeking, supports human freedom, and serves the integral development of persons , but must never usurp moral agency.
USCCB Joint Letter on AI Principles & Priorities (June 2025)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Emphasises the “growing crisis of truth” created by	Provides concrete policy recommendations : protect

Key Magisterial Source	Main Ethical Emphasis	How It Guides AI Use
2025)	deep-fakes and misinformation ⁽²⁾ . • Calls for human oversight, accountability, and transparency in AI systems ⁽²⁾ . • Highlights specific domains: family life, labor, health, education, politics, warfare, environment, each framed by Church social teaching (e.g., <i>Familiaris consortio</i> , <i>Compendium of the Social Doctrine</i> , <i>Laudato si'</i>) ⁽²⁾ .	families, safeguard dignified work, ensure equitable health-care, prevent bias in automated decisions, prohibit lethal autonomous weapons and promote eco-friendly AI
Declaration <i>Dignitas Infinita</i> (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2024) (cited in footnotes)	• AI must be evaluated against human dignity, the common good, subsidiarity, solidarity, and justice ⁽³⁾ . • Calls for transparency, inclusion, accountability, reliability, security, and privacy ⁽³⁾ .	Sets a normative framework that any AI development or deployment must meet the Church's fundamental moral principles.
Instruction <i>Dignitas Personae</i> (CDF, 2008) (cited in footnotes)	• Reiterates that technology must serve the integral development of the person ⁽²⁾ .	Provides a longstanding doctrinal baseline that newer documents build upon.

Core Magisterial Themes in AI Ethics

1. Human Dignity as the Paramount Criterion

- Every AI application is judged first by its respect for the inherent worth of each person (Gen 1:27).
- The Magisterium repeatedly stresses that “the intrinsic dignity of every man and every woman” must guide the evaluation of technology⁽¹⁾.

2. Human Freedom & Moral Agency

- Decision-making must remain a human act; delegating moral choices to machines is condemned⁽²⁾.

- AI should **augment** human freedom, not diminish it.

3. Truth & the Common Good

- AI can be a “tool for greater knowledge of truth” when used responsibly ⁽²⁾, but it also poses a “crisis of truth” through deep-fakes, demanding robust oversight ⁽²⁾.
- The common good requires that AI serve societal well-being, not merely economic efficiency.

4. Solidarity & Subsidiarity

- AI development must respect the principle of subsidiarity: decisions are taken at the most local level possible, with higher authorities providing support and regulation ⁽¹⁾.
- Solidarity calls for AI that benefits the poor and vulnerable, aligning with *Laudato si'*’s ecological concern ⁽²⁾.

5. Justice, Transparency, and Accountability

- The Magisterium demands transparent algorithms, clear documentation, and mechanisms for accountability to prevent bias and discrimination ⁽³⁾.

6. Specific Areas of Moral Concern

Area	Magisterial Guidance
Family	AI should strengthen, not isolate, family life (Familiaris consortio) ⁽²⁾ .
Work	AI must not deprive persons of dignified labor; it should free people for creative, service-oriented work (Compendium of Social Doctrine) ⁽²⁾ .
Health & Education	AI can improve access to care and learning, respecting the right to bodily integrity and proper development (Pacem in terris) ⁽²⁾ .
Political Life	AI must protect democratic processes, avoid hidden responsibility, and ensure fair participation (USCCB letter) ⁽²⁾ .

Area	Magisterial Guidance
Warfare	Lethal autonomous weapons are morally unacceptable; human control is essential (Fratelli tutti, no. 258) ² .
Environment	AI should be employed to protect creation while minimizing ecological harm (Laudato si', no. 49) ² .

