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In *Magnifica Humanitas*, Pope Leo calls for disarming of AI amidst over reliance

VATICAN (CNS): “Humanity, created by God in all its grandeur, is today facing a pivotal choice: either to construct a new Tower of Babel or to build the city in which God and humanity dwell together,” Pope Leo XIV wrote at the start of *Magnifica Humanitas* [Magnificent Humanity], the first encyclical of his pontificate.

Presenting the new document, Pope Leo warned that artificial intelligence must be “disarmed,” urging governments, tech leaders and society to confront the rapidly growing technology before it weakens human relationships, critical thinking and peace itself.

With its authoritative teaching, the 82-page encyclical significantly boosts the Catholic Church’s position as an active voice in discussions over artificial intelligence, autonomous weapons, labour, human dignity and the concentration of technological power among a handful of corporations.

“Peace—not merely the absence of war—is justice at work,” Pope Leo said during the May 25 presentation unveiling the document in the Vatican’s Synod Hall to an audience filled with members of the Roman Curia, reporters and special guests. “But when technology weakens our critical sense, peace itself is at risk.”

The pope said he wrote the encyclical after hearing from scientists, engineers, political leaders, parents and teachers about the promises and dangers posed by artificial intelligence. While some were enthusiastic about the technology, he said others expressed fears over future generations and increasingly autonomous weapons systems.

While he acknowledged the benefits of AI, Pope Leo was clear in saying more scrutiny needs to be applied to this developing technology.

“Artificial intelligence needs to be disarmed,” the pope said. “The word is strong, I know, but deliberately chosen because this



Copies of *Magnifica Humanitas* at the Vatican’s Synod Hall on May 25. Photo: OSV News/Simone Risoluti, Vatican Media

moment needs words capable of attracting attention, awakening consciences and indicating paths forward for humanity.”

Pope Leo has frequently cautioned against the unchecked development of AI since the beginning of his pontificate, warning that the technology risks weakening human discernment, distorting reality and replacing authentic relationships with simulations of human interaction.

Anchoring his address on the Church’s annual World Communications Day theme, the pope said artificial intelligence is increasingly simulating “human voices and faces,” while raising deeper questions surrounding consciousness, responsibility, friendship and truth.

“We do not possess technical answers, nor do we seek to displace those with expertise,” the pope said in his presentation. “But we bring a wisdom concerning the human that our present time desperately needs: every person is unique and irreplaceable.”

The Holy See’s engagement with major technology companies dates back nearly a decade through conversations known as the “Minerva Dialogues,” which brought together Church leaders and executives from Silicon Valley firms, including Google and LinkedIn.

That’s one of the reasons why one of the most anticipated speak-

ers at the presentation was Chris Olah, co-founder of the artificial intelligence research company Anthropic, who praised the pope’s willingness to engage the industry directly.

Olah acknowledged that computer scientists alone cannot determine the ethical boundaries of AI because developers themselves are influenced by “incentives” such as ambition, competition and financial pressure.

‘...when technology weakens our critical sense, peace itself is at risk’

“We need informed critics who will tell the labs when we are failing,” Olah said. “We need moral voices that the incentives cannot bend.”

He said the Church could help shape discussions surrounding the equitable distribution of AI’s economic benefits, the impact of the technology on children and employment, and broader questions about human flourishing.

Olah also described aspects of advanced AI systems as “mysterious, even unsettling,” saying researchers continue to discover behaviours within models they do not fully understand.

Others speaking at the pres-



Anna Rowlands, left, and Christopher Olah, right. Photo: CNS/Lola Gomez

entation highlighted themes throughout the encyclical, including economic inequality, labour exploitation and the concentration of technological power.

Anna Rowlands, professor of political theology and Catholic social doctrine at Durham University in England, was another speaker on the panel with the pope. She said the encyclical “brings the vision of the gospel to bear on the cultures of AI.”

She said the document challenges the idea that artificial intelligence itself can “save” humanity while questioning whether too much influence over modern life is being placed in the hands of a small number of technology companies.

“In the interests of the common good, how can we resist such distorting concentrations of power in the hands of the few?” Rowlands asked.

Leocadie Lushombo, another panellist and professor of theological ethics at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University, pointed to the encyclical’s criticism of extractive mining industries in the Global South that supply minerals used in AI infrastructure and data centres.

“Yes, AI can very easily be colonial,” Lushombo said. “It is more likely to do much to further violate the rights of the Global South.”

Michael Cardinal Czerny, prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Devel-

opment, said the pace of this new technology is unparalleled, while the stakes are deeper, concerning “the very nature of human coexistence.”

He went on to say that the most original contribution the Christian faith brings to the discussion on AI is the “conviction that human beings always transcend the sum of their achievements, their data profiles and any possible technical simulation, because they are called to a fullness of life that finds its truth in relationship and its fulfillment in a constant and sincere gift of oneself.”

Víctor Manuel Cardinal Fernández, prefect of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, said the document insists humanity must not lose sight of its own dignity despite technological advancement.

“For every human being possesses infinite dignity and never loses that sublime capacity for love which God bestowed upon humanity when He created us,” Cardinal Fernández said.

He also emphasised one of the encyclical’s central arguments: that artificial intelligence cannot replicate humanity’s capacity to suffer, grow and love.

Pope Leo’s encyclical states that humanity carries within itself “the lessons that are etched like scars, a memory of the journey taken between freedom and falls, dreams and disappointments,” he said.

Cardinal seeks the Spirit's guidance for Vatican-China relations

HONG KONG (SE): During a Mass to pray for the Church in China at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on Caine Road, on May 24, Pentecost Sunday, Cardinal Stephen Chow S.J. urged Catholic communities to pursue the courage to overcome fear and to seek mutual understanding and forgiveness through the Holy Spirit. He also reminded those present of recent progress in Vatican-China episcopal appointments, crediting improved mutual understanding.

In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI designated May 24, the feast of Mary Help of Christians, as the World Day of Prayer for the Church in China. As the feast coincided with Pentecost Sunday this year, Cardinal Stephen began the service by inviting the congregation to pray for the Church in China on this special feast day, which marks the Church's birthday and renewal by the Holy Spirit.

The Mass was concelebrated by John Cardinal Tong Hon, bishop emeritus of Hong Kong, Auxiliary Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing, and Monsignor Jose Luis Diaz-Mariblanca Sanchez, the head of the Holy See Study Mission, alongside more than 10 other priests. The service was co-organised by the Diocesan Litur-



The Mass ended with a benediction led by the cardinal and prayer for the Holy Spirit to purify the heart of those present.

gical Commission and the Holy Spirit Study Centre.

The 'invisible cage' of fear

In his Chinese homily, Cardinal Stephen addressed the psychological pressures facing the faithful today. He described an "invisible cage" built from fear, which often leaves Christians hesitant to speak out or act on their faith.

However, the cardinal offered

a message of hope, comparing the Holy Spirit to a fire that can transform anxiety into genuine courage. He warned that such power could sometimes be misused, turning religion into an aggressive, divisive ideology.

"Our Christian faith should bring us peace from the Risen Lord, and to understand and forgive one another more deeply," Cardinal Stephen said. "What do we gain from mutual under-

standing and forgiveness? We gain freedom—a true, authentic freedom."

Progress in episcopal appointments

Specifically addressing the provisional agreement on the appointment of bishops between the Holy See and Beijing, Cardinal Stephen emphasised that building trust requires open and respectful dialogue between religious groups and the government.

Reflecting on the agreement, which began in October 2018, the cardinal admitted that progress has been slow. Between 2018 and 2023, only six bishops were appointed. During this period, the Chinese government appointed two unofficial bishops as auxiliary bishops for the official Church. However, many dioceses are still waiting for a bishop.

"The provisional agreement has not achieved very ideal results," Cardinal Stephen noted, "but it can be said that mutual understanding between both sides is increasing. Combined with frequent cooperation, experience, and mutual adaptation between the two places, efficien-

cy has already shown signs of improvement." He highlighted a major shift in recent years, as between 2024 and 2025, 10 bishops have been appointed or recognised.

Despite the progress, the cardinal reminded the faithful that many dioceses are still waiting for leaders and that much work remains.

In January 2024, breaking years of stagnation, three new bishops were consecrated in Shandong, Henan, and Fujian. Notably, in August 2024, the Chinese government officially recognised the 90-year-old Bishop Melchior Shi Hongzhen of the unofficial community in Tianjin.

Forgiveness and the common good

In his English homily, Cardinal Stephen focused on how the Holy Spirit brings truth, unity, and the freedom that comes from forgiveness. He touched upon the difficult nature of reconciliation, acknowledging that many are not yet ready to forgive. Crucially, he urged the community not to judge others or try to decide who is truly repentant, stating that judgment belongs to God alone.

The cardinal ended his homily by asking for continued prayers for the Church in China. "Let us pray that the Catholic Church in China as a whole will endeavour to obtain an authentic understanding of the Christian faith and in driving for Christian communion that brings hope to our people," he said.

For the ongoing talks between the Vatican and Beijing, he prayed that the Holy Spirit would guide both sides through their complex collaboration.

