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Pope Leo XIV blesses a child as he meets with participants of the XVII Annual Meeting of Inter

Pope Leo XIV blesses a child as he meets with participants of the XVII Annual Meeting of International Catholic Legislators Network at the Vatican Aug. 21, 2026.
(OSV News/Vatican Media/Matteo Pernaselci)

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Pope Leo XIV called on Catholic legislators to establish oversight of artificial intelligence so that technology serves the common good rather than eroding human dignity.

"The world does not need an artificial intelligence that diminishes humanity; rather, it needs human intelligence enlightened by wisdom, political authority guided by conscience and technological innovation directed by charity," the pope told members of the International Catholic Legislators Network Aug. 21.

"Only then will artificial intelligence become not a rival to humanity but a servant of the common good," he said.

According to its website, the ICLN, which was founded in 2010, seeks to provide "Christians in public office with faith formation, expert education and a global network of peers and friends" to encourage leadership "that is committed to the dignity of every human being."

The group held its annual meeting Aug. 20-23 in Rome to discuss the theme, "Human Dignity and Artificial Intelligence: Challenges, Chances and Control."

Reflecting on the meeting's theme, the pope said its focus on artificial intelligence was an "opportunity to reflect upon one of the defining questions of our age."

"The extraordinary progress of artificial intelligence is opening horizons that previous generations could scarcely have imagined," he said. "Yet every technological achievement also confronts humanity with a moral question: not merely what can we do, but what ought we to do?"

Citing his encyclical on safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence, *Magnifica Humanitas* ("Magnificent Humanity"), Leo said humanity is facing "a decisive choice."

Humanity, he said, can either "be tempted to construct a new Tower of Babel, where power, efficiency and control obscure the face of the human person; or we can build a civilization in which technology serves the integral development of every person."

The pope told the Catholic legislators that their vocation places them "at the heart of this challenge" and that the church's social teaching can help them discern whether technology helps people "become more fraternal and responsible toward themselves and toward one another."

"Sound legislation should encourage scientific and technological creativity while safeguarding fundamental human rights and freedoms," he said. "It should protect users from exploitation, preserve personal privacy, ensure transparency in the use of emerging technologies and guarantee that they strengthen democratic institutions."

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Independent oversight and legal frameworks, the pope continued, are necessary guardrails for artificial intelligence that help ensure "that no single ideology or interest dictates the values embedded in artificial intelligence systems."

Nevertheless, he added, AI's rapid development "risks creating new forms of technological dependence, with poorer nations increasingly reliant on wealthier ones."

Leo warned that such developments "reveal a new face of the ancient temptation to domination and mastery without service."

"We must remain vigilant in this regard, lest innovation become another vehicle for ideological or economic colonialism," he said. "Sadly, we are presented with a subtle form of domination when algorithms decide who is seen and who remains invisible, when digital platforms shape public discourse without accountability, and when the dignity of workers is subordinated to the optimization of systems."

For this reason, the Catholic Church proposes "the civilization of love" as a response to the "culture of power," which would govern artificial intelligence through "charity, compassion and responsibility."

The family, the pope said, is at the heart of this response as the first place one learns "trust before calculation, generosity before competition, dialogue before division, and love before power."

Leo encouraged the group of Catholic lawmakers to promote policies that "strengthen marriage and families," as well as support parents in "their educational mission and enable young people to look to the future with confidence."

"Artificial intelligence must never be allowed to erode this primary cell of society — whether by reducing persons and relationships to data and simulations, by flooding young minds with content that distorts desire, or by economic models that make family life economically precarious," he said.