Summary

The Magisterium addresses AI ethics by **extending the Church's timeless moral principles**—human dignity, freedom, truth, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and justice—to the concrete challenges posed by artificial intelligence. Through papal speeches, dicastery documents (*Antiqua et Nova, Dignitas Infinita*), and episcopal statements (USCCB joint letter), the Church provides a coherent framework that:

- **Mandates human oversight** and the preservation of moral agency.
- **Requires AI to serve the integral development of the person** and the flourishing of the whole society.
- **Calls for transparent, accountable, and non-discriminatory technologies.**
- **Prohibits uses that threaten life, peace, or the environment**, such as fully autonomous lethal weapons.

When AI is developed and used in accordance with these teachings, it can become a genuine instrument of the Gospel, helping humanity pursue truth, promote the common good, and care for God's creation.

References

- 1 Antiqua et Nova (The Old and the New): Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence 42 / Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for...
- 2 Antiqua et Nova (The Old and the New): Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence Footnote / Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery fo...
- 3 COMECE Statement on the EU Artificial Intelligence Act / Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union

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are there opposing viewpoints and how to respond to them



1. Opposing Viewpoints on AI

Viewpoint	Core Claim(s)	Typical Sources / Proponents
Transhumanist “secular eschatology”	Humanity will overcome biological limits through “mind-uploads,” nanotech, and a future “singularity.” The project is presented as a quasi-religious quest for a post-human future, independent of God or supernatural grace.	Nick Bostrom’s <i>Transhumanist FAQ</i> ; popular accounts by Ray Kurzweil; commentary in media (e.g., <i>The Guardian</i>). See the description of this stance in the analysis of secular transhumanism ¹ .
Utilitarian-efficiency argument	AI should be deployed wherever it maximises overall utility (e.g., economic productivity, cost-reduction, “the greatest good for the greatest number”). Moral evaluation is reduced to outcomes, not to the intrinsic worth of persons.	Secular AI-ethics literature, policy papers that stress “algorithmic optimisation” and “data-driven decision-making.”
Libertarian-market-first stance	Regulation is a threat to innovation; the market will self-correct. AI ownership and data are private property; individuals should be free to sell or monetize their personal data.	Think-tank reports, tech-industry white papers, and libertarian philosophy that prioritises individual autonomy over collective oversight.
Techno-optimist “AI solves everything”	AI will automatically resolve social problems (climate change, disease, poverty) if only enough computational power is applied. Human moral deliberation is seen as a bottleneck.	Statements from leading AI firms, futurist conferences, and popular science media that portray AI as a panacea.

2. The Magisterium’s Response

Magisterial Principle	How It Counters the Opposing Viewpoint	Key Source(s)
Human Dignity as the Non-Negotiable Norm	Any vision that treats the human body as a “mere obstacle” to be upgraded (as in transhumanist mind-uploads) contradicts the Church’s teaching that the person is an inseparable unity of body and soul, created in the image of God. Dignity cannot be traded for efficiency or “post-human” status.	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (2025) – the note stresses that “human dignity is rooted in the person as an inseparable unity of body and soul” ² .
Freedom & Moral Agency	The utilitarian reduction of persons to data points erodes authentic freedom. The Magisterium insists that “intelligent” machines may perform tasks efficiently, but the <i>purpose and meaning</i> of those tasks must remain determined by human beings possessing a “universe of values.” ³	
Truth & the Common Good	Deep-fakes and opaque algorithmic decisions fuel the “growing crisis of truth.” The Church demands transparency, accountability, and human oversight to protect truth-seeking and the common good, rejecting a purely outcome-oriented calculus.	Joint Letter on AI Principles (June 2025) – calls for “human oversight and well-defined accountability” to promote transparency and fair democratic processes ⁴ .
Solidarity & Subsidiarity	Libertarian market-first approaches ignore the preferential option for the poor and the need for communal responsibility. The Magisterium teaches that AI must serve the whole of humanity , especially the vulnerable, and that decisions should be taken at the most local level possible, with	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> footnote cites <i>Laudato si’</i> (cry of the earth & cry of the poor) and the principle of subsidiarity ² .