"Let us also pray for the efforts made by the Holy See and the Chinese government for the Church in China. That the Holy Spirit would guide them closely along the arduous process of collaboration for the greater and common good of our country," he concluded.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CEMETERIES IN HONG KONG

NOTICE OF EXHUMATION AND RELOCATION OF HUMAN REMAINS BURIED IN THE YEAR 2016, EXHUMABLE BURIAL LOTS (ONE EXTENDABLE TERM ONLY) (10 YEARS)

Pursuant to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, cap. 132, notice is hereby given that a General Exhumation of human remains buried in the exhumable burial lots (one extendable term only) (10 years) in the Roman Catholic Cemeteries in Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016, both dates inclusive, will be carried out six months from the date of this publication for the following graves:

Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Cape Collinson, Chai Wan

Grave Nos. from 19722 to 20138 inclusive

St Raphael's Catholic Cemetery, Cheung Sha Wan

Grave Nos. from 8139D to 9043D inclusive

Sai Kung Catholic Cemetery, Sai Kung

Grave Nos. from 818 to 876 inclusive

Cheung Chau Catholic Cemetery, Cheung Chau

Grave Nos. from 306 to 309 inclusive

The aforementioned General Exhumation will commence on 2 January 2027. This exhumation does not affect the permanent burial lots and the extended exhumable burial lots (one extendable term only) for which dues have already been fully settled.

Persons who intend to have a private exhumation of these graves should apply to the respective cemetery office within six months from the date of this publication, for a permit of exhumation and relocation. Unclaimed human remains will be relocated to the designated depository in the same cemetery.

YU CHEUK MAN

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A passage of fortitude for graduating students



HONG KONG (SE): Pride, resilience, and a sense of achievement filled the air as Daughters of Mary Help of Christians Siu Ming Catholic Secondary School in Kwai Chung marked the graduation of the Class of 2026 on May 23. The event marked the end of a challenging secondary journey for 107 graduates, whose years of hard work and perseverance reached their peak in a lively ceremony witnessed by families, faculty, and special guests.

The ceremony opened with a formal procession of distinguished guests, among them Professor Amy Lee Wai-sum, director of Student Affairs at Hong Kong Baptist University; Sister Kenny Luk Kum-lee, provincial of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians; Chan Wing-king, Independent Manager; Dr. Chan Yee, parent manager and Parent-Teacher Association chairperson; Ms. Chau Po-shan, alternate parent manager and vice-chair; and Ms. Michelle Tang Wing-yan, chair of the Past-pupils Association.

Graduates in black and blue gowns entered the hall, greeted by the proud gazes of their parents. Sister Luk began with a prayer, reminding all that graduation is not only about academic results, but also about spreading joy, inspiring others, and building a just and peaceful world.

The principal, Leung Pui-shan, commended the graduates for their resilience, recalling that their secondary journey began during the pandemic. “Our grad-

uates embody resilience and spirit. They are ready to carry these values into the wider world,” she said, echoing the school’s motto. Leung encouraged them to show love, care, and concern for others, and to make gratitude a life-long habit.

Guest speaker, Professor Amy Lee Wai-sum emphasised that care for community, family, and oneself is essential. “Care is not what you feel but what you do next,” she said, stressing that compassion in all aspects of life promotes resilience and strengthens society.

Valedictorian, Mandy Ng Yee Ching reflected on joining secondary school as part of the “pandemic class,” adapting to online lessons and learning perseverance through isolation

In addition to numerous external awards, internal recognitions, and scholarships, the students demonstrated remarkable engagement across all areas of achievement. Some of the notable prizes included:

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Striding On Scholarship – Jasmine Ng Wai-lam [2025 graduate]; The Association of Head of Secondary Schools of Tsuen Wan, Kwai Chun & Tsing Yi District’s Tsuen Kwai Tsing Outstanding Student Award – Venus Li Wing-sum [5D]; Link REIT’s Link 20th Anniversary Outstanding Students Scholarship – Evelyn Liu Hei-yau [5C]; Joint School Music Association’s Gold Award for the Joint School Music Competition 2026, Chinese Ensemble – Chinese Orchestra; The Hong Kong Virtuoso Chorus’s Gold Award in the Hong



Kong Inter-school Choral Festival 2026 Competition cum Masterclass – School Choir.

Extreme left, the Handchimes Team gives a performance, left, Mandy Ng, the valedictorian, gives the Vote of Thanks speech.

Photos supplied

Valedictorian, Mandy Ng Yee Ching reflected on joining secondary school as part of the “pandemic class,” adapting to online lessons and learning perseverance through isolation. She recalled the transition back to face-to-face learning and building memories in lessons, at Sports Day, Talent Quests, and school picnics. She thanked teachers and parents for their support, and

said the graduates would move forward with courage, compassion, and integrity.

The ceremony also included musical performances, with the Handchimes Team playing *Echoes of the Heart*, and the school choir delivering moving renditions of *Tread Softly* and the Chinese song *Before We Grow Up*.

The Class of 2026 leaves with more than academic success—they carry the values of their Catholic education, equipped to become beacons of hope and leadership in a changing world.

As the ceremony concluded, hope and promise lingered—a reminder that education is a life-long journey.

Reflections from the vicar general

By Bishop Joseph Ha Chi-shing OFM

More than just an exhibition

As I write this, the diocesan historical exhibition is underway. I hope that the faithful will seize this rare opportunity to visit Saint Francis University and experience this 23-day event, launched to celebrate the 80th anniversary of the establishment of our diocese.

It is more than just an exhibition, because I am one of its protagonists too. On the one hand, like any other history-themed exhibition, it uses a chronological timeline to present the development of the diocese across its faith communities, educational endeavours, and social welfare services. Complemented by photographs, documents, and artefacts, it allows visitors to easily grasp this evolution.

On the other hand, being a member of this diocese, seeing how the light of faith arrived in Hong Kong, took root, grew, and intertwined with our society’s history truly stirs my heart. I see how generations of our predecessors have protected and built this diocese.

This tells the story of the community to which I belong—the history of my home. Therefore, it is not merely a display of historical data but a journey that brings the past into the present, allowing individuals to immerse themselves in the collective whole.

It is more than just an exhibition; it is the fruit of the sincere cooperation and painstaking efforts of numerous brothers and sisters. For an exhibition, finding a venue comes first. Organisations with suitable spaces that are also willing to lend them are few. Thus, I am deeply grateful for the generosity of Saint Francis University. Not only that, their staff members have been incredibly cooperative, responding to every request.

Once the venue was secured, preparation began immediately. However, we were less than six months away from the scheduled opening date, with two major holiday periods—Lunar New Year and Easter—sandwiched in between. Consequently, it feels like a true miracle that the exhibition could ultimately launch on schedule. This is undoubtedly God’s blessing, made possible only by the uncompromising dedication of many co-workers from the Liturgy Commission, the Catholic Education Office, and Caritas Hong Kong.

Furthermore, the more than 110 volunteer brothers and sisters are like angels sent by God, making me marvel at his handiwork from the bottom of my heart! If the diocese developed in the past through the co-operation of various religious orders, missionary societies from around the world, and local believers, is it not exactly the same today?

It is more than just an exhibition, because it does not simply tell the story of “what the diocese has done,” but also invites visitors to reflect on “how we can carry the torch.” In its final section, the exhibition features both physical and digital message boards for brothers and sisters to write down their personal reflections on the exhibition, their visions for the future of the diocese, and how they can contribute their own efforts towards building up the diocese and serving their parishes.

In this way, historical narrative expands into collective engagement, and personal imagination is placed into a futuristic puzzle shared with other believers. Visitors are no longer just spectators, but participants. While reviewing the 80-year history since the formal establishment of the diocese, this exhibition aims to awaken us to march toward the future hand-in-hand with all our brothers and sisters, co-creating many more 80-year milestones for the diocese ahead.

Come, let us be the messengers of hope!



ENGLISH LESSONS

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A Palestinian woman cooks in Jabalia, the northern Gaza Strip, amid the rubble of residential buildings destroyed during the Israel-Hamas war. Photo: OSV News/Mahmoud Issa, Reuters

Pope Leo renews calls for humanitarian help for people of Gaza

(VATICAN NEWS AND OSV NEWS): Speaking to journalists outside his residence in Castel Gandolfo on the evening of May 26, Pope Leo XIV again called on the international community to assist the people of Gaza.

“We must renew our appeal for the respect of the human rights” of every person, Pope Leo said in response to a question about activists involved in the Gaza-bound Global Sumud Flotilla, following reports that some had been handcuffed and blindfolded on May 19 when Israeli forces intercepted them attempting to challenge Israel’s naval blockade of Gaza.

The flotilla is an international, grassroots maritime movement formed to break the 241 kilometre Israeli blockade of the Gaza Strip, in place since January 2009, and deliver what organisers say is urgently needed humanitarian aid. “Sumud” is Arabic for “steadfastness” or “resilience.” *The Associated Press* said the flotilla was carrying “a symbolic amount of humanitarian aid.”

Pope Leo lamented the continued suffering of civilians in Gaza, noting that “unfortunately, the people of Gaza are still not receiving humanitarian aid.”

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “nearly all of Gaza’s current population of 2.1 million people has been displaced, lacking access to sufficient shelter, food, lifesaving medical services.”

The pope noted that this situ-

ation “is provoking protests,” like the flotilla.

“I would also like to renew this not only as an invitation, but truly as an appeal,” he continued, urging “all authorities to assist and accompany the people of Gaza, and to help begin reconstruction.”

“The people are truly suffering,” the pope said.

Commenting on the mistreatment of the flotilla activists, described by flotilla organisers as “unarmed civilians conducting peaceful, humanitarian missions,” Pope Leo warned of the danger of fuelling further hatred.