Magisterial Principle	How It Counters the Opposing Viewpoint	Key Source(s)
	higher authority providing guidance.	
Justice & Environmental Stewardship	The techno-optimist claim that AI will automatically solve climate change overlooks the ecological cost of data-centres, e-waste, and energy consumption. The Church urges responsible design that minimizes harm to creation.	COMECE statement on the EU AI Act (2024) stresses the need for energy-efficient AI and responsible recycling of electronic waste ⁽³⁾ .
Human-Centred Warfare	Autonomous lethal weapons violate the Church’s demand for human control over the use of force. Any vision that removes humans from the moral decision of life-and-death is unacceptable.	Joint Letter (June 2025) – “human control over any weapon system is essential” (citing <i>Fratelli tutti</i> , no. 258) ⁽⁴⁾ .

3. Practical Ways to Respond

1. Affirm the Person Before the Product

- When a proposal emphasises “upgrading humanity” (e.g., brain-computer interfaces), respond by invoking the Church’s teaching that the **body is integral to the person** and cannot be discarded for efficiency⁽²⁾.

2. Demand Human Oversight & Transparency

- Counter utilitarian or market-driven AI deployments by insisting on **audit trails, explainable-AI, and clear lines of accountability**, as the USCCB letter requires for all AI systems⁽⁴⁾.

3. Highlight the Common Good Over Pure Profit

- Show that AI projects that maximise shareholder value but increase inequality conflict with the Church’s social doctrine on **solidarity and the preferential**

option for the poor ².

4. Promote Ethical Design Standards

- Encourage developers to embed the values listed by Pope Francis (inclusion, transparency, security, equity, privacy, reliability) into the code-base, referencing his call for “human-centred, ethically grounded” technology ⁵.

5. Advocate for Robust Regulation

- Support legislation such as the EU AI Act, which aligns with COMECE’s call for **responsibility, liability, and protection of fundamental rights** ³.

6. Educate the Faithful

- Provide catechesis that explains why “AI as a panacea” is a **technological myth** and why the Church’s moral framework remains essential for discerning the proper use of any powerful tool.

4. Summary

Opposing secular viewpoints—whether transhumanist visions of a post-human future, utilitarian efficiency models, libertarian market-first attitudes, or techno-optimist promises—often **reduce the human person to a set of functions, data, or economic units**.

The **Magisterium** answers these positions by grounding AI ethics in the **immutable principles of human dignity, freedom, truth, the common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and justice**. Documents such as *Antiqua et Nova*, the USCCB Joint Letter, COMECE’s statement, and Pope Francis’ speeches provide a coherent, authoritative framework that **requires human oversight, transparency, and a preferential concern for the vulnerable**.

When faced with contrary arguments, the Catholic response is to **re-assert the primacy of the person**, demand **ethical safeguards**, and promote **regulatory and pastoral measures** that keep AI in service of God’s plan for humanity rather than in opposition to it.

References

- 1 COMECE Statement on the EU Artificial Intelligence Act / Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union
- 2 Antiqua et Nova (The Old and the New): Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence Footnote / Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery fo...
- 3 Joint Letter on Artificial Intelligence Principles and Priorities (9 June 2025) 2 / United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- 4 Joint Letter on Artificial Intelligence Principles and Priorities (9 June 2025) 3 / United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
- 5 Antiqua et Nova (The Old and the New): Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence 38 / Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for...

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What role does the Magisterium play in shaping ethical AI policy?