“We are provoking more and more hatred,” he said, adding that “violence does not help. From any side.”

AP reported both the activists’ claims that they were beaten and tasered by Israeli soldiers and a statement from a spokesperson for the Israeli Prison Service that the allegations were “false and entirely without factual basis.”

The pope stressed the need “to return to negotiations” and “seek, through dialogue, to resolve problems,” always “respecting the human rights of everyone.”

He also commented on the growing role of artificial intelligence in modern warfare, warning against technologies that distance decision-making from the value of human life.

In his encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, released on May 25, Pope Leo called for “the most rigorous ethical constraints” on the use of AI in warfare, as weapon-

ry itself evolves with deadly efficiency.

In Castel Gandolfo, referring to recent conflicts, including in Lebanon, the pope noted that today “war is being waged with AI, without thinking about human lives, [who] are truly victims of all this.” He renewed his appeal for peace and spoke of the need to pursue what he described as a “disarmed artificial intelligence.”

Addressing how the Vatican intends to continue engaging with major AI companies after the release of the encyclical, the pope said that dialogue is already in progress.

He described the ongoing collaboration between the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development and the AI company Anthropic. “There was a kind of joint work,” he explained, “and the invitation was expressed yesterday by both sides.”

Pope Leo said he thinks it “is very important to continue the dialogue and truly seek a disarmed artificial intelligence.”

The launch of the document featured Anthropic co-founder Christopher Olah among the speakers, and the pope thanked him for his presence at the presentation and “accepting our invitation in turn in the name of the Church.”

In his remarks, Olah said, “Today is just the beginning, the start of a long collaboration between those of us who are building this and those who can see what we, from inside, cannot.”

EDITORIAL

SUNDAY EXAMINER

31 MAY 2026

Cherishing life

MAY 31 IS the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Since 2017, the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong has marked this annual feast as the diocesan Day For Life, emphasising the call to respect human life and dignity. This year marks the 10th anniversary, and a thanksgiving Mass was held on May 29, dedicated to promoting this respect as the main message of the observance.

In 1995, Pope St. John Paul II promulgated the encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae* [The Gospel of Life], suggesting that each country select a day to be observed as a “Day for Life,” with the purpose “to foster in individual consciences, in families, in the Church and in civil society a recognition of the meaning and value of human life at every stage and in every condition” [*Evangelium Vitae* #85].

Meanwhile, a Mass was celebrated on May 23 specifically for those who had experienced induced or natural miscarriages. Following the Mass, the presiding priest led the participants in prayer and the offering of flowers before the statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe, who was chosen because the Virgin Mary appeared in Mexico as an ordinary pregnant mother in 1531.

She wore a long dress and a bow, customary for pregnant women, carrying Jesus in her womb. At the time, human sacrifice, including infants, was common in Mexico. After her apparition, eight million converted to Catholicism in seven years, halting these practices. Thus, Our Lady of Guadalupe is venerated as the Patron Saint of Life.

The Virgin Mary’s conception of Jesus calls us to respect and uphold life. By respecting life, we receive it in turn. Upholding life means defending both the right to be born and the dignity God grants all people. When we fight discrimination and care for the poor, vulnerable, and marginalised in society, such as immigrants, refugees, the sick, those in rehabilitation, children, and the elderly, we already uphold life.

Life is sacred, a gift from God. It must be protected, defended, and served at every stage of life from conception to old age. Life must not be destroyed even in the face of illness and suffering. The Virgin Mary’s visit to her elderly and pregnant cousin, Elizabeth [Luke 1:39-56], to assist and care for her is a prime example of practising the Gospel of Life.

May we always remember “human life, as a gift of God, is sacred and inviolable.” [*Evangelium Vitae* #81]. Let us resolve to build a culture that respects and cherishes life. Let us show this respect concretely: volunteer in service, defend dignity in daily interactions, and support those in need. Guided by charity, together we can make a real difference in caring for the lives of every individual. SE



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Address all correspondence to the editor of the Sunday Examiner.

Somalia nearing the brink of humanitarian catastrophe

(OSV NEWS): Somalia is once again approaching the brink of catastrophe, agencies warn as the country is facing one of the world's most severe humanitarian crises.

International aid agencies, including Save the Children International and SOS Children's Villages International, warn that millions lack access to basic, life-saving services and urgently need sustained global support.

"Nearly 6.5 million people across Somalia are experiencing high levels of acute food insecurity, while more than 1.8 million children are suffering from acute malnutrition," the aid organisations said in a joint May 20 statement. "Among them, hundreds of thousands face severe acute malnutrition requiring urgent treatment."

These are not simply numbers, the organizations said, "they represent children going to bed hungry, families forced from their homes by repeated drought and conflict, and mothers struggling to make impossible trade-offs to keep their children alive."

The numbers correspond with the latest April-June data from the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification initiative—a standardised global framework used to classify, measure and communicate the magnitude of food insecurity and malnutrition.

Bishop Jamal Boulos Sleiman Daibes of Djibouti, who is also the apostolic administrator of Mogadishu, is calling for continued international attention and solidarity, pointing to the country's fragile and complex humanitarian reality.

"The humanitarian situation is indeed very serious," Bishop Daibes said, noting that the scale of the crisis is vast, driven by recurrent drought, displacement, food insecurity and climate shocks, while available resources remain insufficient. "For this reason, continued international solidarity and support remain essential."

Millions of people are without essential services such as health care and clean water, even as the Church—through Caritas Somalia and in collaboration with



An internally displaced Somali family prepares breakfast outside their makeshift shelter in Mogadishu on May 7.

Photo: OSV News/Feisal Omar, Reuters

humanitarian organisations and international partners—continues to respond.

"One can also observe the resilience and dignity of the Somali people, as well as ongoing efforts by local authorities and international partners to strengthen stability and promote recovery," the bishop said. "Nevertheless, the humanitarian needs remain immense and require sustained international attention and solidarity," Bishop Daibes said.

In a statement issued in late March, Caritas Somalia said that "women, children and the elderly, already hit, are bearing the brunt of this worsening crisis," and warned that 11 per cent of the needed donor funds had been received. "We call on donors to mobilise urgently needed funding to provide life-saving service to the most vulnerable, especially women and children," Caritas said.

Aid leaders say the crisis is deepening as economic pressures compound humanitarian needs.

Mohammed Abdi, Somalia country director for the Norwegian Refugee Council, said the country is absorbing a major economic shock alongside widespread hunger, with fuel prices rising by as much as 150 per cent and basic food staples increasing by 50 per cent since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

"Only 15 per cent of the humanitarian response is funded. We are

watching this deteriorate in real time, while the resources to stop it are not there," Abdi said.

The situation in Somalia was already tenuous when the Trump administration shuttered the US Agency for International Development in 2025, and the Iran war added to challenges of aid organisations.

"Somalia is heavily dependent on imports for food, fertiliser and fuel. With shipping effectively halted in the Strait of Hormuz, prices for those critical goods have roughly doubled. In scores of poor and unstable countries,

hunger is increasing as the cost of food rises," The New York Times reported, adding: "We're seeing the first real test of how a global shock like the war will play out in what one relief official described as 'the post-aid era.'"

Somalia's prolonged instability further complicates relief efforts. The country continues to face an insurgency by al-Shabab, an al-Qaida-affiliated group in East Africa, which has carried out attacks and enforces a strict interpretation of Islamic law in areas under its control.

Despite these challenges, the Church maintains a discreet but meaningful presence. Somalia is overwhelmingly Muslim [99.9 per cent] and Christian communities are small and largely concentrated in urban areas, often consisting of converts.

Much of the Church's physical infrastructure has been destroyed; the main cathedral in Mogadishu, built between 1925 and 1928 by the Consolata missionaries, has been in ruins since 2008 and its grounds have been used as a settlement for people displaced by decades of conflict.

Bishop Daibes said his ministry is carried out with prudence and discretion, but remains closely connected to the people

through humanitarian outreach and collaboration.

"Although direct presence in the country is not always possible, I remain in regular contact with the reality of Somalia, especially through Caritas Somalia, which represents the social and humanitarian service of the Church," the bishop said.

He added that the Church's presence is necessarily limited and respectful of local conditions, with ongoing contact maintained with clergy in Somaliland—a self-declared independent region in the north—and chaplains in Mogadishu.

"The Church's mission is carried out primarily through witness, humanitarian service, accompaniment, and the promotion of dialogue and human fraternity," Bishop Daibes explained.

Despite the scale of suffering, the bishop expressed cautious hope for Somalia's future, pointing to the importance of reconciliation, institution-building and investment in young people.

"Building lasting peace requires not only security measures, but also investment in opportunities for young people, social development, and the strengthening of trust and cooperation within society," he said.

ROMAN CATHOLIC CEMETERIES IN HONG KONG

NOTICE OF EXHUMATION AND RELOCATION OF HUMAN REMAINS BURIED IN THE YEAR 2010, EXHUMABLE BURIAL LOTS (ONE EXTENDABLE TERM ONLY) (16 YEARS)

Pursuant to the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, cap. 132, notice is hereby given that a General Exhumation of human remains buried in the exhumable burial lots (one extendable term only) (16 years) in the Roman Catholic Cemeteries in Hong Kong, Kowloon and New Territories from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010, both dates inclusive, will be carried out six months from the date of this publication for the following graves:

Holy Cross Catholic Cemetery, Cape Collinson, Chai Wan

Grave Nos. from 16923 to 17402 inclusive

St Raphael's Catholic Cemetery, Cheung Sha Wan

Grave Nos. from 3124D to 3905D inclusive

Sai Kung Catholic Cemetery, Sai Kung

Grave Nos. from 640 to 656 inclusive

Cheung Chau Catholic Cemetery, Cheung Chau

Grave Nos. from 273 to 277 inclusive

The aforementioned General Exhumation will commence on 2 January 2027. This exhumation does not affect the permanent burial lots.