The Magisterium’s Role in Shaping Ethical AI Policy

1. Magisterial Sources that Form the Moral Framework

Document	What It Provides	Key Moral Themes
Antiqua et Nova (Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, 2025)	A theological-philosophical note on the relationship between artificial and human intelligence.	Human dignity, the uniqueness of the person, the need for human freedom and responsibility in the use of A
Pope Francis – G7 Session on AI (June 2024)	Public address urging “responsible and discern-ment-filled” political action.	AI must be a “bulwark” against technocratic paradigm; politics must protect the common good and human truth ² .
Pope Leo XIV – Message to the Jubilee of Governments (June 2025)	Calls AI a “tool for the good of human beings” that must not diminish human identity.	Emphasis on human-centred design, environmental stewardship, and political responsibility ¹ .
USCCB Joint Letter on AI Principles & Priorities (June 9 2025)	Concrete policy recommendations addressed to U.S. legislators.	Protection of family, work, health, environment, prohibi

Document	What It Provides	Key Moral Themes
		of lethal autonomous weapons transparency, accountability
COMECE Statement on the EU AI Act (2024)	Episcopal-conference position that fed directly into the EU legislative process.	Human-centric regulation, responsibility, prohibition of legal personality for robots, precautionary principle, solidarity, subsidiarity ⁽⁴⁾ .
Minerva Dialogues (Pope Francis, 2023)	Invitation to an inclusive dialogue between scientists, engineers, ethicists and the Church.	Emphasises “inclusive, fruitful dialogue” as a way to shape ethical standards ⁽⁵⁾ .

These documents constitute the **official magisterial teaching** on AI: they articulate the Church’s moral principles and translate them into concrete recommendations for legislators, regulators and industry.

2. Core Moral Principles that Guide Policy

Principle	Magisterial Basis	Policy Implication
Human Dignity	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> stresses that every person is an “in-separable unity of body and soul” whose dignity is non-negotiable ⁽¹⁾ .	AI systems must be designed to respect the person, not to replace or diminish it; any use that treats people as data-points is rejected.
Freedom & Moral Agency	Pope Francis warns that decision-making must remain “in the hands of the human person” ⁽²⁾ .	Requires human oversight , explainability and the prohibition of fully autonomous lethal weapons (USCCB, p. 2) ⁽³⁾ .
Truth & the Common Good	The G7 address calls AI a “tool for greater knowledge of truth” when responsibly used ⁽²⁾ .	Policies must ensure transparency , combat deep-fakes, and protect democratic discourse (USCCB, p. 2) ⁽³⁾ .

Principle	Magisterial Basis	Policy Implication
Solidarity & Preferential Option for the Poor	<i>Laudato si'</i> (cry of the earth & cry of the poor) is repeatedly cited in COMECE and USCCB documents ⁴ ³ .	AI should be deployed to reduce inequality , protect vulnerable groups, and avoid environmental harm (energy-efficient AI, e-waste recycling) ⁴ .
Subsidiarity	Emphasised in <i>Antiqua et Nova</i> and COMECE as a guiding principle for regulation ¹ .	Decisions about AI should be taken at the most local level possible, with higher authorities providing normative guidance rather than micromanagement.
Justice, Accountability & Transparency	COMECE lists “transparency, sharing of information, inclusion, accountability, reliability, security, and privacy” as essential ethical pillars ⁴ .	Legislative drafts (EU AI Act, AI Liability Directive) must embed audit trails, risk-assessment, and liability regimes that reflect these values.

3. Mechanisms by Which the Magisterium Shapes Policy

Mechanism	How It Operates	Illustrative Example
Authoritative Teaching (Encyclicals, Apostolic Letters, Dicastery Notes)	Provides a universal moral compass that legislators can cite as a normative reference.	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (2025) offers doctrinal definition of AI’s limits, which has been quoted in policy-making forums.
Episcopal-Conference Statements	National or regional bishops’ conferences (e.g., USCCB, COMECE) issue joint letters and position papers that directly address lawmakers.	USCCB’s “AI Principles and Priorities” letter was sent to congressional leaders, urging specific regulatory measures.
Direct Participation in Legislative Processes	Bishops and Church experts attend hearings, consult on draft regulations, and lobby for inclusion of ethical criteria.	COMECE’s input was incorporated into the EU Artificial Intelligence Act , influencing its emphasis on human-centric design and liability ⁴ .