Persons who intend to have a private exhumation of these graves should apply to the respective cemetery office within six months from the date of this publication, for a permit of exhumation and relocation. Unclaimed human remains will be relocated to the designated depository in the same cemetery.

YU CHEUK MAN

Superintendent of Catholic Cemeteries
CATHOLIC CEMETERIES HEAD OFFICE
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Philippine bishops promote networks of women nationwide



The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines Office on Women in Manila on May 22.

Photo: UCAN/Dennis Dayao/CBCP News

MANILA (UCAN): The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines [CBCP] launched its Office on Women at its headquarters with a Mass on May 22, to create a network of women in dioceses nationwide, aiming to ensure greater participation of women in the Church.

Bishop Isabelo Abarquez, who heads the office, said they established the network because many dioceses lack women's offices or have limited coordination with the conference.

Of the 84 dioceses in the country, only 14 have fully or partially established women's offices, according to data on May 25.

In other dioceses, similar ministries "are newly set up as separate offices or are temporarily included in other ministries also dealing with women," an official of the office said.

Women "have always carried a unique and indispensable role" in the Church and society, Bishop Abarquez said during the Mass noting that they face "painful realities" such as poverty, violence, and discrimination, he added.

"The future of our evangelisation requires the full participation of women," the 69-year-old bishop emphasised.

The Philippines is the highest-ranked Asian country in the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index 2025. It is ranked 20 globally, well ahead of Singapore [47], Mongolia [65], and Thailand [66].

Still, the status of Catholic women in the country "is a mixed bag," Stephanie Ann Puen,

...many cases of discrimination are 'often very subtle' and 'so ingrained'

a theologian from the Ateneo de Manila University, said on May 25.

"In some pockets, women are treated quite well," and "it's just really, really bad" in others, she elaborated, adding that many cases of discrimination are "often very subtle" and "so ingrained," she said.

She said some spaces in the Church are often perceived as "just spaces for women," and those spaces are often "seen as lower than other spaces in the Church," she added.

Puen said building the diocesan network for women "is a good approach."

However, the bigger questions concerned the kinds of women's roles the network would support and the resources allocated for the initiative.

Rafaela David, president of the activist group Akbayan, which advocates for women's empowerment, welcomed the initiative, saying it recognises "women's crucial contribution to the Church."

David noted, "It also sends a strong message to all Filipinos that women's voices must be heard and valued in all spaces and that empowering women is integral to the Church's mission of liberation."



The trunk of a large tree that was cut for a planned expressway in Manila.

Photo: UCA News/Elmer Valenzuela

Caritas Philippines calls Manila tree-cutting 'ecological violence'

MANILA (RVA NEWS): In a statement, Bishop Gerardo Alminaza, president of Caritas Philippines, condemned the mass cutting of decades-old trees along Quirino Avenue in Manila, and called on authorities to halt the activity immediately.

Bishop Alminaza criticised the removal of trees for infrastructure development, arguing it increases hardship for communities already facing extreme heat, polluted air, and flooding.

"The mass cutting of decades-old trees along Quirino Avenue is an act of ecological violence against the people of Manila," the bishop said.

Bishop Alminaza emphasised that the trees had served as protection for commuters and residents, providing shade and improving urban environmental conditions.

Caritas Philippines argued that development projects should not come at the expense of environmental protection and vulnerable communities.

"Why must 'development' always demand the sacrifice of

'The mass cutting of decades-old trees along Quirino Avenue is an act of ecological violence against the people of Manila'

the vulnerable?" the bishop asked, questioning urban planning approaches that prioritise vehicles and concrete infrastructure over people.

The tree removal has sparked public outcry, with reports suggesting hundreds of trees were affected by an infrastructure project linked to the Southern Access Link Expressway.

The social action organisation also cited *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis' encyclical on environmental stewardship, warning against what it described as a "throwaway culture" that treats nature and vulnerable populations as expendable.

"The climate crisis is a present, urgent and unquestionable

reality," Bishop Alminaza said. "Every mature tree destroyed is a moral failure."

Caritas Philippines called on public authorities and contractors to stop the tree-cutting, review infrastructure projects through the perspective of ecological justice and consult communities affected by environmental changes.

Government agencies and project proponents say that permits were secured and mitigation measures, including plans to plant 50,700 replacement seedlings, are part of the project.

According to recent updates, some replacement planting has begun, but residents and environmental groups remain sceptical about the long-term effectiveness.

However, critics maintain that legal compliance alone does not address wider concerns about ecological impact and urban environmental justice.

Caritas Philippines also urged the public to help protect remaining urban green spaces and demand accountability from leaders.

New anti-fake news decree for Vietnam

HANOI (ASIANEWS): Vietnam has issued Decree No. 174/2026, which imposes new administrative penalties for violations in postal services, telecommunications, e-transactions, and information technology.

Set to take effect on 1 July, the decree imposes fines up to US\$1,900 for spreading "fake news" on social media. The rules apply to organisations, businesses, and individuals alike.

Where there is no criminal liability, fines may be issued for content deemed by authorities to

cause public panic, disrupt the economy, hinder state agencies, or infringe on the rights of others.

The decree also covers state secrets, bans content distorting history, denying revolutionary achievements, undermining national unity, insulting religion, or promoting discrimination. Explicit violence is also targeted.

Authorities are empowered to demand the removal of false or illegal content and to suspend online accounts, pages, or channels that violate the law.

The rules also include intellec-

tual property protections, fines for distributing unauthorised materials, and penalties for publishing maps that misrepresent Vietnam's sovereignty.

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Franciscans say conflict in Papua driving fear and displacement



Jayawijaya Regency, Papua, Indonesia. Photo: Fadhil Abhimantra via Unsplash

(LICAS NEWS): The Franciscans in Papua, eastern Indonesia, condemned a drone blast near a church in the area, warning that escalating militarisation is worsening the suffering of Indigenous civilians and deepening fear among communities already displaced by violence.

A bomb exploded on May 17 in the courtyard of St. Paul's Catholic Church in Mbamogo village in Intan Jaya regency, Central Papua province, shortly after Sunday Mass, according to *Fides*.

Four Indigenous Papuans were injured in the explosion while worshippers were gathered outside the church compound.

"The recent drone attack on a Catholic church in Intan Jaya has claimed civilian lives and severely traumatized the local population," Father Alexandro Rangga, head of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Friars Minor of Indonesian Papua, said.

"As Friars Minor of the Justice and Peace Commission, we express our deep concern about the increasing violence against places of worship and unarmed residents," he said.

Eyewitnesses said a drone detonated the explosive device. The explosion triggered panic among residents, with hundreds of civilians reportedly fleeing into nearby forests.

The Indonesian military denied involvement in the incident, calling it a possible "provocation" aimed at creating chaos and heightening tensions between security forces and civilians. Police in Central Papua have launched an investigation.

'This situation shows that Papua is trapped in a cycle of suffering and has not yet found a path to true peace'

Father Yanuaris Yance Yogi, the parish priest, coordinated the evacuation of the injured and expressed concern over the safety of worshippers.

Tino Mote, president of the Catholic Youth of Central Papua, called for a transparent investigation and appealed to Indonesian president, Prabowo Subianto, to intervene "with serious peace measures."

The attack has shaken Catholics in the Diocese of Timika, where church leaders say civilians continue to bear the brunt of the decades long conflict in Papua's central highlands.

ua's central highlands.

"Shootings, security operations against civilians, the deaths of children, women, students, and members of indigenous communities, as well as the recent bombings near places of worship, have not only triggered a wave of refugees but have also caused deep wounds and pain," Father Rangga said.

"This situation shows that Papua is trapped in a cycle of suffering and has not yet found a path to true peace," he said, adding that the prolonged conflict has stripped many Indigenous Papuans of security and dignity.

The Franciscans also criticised the militarisation of civilian communities in Papua.

"The excessive presence of armed forces in civilian areas," Father Rangga said, "has so far caused trauma, fear, displacement, and new vulnerabilities for the communities."

Conflict in Papua has intensified in recent years as fighting continues between Indonesian security forces and armed separatist groups seeking independence or greater autonomy.

More than 105,000 internally displaced persons have been recorded since the beginning of 2026, most of them Indigenous Papuans forced to flee into forests amid military operations and recurring violence.



Father Gariguez. Photo: RVA News

Church-backed group urges renewable energy roadmap amid Philippine power crisis

MANILA (RVA NEWS): REnew Mindoro, a Church-backed renewable energy campaign in Mindoro, southwestern Philippines, has welcomed the provincial government's emergency response to the worsening power crisis while calling for long-term solutions centered on clean and sustainable energy.

Convened by the Diocesan Social Action Centre [DSAC] of the Diocese of Calapan and the Centre for Energy, Ecology, and Development [CEED], expressed support for the move by governor, Humerlito "Bonz" Dolor, to gather key energy stakeholders to address persistent rotational brownouts affecting the province.