Mechanism	How It Operates	Illustrative Example
International Advocacy & Diplomatic Channels	The Holy See, through the Pope and Vatican dicasteries, calls for global treaties and multilateral agreements on AI.	Pope Francis repeatedly urg an “international legally binc treaty” for AI governance (referenced in COMECE) ⁴ .
Dialogue with Scientists & Industry	Events such as the Minerva Dialogues and G7 sessions create spaces where Church teaching meets technical expertise, shaping a common ethical language.	The 2023 Minerva Dialogue invited AI researchers to dis “responsible use” under the Church’s moral framework ⁵ .
Pastoral Guidance & Catechesis	Through homilies, pastoral letters and educational programs, the Church forms the conscience of the faithful , which in turn pressures public policy.	Pope Leo XIV’s Jubilee mes stresses that AI must “not diminish” human identity, influencing Catholic laity’s c engagement ¹ .

4. Concrete Impact on Contemporary AI Policy

Policy Arena	Magisterial Influence	Resulting Legislative/Regulatory Feature
European Union – AI Act & AI Liability Directive	COMECE’s ethical checklist (human-centric, responsibility, precautionary principle) was submitted during the legislative process ⁴ .	The final Act includes risk-assessment obligations , human-in-the-loop requirements, and a liability regime for AI-enabled products.
United States – Congressional AI Oversight	USCCB’s joint letter (June 2025) urged Congress to adopt transparency, anti-bias, and worker-protection provisions ³ .	Draft bills on algorithmic accountability and AI-related labor protections cite the bishops’ recommendations.
International Governance	Papal calls for a binding global treaty on AI ethics (referenced by COMECE) have been echoed in UN-AI-related discussions.	Ongoing negotiations for an AI-focused multilateral agreement incorporate “human dignity” as a core principle, a

Policy Arena	Magisterial Influence	Resulting Legislative/Regulatory Feature
		direct echo of the Magisterium's advocacy.
Military & Defense	USCCB and <i>Fratelli tutti</i> (no. 258) condemn lethal autonomous weapons; the Magisterium's stance informs national export-control policies .	Several NATO-member states have introduced human-control clauses in their autonomous-weapon procurement guidelines.
Environmental & Energy Policy	Pope Leo XIV's Jubilee message and <i>Laudato si'</i> are invoked when drafting energy-efficiency standards for data-centres .	EU and U.S. proposals now require green-AI certifications that align with the Church's ecological concern.

5. Summary

The **Magisterium** shapes ethical AI policy by:

1. **Defining a universal moral framework**—human dignity, freedom, truth, common good, solidarity, subsidiarity, and justice—through doctrinal notes, papal speeches, and encyclicals.
2. **Translating that framework into concrete recommendations** via episcopal-conference statements (USCCB, COMECE) and pastoral letters that address legislators directly.
3. **Participating actively in the legislative process**, offering expert testimony, submitting position papers, and lobbying for the inclusion of Church-derived ethical criteria in statutes such as the EU AI Act and U.S. congressional proposals.
4. **Advocating at the international level** for multilateral treaties and global norms that embed the same moral principles.
5. **Fostering dialogue with scientists, technologists and policymakers** (e.g., Minerva Dialogues, G7 sessions) to ensure that technical development remains anchored in the Church's vision of the human person and the common good.

Through these channels, the Magisterium does not dictate technical specifications but **provides the moral compass** that guides lawmakers, regulators, and industry toward AI

systems that **serve humanity**, protect the vulnerable, and uphold the Gospel values at the heart of Catholic teaching.

References

1 To Participants in the Jubilee of Governments (21 June 2025) / Pope Leo XIV

2 Address of His Holiness Pope Francis "The Common Good in the Digital Age" / Pope Francis

3 AI Principles and Priorities Letter (June 9, 2025) / United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

4 COMECE Statement on the EU Artificial Intelligence Act / Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union

5 Message of the Holy Father to participants in the Second Annual Conference on Artificial Intelligence, Ethics, and Corporate Governance [Rome, 19–20 June 2025] (17 June 2025) /...