In a statement released on May 20, Father Edwin Gariguez, DSAC executive director and lead convener of REnew Mindoro, said immediate interventions are necessary but stressed that renewable energy must become the foundation of Mindoro's future power system.

"We are grateful that the Governor took immediate action and brought the key players to the table," Father Gariguez said.

"The steps outlined, like reviewing contracts, coordinating fuel supply, and calling for conservation, are necessary, and we fully support them. We now ask that the provincial government take the next and more lasting step: a concrete renewable energy roadmap for Oriental Mindoro," he added.

The provincial government earlier confirmed that rolling brownouts may continue through May and June due to insufficient power supply and dependence on costly emergency power supply agreements.

During an emergency dialogue on May 18, the Oriental Mindoro Electric Cooperative [Ormeco] reported that dependable supply was only 56.5 megawatts against a peak demand of over 75 megawatts recorded on May 11.

The shortage was attributed to reduced hydroelectric generation caused by low water levels, delays

'We now ask that the provincial government take the next and more lasting step: a concrete renewable energy roadmap for Oriental Mindoro'

in independent power projects, fuel supply problems, and transmission limitations.

REnew Mindoro said the crisis highlights the vulnerability of relying heavily on hydroelectric power without developing a diversified renewable energy system combining solar, wind, and hydro sources.

"When a province depends heavily on hydro alone, a dry season becomes a crisis," the group said, noting that rooftop solar systems can generate more electricity during the hot summer months when hydro output declines.

The group also pointed to growing grassroots support for renewable energy in Mindoro.

During the REnew Mindoro Investment Summit held on April 30, seven parishes of the Diocese of Calapan signed solar energy contracts representing 200 kilowatt-peak of community-funded solar capacity.

Father Gariguez said the participation of parishes, cooperatives, farmers, fisherfolk, and Indigenous Peoples communities demonstrates that local communities are ready to embrace clean energy solutions.

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Your home can bear this kind of love

by John Singarayar SVD

There is a mother somewhere right now who has made breakfast, resolved an argument between two children before eight in the morning, driven someone to practice, and sat down at the end of the day feeling not satisfied but simply emptied. She loves her family without question. But love, when it runs entirely on willpower and routine, eventually starts to feel like a job she never applied for and cannot resign from.

That feeling is not a failure of character. It is what happens when love loses its source.

The Feast of the Sacred Heart arrives every June with a quiet insistence, and most families barely notice it. But this feast is not a liturgical formality for the devout. It is a direct address to every home where people are trying to love each other well and finding it harder than they expected. It asks a question that cuts through the noise of family life with uncomfortable precision: what is actually powering the love in this house?

What the image means for a home

Most Catholic families have the Sacred Heart somewhere—on a

wall, in a prayer card, in a grandmother's bedroom. Familiarity has made it easy to stop seeing. But look at it again, slowly.

The heart has been wounded. Pierced, and still open. It was not kept safe from what could hurt it. It went all the way into the worst that love can cost—betrayal, abandonment, rejection—and came out still burning.

That is the most honest description of what real family love looks like on its hardest days. The parent who keeps showing up for the child who keeps pulling away. The spouse who chooses tenderness after a fight when resentment would be so much easier. The teenager who apologises first, even when they were only half wrong. These are not small moments. They are the Sacred Heart made visible in a kitchen, a car, a conversation that almost went badly and didn't.

The image is not on the wall to be admired. It is there to be recognised.

The stop that changes everything

There is a moment in the parable of the Good Samaritan that most people read past too quickly. He does not feel moved and continue on his way, slightly saddened. He stops. Kneels in the road. Touch-



Detail of a painting depicting St. Catherine of Siena in adoration of the Sacred Heart, circa 1739, at the Church of Saint-Martin de Montchamp in Valdallière, Normandy, France. Photo: OSV News/Wikimedia Commons-cc 4.0

es the wound. Spends his own time and money. Comes back later.

The stop is the thing. Everything else follows from it, but nothing follows without it.

Family life is structured, often unintentionally, to prevent that stop. The schedule fills every gap. Screens absorb every silence. And slowly, without anyone deciding it, people who love each other begin to coexist rather than connect—moving through the same rooms, sharing the same meals, and somehow missing each other entirely.

The Sacred Heart interrupts this. It asks not how much the family accomplished this week but whether anyone stopped long enough for love to actually reach someone. Whether the child who went quiet was noticed. Whether the spouse who seemed fine was asked twice. Whether the parent on the other end of the phone was given enough time to say what they were really ringing to say.

The stop is chosen against the current, every time. But it is where the feast actually lives—not in the prayer card on the wall but in the moment someone puts the phone down and pays attention.

Say the hard thing

Every family has a conversation it has been avoiding. Not because the people involved do not love each other, but because love, when it has not been honest for a while, starts to feel safer when it stays on the surface.

The Sacred Heart has no patience for that arrangement. A devotion built around a God whose love was so exposed it could be physically pierced—and who stayed open anyway—cannot coexist with a family culture where honesty feels too risky and vulnerability gets met with silence.

Some homes are warm on the outside and defended on the inside. Everyone performs wellness at the dinner table. Nobody admits

The Sacred Heart has been pierced and kept loving. Rejected and kept burning. Ignored and remained open. It did not wait for the people it loved to deserve it

they are struggling because the last time someone did, it did not go well. Children learn early to manage their parents' emotions rather than express their own. Spouses maintain a careful distance that looks like stability and feels like loneliness.

That is not a Sacred Heart home. That is a managed one.

The feast asks someone to go first—to say the true thing, admit the real thing, and stay present to whatever that honesty opens up. That is not a therapeutic exercise. It is a spiritual one. It is what it looks like when a family decides to love the way the Sacred Heart loves: without the protection of pretence.

What children are actually learning

Children do not learn love from what their parents say about it. They learn it from what they watch their parents do with it—especially when it is costly, inconvenient, or unreturned.

A child who watches a parent choose patience when they had every right to anger is learning something no curriculum can teach. A child who sees their parents repair a rupture honestly—apologising, staying in the room, not letting it harden into distance—is being formed in a way that will shape every relationship they ever have. A child who grows up in a home where struggle can be named, where doubt is not dangerous, where love does not have

to be earned by performance—that child carries something into the world that is increasingly rare and desperately needed.

This is the reach of Sacred Heart devotion lived inside a family. It does not stay domestic. It goes with the children into their friendships, their future marriages, their own eventual homes. A family that loves honestly is not just healing itself. It is quietly changing everything it touches.

What the world is hungry for

Outside the family home, the world is harder and colder than it has been in a long time. Loneliness is epidemic. Trust is eroding. People are hungry not for more information or more entertainment but for evidence that genuine love is still possible—that it has not been replaced entirely by transaction, performance, and managed impression.

The Christian family is meant to be that evidence. Not a perfect family. Not one that has solved everything or never raises its voice. But a family that keeps choosing each other honestly—that repairs what breaks, stays when staying is hard, and makes room for the people nobody else is making room for.

That witness is more powerful than any argument. A heart, visible and open, in the middle of an ordinary life—that is what the Sacred Heart has always been asking families to become.

Still burning

The feast asks one thing. Not a new routine. Not a family rosary that nobody enjoys. Not a resolution that lasts until Thursday.

It asks whether the heart of Christ has actual room inside your home—whether it is changing the texture of your patience this week, the honesty of your conversations, the quality of attention you bring to the people you live with and sometimes take entirely for granted.

The Sacred Heart has been pierced and kept loving. Rejected and kept burning. Ignored and remained open. It did not wait for the people it loved to deserve it. It never protected itself at the expense of the person in front of it.

That is not a historical fact to be admired from a distance. It is a living invitation to every marriage, every parent, every child old enough to choose how they will love.

It does not ask your family to be extraordinary. It asks you to stay—present, honest, and open enough to let it change everything.

That is what love this honest costs. And what it makes possible, in a home brave enough to bear it.

Vietnamese Catholics abroad find community and mission through

MANILA (LICAS NEWS): Vietnamese Catholics living, studying, and working in the Philippines gathered in Manila on May 17 for a Marian celebration that highlighted faith, cultural identity, and solidarity among migrant communities far from home.

The gathering at the chapel of St. Paul University Manila brought together families, students, workers, and religious for traditional flower offerings to the Virgin Mary followed by a Mass for the Feast of the Ascension.

The event reflected the efforts of overseas Vietnamese Catholics to preserve their faith traditions while building community abroad.

Children opened the programme with dances dedicated to Mary, symbolising families striving to keep the faith alive overseas while remaining united in devotion to Our Lady of La Vang, patron of the Church in Vietnam.

Representatives of different sectors, including fathers, businesspeople, university students, and schoolchildren, later participated in candle and incense offerings that carried the prayers and struggles of migrants pursuing work and studies away from their families in Vietnam.

Religious sisters from the Congregation of Our Lady of Sorrows also performed a Marian dance honouring Vietnamese priests and religious studying and serving in the Philippines.

A Mass celebrating the Ascension followed. The faithful were reminded of the missionary calling of Christians, especially migrants living far from home, to witness to the gospel through lives rooted in love and service.

After the Mass, participants shared Vietnamese dishes and traditional food in a communal meal that strengthened ties among members of the overseas community.

Organisers said the gathering reflected the Church's 2026 pastoral theme, "Every Christian is a missionary disciple."