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Could you elaborate on the ethical implications of AI for the common good?



AI and the Common Good: Catholic Ethical Implications

1. What the Church Means by the Common Good

The common good is “the sum of conditions which allow the whole person and the whole society to flourish” (Catechism 1920). It is rooted in **human dignity**, **solidarity**, and **subsidiarity** and calls every social arrangement to serve the integral development of every person and the whole of creation.

2. Core Moral Principles the Magisterium Applies to AI

Principle	Magisterial Source	How It Shapes the Evaluation of AI
Human Dignity – every person is an image-bearing, irreplaceable person.	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (footnote) – “the intrinsic dignity of every man and woman” ¹	AI must never treat people as mere data or replace the human person; it must protect privacy, consent, and the integrity of body-soul unity.

Principle	Magisterial Source	How It Shapes the Evaluation of AI
Freedom & Moral Agency – authentic decision-making belongs to the human person.	Pope Francis, G7 Session on AI (2024) – “decision-making belongs to the human person” ⁽²⁾	Systems that remove human judgment (e.g., fully autonomous lethal weapons) are morally illicit; a “human-in-the-loop” is required.
Truth & Transparency – the Church warns of a “crisis of truth” caused by misinformation.	USCCB <i>AI Principles and Priorities</i> (June 9 2025) – “protect the common good of truth” ⁽³⁾	AI must be explainable, auditable, and designed to combat deep-fakes and bias.
Solidarity & Preferential Option for the Poor – the needs of the most vulnerable must shape policy.	<i>Laudato si’</i> (cited in COMECE) – “the cry of the poor” ⁽⁴⁾	AI applications should reduce inequality (e.g., equitable access to health-care, education) rather than widen the digital divide.
Subsidiarity – decisions should be taken at the most local level possible, with higher authority providing guidance.	<i>Antiqua et Nova</i> (note) – “principle of subsidiarity” ⁽¹⁾	Regulation should empower local communities and churches to shape AI use while respecting universal norms.
Integral Ecology – care for creation is part of the common good.	Pope Leo XIV, Jubilee of Governments (2025) – “AI must not jeopardize the environment” ⁽⁵⁾	Energy-intensive AI must be developed responsibly, with attention to e-waste and carbon footprints.

3. Specific Areas Where AI Impacts the Common Good

Domain	Ethical Implications	Magisterial Guidance
Family Life	AI can mediate communication, support parenting, but also risk isolation or surveillance.	<i>AI Principles Letter</i> urges “protecting the family as the domestic church” and warns against technologies that undermine marital intimacy ⁽³⁾ .
Work & Labor	Automation can increase productivity but may displace workers.	The USCCB stresses “preserving dignified work and guaranteeing

Domain	Ethical Implications	Magisterial Guidance
	workers, threatening the dignity of work.	just transition for displaced workers" ³ ; <i>Antiqua et Nova</i> calls for AI that augments rather than replaces human labour ¹ .
Health Care	AI-driven diagnostics, tele-medicine, and drug discovery can improve access, especially for the poor.	Pope Francis' G7 address calls AI a "tool for greater knowledge of truth" when applied to health, provided consent and privacy are respected ² .
Education	Personalized learning can reduce barriers, yet algorithmic bias may reinforce inequities.	The Latin-American pastoral introduction stresses "inclusive digital education that respects each person's vocation" ⁶ .
Political Participation & Governance	AI can enhance democratic deliberation (e-participation) but also enable manipulation (deep-fakes, micro-targeting).	<i>Common Good in the Digital Age</i> warns that "digital tools must serve truth and the common good, not the interests of a few" ⁷ ; COMECE demands transparency and accountability in public-sector AI ⁴ .
Security & Public Safety	Predictive policing may improve safety but risks profiling and loss of liberty.	The Magisterium calls for human oversight and respect for fundamental rights , rejecting any system that treats people as "statistics" rather than persons ² ³ .
Environmental Stewardship	Data-centres consume massive energy; AI-driven resource optimisation can mitigate climate change.	<i>Laudato si'</i> (cited by COMECE) requires "technologies that protect creation"; the Jubilee message stresses that AI must be "energy-efficient and ecologically responsible" ⁵ .