Notice Board



Connecting with God on a busy day

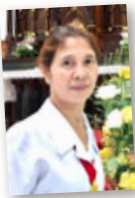
Even if we are busy, we should allocate time with God. We have a saying that if there is a will, there is a way, and I believe this applies to prayer too. I pray to God wholeheartedly during the time before sleeping—praising him, glorifying him, and thanking him for the gift of life, guidance, and protection. As long as we are sincere, humble, and praying from the heart, I believe God is listening, and that means we are truly connected.

— Marites Regalado Aranas



Every morning is a new blessing from God. When I wake up, I do my morning prayer before I leave my bed. As I prepare for my daily work routine, I ask God to help and guide me on what I should do first so I can finish as soon as possible, because I know so many tasks can be overwhelming. I believe nothing is impossible for God. Even when I'm very busy, I never forget to say short prayers of praise and thanksgiving. The more I'm busy doing things, the more I try to connect with God. Sometimes, when I feel tired, I sing a worship song and say a short prayer, and after that I feel better again—because God is my strength. I can do everything because of him, and he never leaves me.

— Rosemarie Ariola



When my day is busy, I close my eyes and give God a short time of praise. I pray my personal prayers for guidance and protection, and I also give thanks to God.

— Junamhe Royo Luna



I connect to God even in my busy schedule every day. To know him more, I wake up earlier to pray and study my Bible. Having alone time with God is very vital because it helps me seek his heart for the day and receive wisdom in every aspect of my life. Like breathing every day, spending time with God should also be a daily affair. During my time with God, I usually listen to worship music to saturate the environment with the presence of the Holy Spirit, read my Bible and devotionals, and pray for the things I dedicate to him—my family, friends, my Apostleship of Prayer community, my ministry, my priest and Church, and more. At night, I do my personal examination of conscience and pray the Holy Rosary.

— Irene Villamor Mariano



I can say that I am still connected to God even when I'm busy with my work. The first thing I do when I wake up is say my morning prayer immediately. While I work, I listen to worship music and online Mass, and before going to bed, I take time to pray and meditate. We don't need long prayers to talk to God—what matters most is sincerity. A short prayer prayed from the heart is more important than a long prayer that doesn't come from within.

— Rolina B. Dela Peña



For me, as an OFW and part of the Church, connecting to God in a busy day means integrating faith into daily life and shifting my conversations back to God even if it's not always a scheduled prayer time. God will still hear us in formal prayer and spiritual practices such as morning prayer, the Rosary, and worship songs. I start my day and I also end my day of work by thanking God for choosing us — even in our busiest days.

— Charmie Taytayan



Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

Matthew 11:28-30

Anger is a luxury

Working miles away from home, life is a constant battle against loneliness, exhaustion, and the silent sting of emotional pain. Whether it is a broken promise from back home, a painful misunderstanding with family over hard-earned remittances, or unfair treatment in a foreign workplace, resentment can easily take root in a lonely heart.

In these heavy moments, my faith becomes my ultimate anchor, and forgiveness becomes my survival.

Faith is not just a Sunday routine; it is the very oxygen that keeps us going. True faith demands forgiveness. Holding onto anger in a foreign land is a luxury I simply cannot afford. Bitterness consumes the emotional energy I drastically need to endure long shifts and stay strong for my family's future. When I choose to forgive those who have hurt or misunderstood me, I am not dismissing their actions. Instead, I am placing my burdens in God's hands, trusting his justice over my own grievances.

Forgiveness frees my soul from the heavy baggage of bitterness. It bridges the vast physical miles between me and my loved ones, healing fractured relationships across deep oceans and keeping our families united despite the distance.

By letting go of anger, I receive the ultimate grace—the profound peace of mind to keep smiling, keep sacrificing, and keep moving forward. Through faith and forgiveness, I find the strength to survive any hardship under God's protective care.

— Ella Torres



Pain is a blessing in disguise

Pain is the best strengthening, it is a feast of our weak being.

It is molding you.
It is washing you.
It cleans you.

Pain tends you to stream your tears, but it is washing your lens to see more brighter and clearer.

It is heaviness, carrying the world when you cry. But it is God's grace that you cannot deny.

Your life may be vague without experiencing turmoil.

Cry, see the world. But in losing, there's a triumph waiting ahead, the blessings...

When your heart is crying it isn't weakness but truthfulness of a soul.

When you sob, it means you have the feeling, you're human.

You are infinite, but you are alive. You are chosen.

Pain is just a false alarm, not to fool you, not to destroy you, but to save you in the abyss of harm.

At first, you can say that the pain is unfordable, but you didn't know the true meaning of it:



Helen A. Sarita

A corner for you

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YOUR DAILY MASS GUIDE

MAY 31 – TRINITY SUNDAY. Mass of the solemnity, *Gloria, Creed*, Preface for the solemnity (white). Readings: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18.

JUNE 1 – ST. JUSTIN. Mass of the memorial (red). Readings: 2 Peter 1:2-7; Mark 12:1-12.

JUNE 2 – TUESDAY: NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME. Mass of the day (green). Readings: 2 Peter 3:12-15a, 17-18; Mark 12:13-17.

JUNE 3 – SS. CHARLES LWANGA & COMPANIONS. Mass of the day (green). Readings: 2 Timothy 1:1-3, 6-12; Mark 12:18-27.

JUNE 4 – THURSDAY: NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME. Mass of the day (green). Readings: 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Mark 12:28b-34.

JUNE 5 – ST. BONIFACE. Mass of the memorial (red). Readings: 2 Timothy 3:10-17; Mark 12:35-37.

JUNE 6 – SATURDAY: NINTH WEEK IN ORDINARY TIME. Mass of the day (green). Readings: 2 Timothy 4:1-8; Mark 12:38-44.



Apostleship of Prayer

Themes for June 2026

For the values of sports

Let us pray that sports be an instrument of peace, encounter, and dialogue among cultures and nations, and that they promote values such as respect, solidarity, and personal growth.

Trinity Sunday

Just three densely packed verses constitute the gospel passage for today. They would be enough to correct any distorted image of God that may still be present in the minds of many Christians — that of the stern and inflexible judge — and to open our hearts to trust in his love.

“God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whoever believes in him may not be lost” (v.16). It can be considered the summit reached by the biblical revelation on the meaning of creation, life and human destiny.

John, who has seen with his own eyes and touched with his hands the word of life (1 John 1:1), arrives to say, “God is love” (1 John 4:8); love that manifested itself in the only begotten Son’s gift to the world.

He has not only given him in the incarnation; he delivered him into the hands of men on the Cross. There he has shown his true face, without any veil.

Paul shows that he understood

this miracle of love when, writing to the Romans, he says, “But see how God manifested his love for us, while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

In the face of this gift, what is required of man? One thing only: that he trusts, abandons himself in his arms—as does the bride with the groom—who hands herself to him, immense love, in the certainty of meeting life.

When we think of God who became one of us in Jesus of Nazareth, sometimes we make the mistake of considering this as an episode, a sad parenthesis of his existence. He came among us, remained a little more than 30 years, suffered and died on the Cross, then returned to heaven, far away, happy to have retaken the former state.

That is not so. Our God took on our human nature and remains

The God we believe in

forever one of us. He has not pulled himself out of our world. He is and remains always the Emmanuel, the God-with-us (Matthew 28:20).

In the Gospel of St. John, Jesus does not appear as a judge who condemns, but only as a saviour of persons. “God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world; instead, through him, the world is to be saved” (v.17). “For I have come, not to condemn the world, but to save the world” (John 12:47).

The third and final verse of today’s passage is read in this perspective. In it, the responsibility of each person in front of God’s love is highlighted. “Whoever believes in him will not be condemned. He who does not believe is already condemned” (v.18).

Today we are called to welcome

Readings: Exodus 34:4b-6, 8-9; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; John 3:16-18

the joy that God offers, but we can also commit the folly of delaying or even refusing his embrace. He expects an immediate yes, because every moment spent in sin, in the rejection of his love, is a wasted opportunity.

At the end of life, when God “will test the work of everyone” (1 Corinthians 3:13), the conformity or discrepancy of each person’s action with the person of Christ will appear clearly.

God then surely welcomes all in his arms, though some will be forced to admit to having badly managed and hopelessly wasted the unique opportunity that was offered to them.

The work of this man, warns Paul, “Will become ashes; although he will be saved, but it will be as if passing through fire” (1 Corinthians 3:15).

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Ngayon ay ipinagdiriwang natin ang Linggo ng Banal na Santatlo. Ito ang Dakilang Kapistahan ng Santisima Trinidad. Ito’y hindi isang abstraktong palaisipan sa matematika kung saan ang isa ay katumbas ng tatlo (1 = 3); ito’y isang teolohiyang mahirap man ipaliwanag o maintindihan ng isang payak na kaisipan subalit ito ay katotohanang inaarok ng pananampalatayang Kristiyanong Katoliko sa gabay ng Simbahan. Ang ating pananampalataya ay nagsasabing merong Isang Diyos at sa iisang Diyos na ito ay napapalooob ang magkakaibang katangian ng Tatlong Persona: Ama, Anak at Eepiritu Santo.

Batay sa ating Katisismo ang bawat personang nabanggit ay may ibat-ibang katangian at kakanyahan: Ama ng siyang Lumikha (Crea-

Dakilang Kapistahan ng Santisima Trinidad

tor); Anak na Siyang Tagapagligtas (Redeemer) at Espiritu Santo’ng Patnubay (Sanctifier). Ang bawat isa sa mga personang ito ay tunay na Diyos, at gayunpaman ay iisa lamang na Diyos. Hindi natin ito lubos na maunawaan, at hindi natin ito paniniwalaan kung hindi ito sinabi sa atin ng Diyos; gayunpaman, marami ang ibinahagi sa atin ng Panginoong Hesus tungkol sa Diyos. Sinabi Niya sa atin na ang Diyos ay Pag-ibig, Buhay at Kabutihan.

Upang magkaroon ng kaganapan ang ating pagkatao, kailangan nating magkaroon ng ugnayan sa ating Diyos. Hindi natin hinahayaang maputol ang ugnayan sa naka paligid sa atin at sa ating Diyos. Subukan

nating isipin ang mga malungkot at masakit na karanasan ng pagtatakwil o pagtataksil ng pamilya at mahal sa buhay o di kaya’y kaibigan; ang pagkakataong nadama mong ikaw ay nag-iisa; iyong di mo kayang kumaing mag-isa; namamanglaw at tila hinahanap mo ang mga mahal mo sa buhay, at labis na nangan-gailangan ka ng pagkakaisa.

Nilikha tayo sa wangis at larawan ng Diyos at ang Diyos ay ugnayan at komunyong. Kaya gayon din tayong mga tao. Nagsusumikap tayo para sa patuloy na pagkakaisa at ugnayan natin sa Diyos at sa bawat isa. Ang ugnayang ito ng pakikiisa ay patotoo sa Santisima Trinidad o Banal na Santatlo. Sinasabi ng San-

atlo na ang Diyos ay ugnayan kaya tayo ay naghahangad; ang Diyos ay pamayanan kaya tayo ay nagmam-atyag; ang Diyos ay pag-ibig kaya tayo ay nagmamahal. Hindi natin ito mapipigilan sapagkat sinasalamin natin ang ating pagiging kawangis ng Diyos.

Ang Diyos ng pag-ibig at pagkakaisa ay hindi nahahati at tayo’y nagsusumikap gampanan ang parehong bagay. At hindi nakapagtataakang tayo mga nilikha niya sa kanyang larawan at wangis ay nakatuon din sa ugnayan ng pagkakaisa sa diwa at damdamin. Naway ang dakilang kapistahang ito ng Banal na Santatlo ay magdulot sa atin ng malalim na ugnayan at pagkakaisa bilang sambayanan ng Diyos at tunay na Simbahan ng pagkakaisa. Aman.

● **Father Jerry M. Perocho** SVD

What exactly is a papal encyclical? Put simply, it is an official pastoral letter written by the pope and addressed to the entire Catholic

Church. These letters are used to guide the faithful on matters of faith, morals, Church discipline, or special acts of devotion.

The tradition of using letters to guide the faithful goes back to the very beginning of Christianity. St Paul and the other apostles famously wrote epistles to the early Christian communities to keep everyone united in their beliefs. Over time, bishops continued this practice. The Bishop of Rome — the pope — would write letters to all other bishops, creating a circular network of communication.

During the Middle Ages, this custom of global letter-writing faded. Popes generally only wrote to individual bishops about specific local problems. However, in the 18th century, Pope Benedict XIV revived the ancient practice, smartly taking advantage of the newly invented printing press to reach a wider audience. It was later, under Pope Gregory XVI, that these documents officially became known as “encyclicals”—a word derived from the Latin for “circular.” Since 1740, popes have written nearly 300 of them, covering an immense range of modern issues.

While encyclicals are not considered part of sacred scripture and do

What exactly is an encyclical?

FAITH ALIVE!



This raises an important question: are Catholics required to follow them? In 1950, Pope Pius XII clarified that even if a pope is not using his absolute supreme authority in an encyclical, the teachings still require respect and agreement, noting that much of what is written is already part of established Catholic doctrine. Decades later, the Second Vatican Council re-emphasised this point, stating that Catholics should offer a “religious submission of will and mind” to the authentic teaching of the pope, even when he is not speaking infallibly.

Over the years, encyclicals have had mixed receptions. Some have been welcomed with great joy, especially those focusing on popular prayer and devotion. Others, tackling the complex moral and social crises of the day, have sparked intense debate among scholars and theologians.

Ultimately, encyclicals are not automatically infallible. Though their instructions can sometimes be challenging, Catholics are called to recognise the pope’s apostolic authority and trust in the wisdom they offer to the Church across the ages.

● **By Father Joseph Parisi**
OSV News

not contain brand-new divine revelations, they hold immense weight. They are an expression of the pope’s ordinary teaching authority as the Vicar of Christ.

Caritas leaders gather in Indonesia to strengthen mission to poor and vulnerable

BAJO (LICAS NEWS): Catholic humanitarian leaders from across the world gathered in the Diocese of Labuan Bajo, Indonesia, in the third week of May to reaffirm the Church's mission of accompanying vulnerable communities and responding to growing ecological and social challenges during celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of Caritas Internationalis.

The gathering on the island of Flores in East Nusa Tenggara Province also marked the 20th anniversary of Caritas Indonesia.

Among those in attendance were Tarcisio Isao Cardinal Kikuchi, president of Caritas Internationalis and archbishop of Tokyo; Bishop Antonius Subianto Bunjamin, president of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference; Bishop Maksimus Regus of Labuan Bajo; and delegates from Caritas networks across Asia and other regions.

Member of the organising committee, Antonius Eko Sugianto, said the conference sought to strengthen humanitarian solidarity and care for "Our Common Home."

A Thanksgiving Mass at the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit brought together bishops from member countries of Caritas Internationalis, dioceses across Indonesia, and representatives of Caritas Asia and the organisation's Representative Council, or RepCo, the confederation's principal governing body.

In his homily, Cardinal Kikuchi reflected on Pope Benedict XVI's encyclical, *Deus Caritas Est* [God is Love], and the meaning of the word "caritas".

The cardinal said, "Caritas does not simply mean love, but also love of God. Pope Benedict XVI emphasised that God is Love."

He said the mission of Caritas is rooted in an encounter with Jesus Christ and expressed through proclaiming the gospel, celebrating the sacraments, and serving people in need.

"These three dimensions are interconnected and inseparable. Our mission is to help build a just world that reflects the Kingdom of God, where all people experience love, compassion, and a life of dignity," Cardinal Kikuchi said.

He said Caritas seeks to uphold human dignity by listening to people, understanding their needs, and responding with compassion.

"Often, through Caritas, the Church expresses this love in a tangible way. Caritas accom-



Cardinal Kikuchi, SVD, right, and Bishop Regus hold freshly harvested vegetables during a visit to Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Datak, West Manggarai, where Caritas supports farming programmes promoting organic agriculture and community empowerment.

Photo: LiCAS News/Caritas Indonesia

panies refugee families, supports farmers, cares for children, ensures access to essential services, and helps communities rebuild their lives," the cardinal said.

"In many places, the Church through Caritas becomes a source of hope, stability, and dignity for communities," he added.

Cardinal Kikuchi also referred to *Dilexi Te* [I have loved you], an apostolic letter by Pope

Leo XIV emphasising that the love of Christ "draws near, listens, and accompanies."

According to the cardinal, the spirit of accompaniment must guide the Church's humanitarian work by combining compassion with professionalism.

"Accompaniment requires more than mere presence. Our service must be competent, organised, and effective, but also deeply human, rooted in com-

Encyclical..continued from page 12

irreversible decisions to artificial systems."

While AI must reflect alignment with human moral values, Pope Leo dismissed the concept of "artificial moral agents" that would seek to replace a human being's moral judgement, which involves "conscience, personal responsibility and the recognition of the other as a person."

'Concrete criteria' required for the use of weapons in the AI age

Moreover, he said, three "concrete criteria for discernment" must be established for the use of weapons in an age of artificial intelligence: an "identifiable and verifiable" chain of responsibility that holds accountable "those who design, train, authorise and employ technology;" a moral timeframe for making "irreversible decisions" amid war where "speed and efficiency" are "never ... the supreme motivating force;" and the identification and protection of civilians in conflict, rather than faceless strikes on non-combatants.

"Target selection and the use of force must not confuse combatants and non-combatants, nor

ignore the impact on defenseless populations," he said.

In addition, Pope Leo listed three "non-negotiable requirements" for weapons in the AI age. First, all systems in warfare must be able to retrace and reconstruct decision-making processes, "so that accountability and blame are not collapsed into 'the machine.'"

Second, the decision to use lethal force "must remain under effective, self-aware and responsible human control," rather than "delegated to opaque or automated processes."

Third, a shared framework must be established to curtail the arms race and ensure protection for civilians and critical civilian infrastructures.

Greater danger, greater responsibility

Pope Leo urged "all key players" in AI—scientists, scholars, business leaders and politicians—to be "transparent and responsible," keeping in mind "an acute awareness" of the full impact of their work in advancing technology, so as not to "deceive themselves into believing they are performing actions that are morally neutral and avoid questions about the ultimate ends that guide certain experiments."

'Our mission is to help build a just world that reflects the Kingdom of God, where all people experience love, compassion, and a life of dignity'

passion and in the love of God," he said.

The celebration drew thousands of faithful to the cathedral and highlighted Caritas' continuing work among poor, marginalised, and vulnerable communities.