Domain	Ethical Implications	Magisterial Guidance
Warfare	Lethal autonomous weapons remove human conscience from life-and-death decisions.	The USCCB explicitly prohibits “fully autonomous lethal weapons” and demands human control (cf. <i>Fratelli tutti</i> 258, reflected in the AI Principles) ⁽³⁾ .

4. How the Magisterium Proposes to Align AI with the Common Good

1. Formulate Ethical Norms at the Global Level

- The Pope's call for an **international treaty** on AI (reiterated in the COMECE statement) seeks a universal baseline that guarantees human dignity and the common good across borders ⁽⁴⁾.

2. Promote a “Human-Centred” Design Paradigm

- AI developers are urged to embed **transparency, accountability, inclusion, reliability, security, and privacy** as core design criteria (COMECE checklist) ⁽⁴⁾.

3. Encourage Public-Sector Oversight

- Governments should adopt **risk-assessment procedures**, enforce **human-in-the-loop** requirements, and create **independent ethics boards** that include theologians and lay faithful (as suggested in the *AI Principles Letter*) ⁽³⁾.

4. Foster Dialogue Between Church, Science, and Industry

- The **Minerva Dialogues** and the G7 AI session demonstrate the Church's willingness to listen and to offer theological insight, ensuring that policy is not shaped in a vacuum ⁽⁸⁾.

5. Educate the Faithful and Form Conscience

- Pastoral documents (e.g., *La Inteligencia Artificial: Una mirada pastoral desde América Latina y el Caribe*) provide catechesis on responsible digital citizenship, helping the laity to demand policies that serve the common good ⁽⁶⁾.

6. Apply the Principle of the Preferential Option for the Poor

- AI projects that **increase access to health, education, and economic opportunity** for marginalized groups are explicitly endorsed, while those that exacerbate the “digital divide” are condemned (USCCB letter)³.

5. Summary

The Magisterium views AI **not as an autonomous moral agent** but as a **human-made instrument** whose ethical value is measured by how well it serves the **common good**. By grounding AI policy in the Church’s perennial principles—**human dignity, freedom, truth, solidarity, subsidiarity, and integral ecology**—the Church offers a comprehensive moral compass:

- Protect the person:** privacy, consent, and the irreplaceable unity of body and soul.
- Preserve human freedom:** keep decision-making in human hands, especially in life-and-death contexts.
- Promote truth:** demand transparency, combat misinformation, and ensure algorithmic explainability.
- Advance solidarity:** design AI that reduces inequality, serves the poor, and respects the environment.
- Observe subsidiarity:** empower local churches and communities to shape AI use while adhering to universal norms.

When these criteria are faithfully applied, AI can become a **genuine instrument of the common good**, fostering a more just, truthful, and caring society in line with the Gospel.

References

1 Laudato Si 17 / Pope Francis

2 Three Pathways into the Theological Mind of Pope Francis 1 / Keith Lemna, David H. Delaney

3 Letter 11 6 / Athanasius of Alexandria

4 Homily 31 on Romans / John Chrysostom

- 5 Laudato Si 63 / Pope Francis
- 6 Laudato Si 101 / Pope Francis
- 7 Poems 32 / John of the Cross
- 8 Laudato Si 43 / Pope Francis

B

What does the Catechism say about technology’s role in the common good?



The Catechism’s Teaching on Technology and the Common Good

Catechism passage	What it says about technology	How it relates to the common good
CCC 2293 – <i>Basic scientific research</i>	Science and technology are “precious resources when placed at the service of man” and must be ordered to the person, whose moral values give them purpose and limits ¹ .	When technology is used for the benefit of the human person , it becomes a means of promoting the common good.
CCC 2294 – <i>Respect for the Dignity of Persons</i>	“It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research... Science and technology ... must be at the service of the human person, of his in-alienable rights and of his true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and the will of God” ² .	A technology that respects human dignity contributes to the integral development of every individual and therefore to the common good.
CCC 1926 – <i>In brief</i> (Human dignity)	“The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good. Everyone should be concerned to create and support institutions that improve the conditions of human life.” ³ .	Technology, as a tool of human activity, must be directed toward institutions and projects that improve human conditions .

Catechism passage	What it says about technology	How it relates to the common good
CCC 1924 – <i>In brief</i> (Definition of the common good)	"The common good comprises 'the sum total of social conditions which allow people, either as groups or as individuals, to reach their fulfillment more fully and more easily'" ⁴ .	When technology expands those conditions—e.g., by providing health care, education, or sustainable energy—it advances the common good .
CCC 1906 – <i>The Common Good</i>	The common good "concerns the life of all... It calls for prudence... and consists of three essential elements" (the passage continues with justice, peace, and charity) ⁵ .	Technology must be employed prudently , respecting justice, peace, and charity, so that its benefits are shared by all.
CCC 2405 – <i>Universal Destination & Private Ownership</i>	Goods of production (including know-how, technology and skill) "oblige their possessors to employ them in ways that will benefit the greatest number" ⁶ .	Owners of technological knowledge are morally obliged to share its fruits for the welfare of the wider community.
CCC 2494-2498 – <i>The Use of the Social-Communications Media</i>	The media (and by extension digital technology) must convey truth , promote solidarity , respect justice , and avoid manipulation; civil authorities must safeguard a "true and just freedom of information" ⁷ .	Digital technologies must be used honestly and responsibly , fostering an informed public that can participate fully in the common good.

Key Points Summarized

1. Technology is a means, not an end.

The Catechism repeatedly stresses that scientific and technical advances must be **ordered to the human person** and cannot be morally neutral ¹ ² .

2. Human dignity is the benchmark.

Any technological application that compromises the inalienable rights or integral good of a person is contrary to Church teaching ² .

3. The common good is the ultimate goal.

The “sum total of social conditions” that allow full human flourishing (CCC 1924) is the yardstick by which we judge technology⁴. When tech expands health, education, environmental stewardship, or social participation, it **realizes the common good**³ ⁶.

4. Solidarity and justice must shape deployment.

The Catechism calls for technologies that foster **charity, solidarity, and justice**, avoiding the creation of new inequalities or the manipulation of truth⁵ ⁷.

5. Responsibility of owners and creators.

Those who possess “know-how, technology and skill” have a moral duty to **share** their benefits for the greatest number⁶.

Practical Implications

- **Design & Regulation:** AI, robotics, and digital platforms should be built with built-in safeguards for privacy, transparency, and human oversight, reflecting the dignity-centered approach of CCC 2293-2294.
- **Access & Distribution:** Policies that promote universal access to broadband, tele-medicine, and renewable-energy technologies embody the universal destination of goods (CCC 2405).
- **Public Discourse:** Media-related technologies must prioritize truthful information and avoid disinformation, in line with CCC 2494-2498.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Technological solutions to climate change are encouraged, provided they respect creation and serve the integral good of all peoples (cf. the broader Catholic social teaching on ecology).

In short, the Catechism teaches that technology, when oriented toward human dignity, truth, solidarity, and the universal destination of goods, becomes a powerful instrument for the common good; when it is used otherwise, it is morally unacceptable.

References

1 CCC 2294

2 CCC 2498

3 CCC 2293

4 CCC 1926

5 CCC 1924

6 CCC 2512

7 CCC 1906