Alongside the anniversary of Caritas Internationalis, Caritas Indonesia marked two decades of humanitarian service since its establishment on 17 May 2006.

Over the past 20 years, the organisation has responded to major humanitarian crises in Indonesia, from the 2004 Aceh tsunami to floods in the Diocese of Sibolga in North Sumatra in 2025.

Bishop Antonius Subianto

Such vigilance is especially crucial as "new wars ... are perhaps even more dangerous than those of the past, since they tend to disregard all ethical limits."

Pope Leo lamented that "decisions now seem to be driven almost exclusively by economic calculations, justified through media distortions, manufactured enthusiasm and 'dreams' that inevitably shatter, generating frustration and further violence."

In nations wrought by "serious social tensions," he said, "we cannot rule out the possibility that some leaders may consider armed conflict as an effective way of diverting attention from domestic problems and a cynical tool for managing difficulties."

'Let us disarm words'

Amid grave dangers of the moment, Pope Leo affirmed that Christians "do not merely gaze" upon the darkness "passively," but "serve the good." He said they "know the light and understand that the darkness has not overcome it and cannot defeat it," a reference to John 1:5.

"Even in the darkest nights, the Lord raises up men and women who refuse to give up, who persevere in doing good, who protect the vulnerable and open pathways to reconciliation," he said.

Bunjamin said Indonesia's selection as host of the anniversary celebration reflected the universal character of the Church and its mission of solidarity.

"May this expression of gratitude become a spirit that inspires and strengthens even greater works as a concrete expression of Christ's commandment to love one another, especially the poor and marginalised," he said.

He also recalled Pope Francis' message that serving the poor is a special grace because not everyone is given the opportunity to undertake such ministry.

Before the Thanksgiving Mass, participants visited Saint Teresa of Calcutta Parish in Datak, where Caritas Labuan Bajo supports local farmers through the HARVEST Programme.

The initiative promotes organic agriculture and trains communities in the production of local microorganisms, organic fertilizers, and natural pesticides.

Organisers said the programme reflects Caritas Indonesia's effort to integrate the message of "integral ecology" from Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*, which calls on the Church to hear "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor."

"The memory of the saints, righteous people and the oft-forgotten peacemakers, show us that grace does not magically eliminate conflict, but instead it inspires active resistance to evil and an astonishing creativity in doing good."

The "sum total of small and steadfast acts of fidelity," he added, will build "the civilisation of love."

He pointed to his May 2025 call—which he repeated during the May 25 press conference announcing the encyclical's release—to "disarm words" in order to "help disarm the world."

Pope Leo also stressed the need to build justice-based peace that is not just "an absence of conflict at any cost."

He urged "giving space to the perspectives and voices" of war's victims to make people aware of the "abyss of evil inherent in war, and generally in all forms of violence." He noted that "both history and memory" are essential to the prevention of war—along with dialogue, diplomacy, authentic multilateralism and prayer.

"Let us never tire of praying for peace," he said, "and of committing ourselves to achieving it in our relationships and in society."

AI and 'culture of power' render just war theory outdated, requiring new constraints, pope says in encyclical

(OSV NEWS): In his new encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas* [Magnificent humanity], subtitled, *On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, Pope Leo XIV took aim at the normalisation of war, made more dangerous by a digital revolution that is "changing the nature of conflict" and blurring "the fine line between protection and aggression."

Pope Leo described the just war theory as "outdated" and—except for cases of "self-defense in the strictest sense"—said it has "all too often been used to justify any kind of war." With AI expanding the capabilities of weapons systems, the pope called for "the most rigorous ethical constraints" on the use of AI in warfare, as weaponry itself evolves with deadly efficiency.

Above all, Pope Leo urged a renewed commitment to Pope St. Paul VI's vision to build a "civilisation of love." He said "war is never inevitable" and said all can contribute to bringing about "the true peace born of justice," nurtured in the theological virtue of hope.

The highly anticipated encyclical, signed by the pope on May 15 and released on May 25, invoked the wisdom of the Church's social teaching—which articulates the means of building a just society and living out holiness in modern life—as a framework for shaping AI amid rapid technological advances, a fractured global order, and accelerating threats to human life and dignity.

In the document, Pope Leo situated the rapid development of AI within the current global geopolitical landscape.

AI has emerged as one key factor among many—such as developments in warfare, armaments, information access, markets, and social and global relations—driving the erosion of the post-war international order and the expansion of conflict, the pope said.

A 'culture of power' versus a 'civilisation of love'

In the encyclical's fifth chapter, which discusses AI and war, Pope Leo begins by contrasting the "culture of power" with the "civilisation of love," the latter of which was coined by St. Paul VI in a 1970 Regina Caeli address during Pentecost.

The two terms respectively correspond with the document's



Pope Leo XIV speaks at a presentation of his encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas: On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence*, at the Synod Hall at the Vatican on May 25. Photo: CNS/Lola Gomez

central biblical images: the construction of the Tower of Babel, symbolising arrogance and pride, and the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah after the Babylonian exile, which represents collaborative, God-centred efforts.

Alongside the culture of power—marked by "polarisation and violence," as well as the drive for supremacy—"a great part of humanity" also strives to build "the holy city of coexistence and peace," said the pope.

Yet the culture of power is "taking hold," with humanity's common good "relegated to the background," and "the concrete tragedy of peoples at war" is subordinated to the consideration of "strategic interests," Pope Leo said.

The effects are intensified as "digital networks, the globalised economy and the development of AI create increasingly tighter bonds," observed Pope Leo, noting that "decisions made in one place" are linked "in real time" to "the effects they produce elsewhere."

The culture of power works to normalise war and expand military power, he said, while "fueling a false realism that insists that there is no alternative."

Despite the international rules-based order agreed upon following World War II, the past 60 years have been marred by "conflicts of astonishing brutality" that have impacted civilians "on a massive scale," Pope Leo said.

A 'real paradigm shift' to war revival

He identified "a real paradigm shift" that has led to a "troubling revival of war as an instrument of international politics," all while the ethical principles that had constrained war "are being eroded."

That revival has been compounded by "a disconcerting loss of historical memory." As the first-hand accounts of survivors of the First and Second World Wars and the Holocaust, or Shoah—the systematic persecution and murder of six million Jews under the Nazi regime and its collaborators—are disappearing,

Pope Leo said the lessons of war are being forgotten, obscured by "a 'selective or distorted rewriting of the past.'"

The pope pointed as well to the influence of digitally revamped, "fragmented information environments," in which "algorithms that reward conflict" work to make war "culturally conditioned."

He said, "When historical memory fades and the ethical principles that protect civilians and the most vulnerable are weakened, it becomes easier to justify violence as necessary, inevitable or even 'sanitised'. It is in this context that humanity is slipping into a violent culture of power, where peace no longer appears as a responsibility to be taken on, but as a fragile interval between conflicts."

Just war theory 'outdated'

As a result, he said, "Today, more than ever, without prejudice to the right to self-defense in the strictest sense, it is important to reaffirm that the 'just war' theory, which has all too often been used to justify any kind of war, is now outdated."

The Catechism of the Catholic Church stipulates that legitimate defense by military force is only morally permissible under strict conditions that are all present at one and the same time: the "lasting, grave and certain" damage from the aggressor, the exhaustion of all other means to end such damage, "serious prospects of success," and the use of arms such that graver evils and disorders are not produced.

In an accompanying footnote to his statement on just war theory, Pope Leo quoted Pope Francis' 2020 encyclical, *Fratelli Tutti*, in which the late pope both noted that in recent decades "every single war has been ostensibly 'justified'" and warned against falling into "an overly broad interpretation of this potential right. In this way, some would also wrongly justify even 'preventive' attacks or acts of war that can hardly avoid entailing 'evils and disorders graver than the evil to be eliminated.'"

Noting modern war's "disastrous consequences for civilian populations," Pope Leo said, "Humanity possesses far more effective and capable tools

for promoting human life and resolving conflicts, such as dialogue, diplomacy and forgiveness."

A wider battlefield, a new arms race

Warfare itself has become more asymmetric and hybridised, said Pope Leo, with the battlefield expanding to encompass "economic, financial and cyberfronts."

With the rise of "jihadist groups, private militias and criminal networks," ideology and economic interests have become intertwined, making war a "way of life" for entire generations of the young, he said.

The pope said, "Here, the objective is no longer a definitive victory, but the perpetuation of conflict as a source of power and income," noting the growth of the military-industrial complex has become "a key sector in the economy of various countries."

A "new arms race" has been set in motion, with nuclear reduction agreements being dismantled and nuclear deterrence erroneously pursued as "indispensable" to security, he said.

In an apparent reference to drones—which have been pivotal to the current wars in Iran, Ukraine, Sudan and Gaza—Pope Leo said "the development of 'miniaturised' weapons" in this new arms race has led to their use seeming "like a more viable option."

AI and weapons

Pope Leo particularly noted autonomous weapons systems, which he said, make war "more 'feasible' and less subject to human control."

Currently, there is no internationally accepted legal definition of lethal autonomous weapons, which can range from semi-autonomous and supervised to fully autonomous, with no human control following launch.

With armed force as a last resort, Pope Leo said that "the development and use of AI in warfare must be subject to the most rigorous ethical constraints, to guarantee respect for human dignity and the sanctity of life and to avoid a race to develop such arms."

The pope declared, "No algorithm can make war morally acceptable," underscoring his point that it is "not permissible to entrust lethal or otherwise

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