

Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice
Foundation

Annual Report
2025-2026

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Printed by
Tipografica Renzo Palozzi
Via Capo d'acqua, 22b - Marino (RM) - Italy

Printing in May 2026

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FOREWORD

A shared journey: a narrative between history and memory, present and future

This 2025–2026 Annual Report has been produced with the aim of providing an overview of the journey undertaken by the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation, highlighting not only its activities and projects, but above all their significance.

It is intended as a document that draws attention to a narrative capable of highlighting the Foundation's human and institutional journey: a story that weaves together experience, vision and responsibility. Within these pages, a story takes shape, made up of encounters, projects and reflections, which bear witness to a constant and shared commitment. The Report (through its various sections: introduction; history, aims, target audience; editorials; recent messages from Pope Leo XIV; the charter establishing the Foundation and the founding document bearing the signatures of the founding members; the address by Saint John Paul II on the occasion of the tenth anniversary; the addresses by Pope Francis for the twentieth and thirtieth anniversaries of the Foundation) aims to take the reader by the hand and guide them along a journey that does not merely record what has been achieved, but invites them to understand its value and, indeed, its significance.

The Foundation sees itself as a community in which everyone is called upon to participate actively and consciously. The Report aims to serve as an opportunity to nurture a sense of belonging and to promote ever-wider engagement. It is a tool designed to encourage a conscious reflection on the present, whilst offering insights to help interpret it. The document also looks decisively to the future, outlining prospects and identifying areas for development: opportunities for growth, to be built together. It is an invitation to contribute ideas, skills and vision, with a truly participatory approach; here, the theme of shared responsibility emerges strongly.

The Report is conceived as a space for dialogue, capable of bringing together diverse experiences and directing them towards common goals: consolidating a shared identity, planning, walking together in shared responsibility, thus echoing the synodal perspective. A journey that continues, in the awareness that only through communion and participation is it possible to generate lasting value over time.

Rome, May 2026

Introduction

The first Annual Report of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation (CAPPF) marks the first year of the new pontificate, that of the American Pope Robert Prevost. A pontificate that builds on the rich and revolutionary legacy of Pope Francis, consolidating, systematising and extending it, and transforming it into doctrine: the “Social Doctrine of the Church (SDC)” of Pope Leo XIV.

In his first message to the Foundation, which is directly at his service (Pro-Pontifice), just nine days after his election to the See of Peter, during the private audience that traditionally follows the CAPPF International Conference, Pope Leo elaborated on the concept of ‘doctrine’ and set out his vision for the mission and future of Catholic social thought and of the Foundation. The CAPPF must commit itself “in the Augustinian spirit” to the search for Truth, a rigorous and inclusive quest, grounded in science and conscience, because Truth – to use the words of the African Holy Bishop – “is neither mine nor yours”, but must become “yours and mine”, and thus the foundation of human brotherhood and the dialogue that brings it about. A Truth which, “on its own”, can give us peace, the “Peace of the Risen Christ”, which is built first and foremost “in the heart”, in the restless depths of the human soul that finds serenity only in its relationship with God, and upon this relationship builds the harmonious coexistence of communities, nations and international relations.

In response to this fundamental message from the Pope, the CAPPF has launched or strengthened initiatives and processes of change with the aim of laying the groundwork for looking towards *the Rerum Novarum* of this turbulent and troubled period in human history with hope, confidence and a sense of responsibility.

At the 2025 CAPPF International Conference, we articulated and summarised these *Rerum Novarum insights* under the concept of ‘polarisation’. Extreme divisions provide us with a possible unambiguous interpretation of the most dramatic challenges of our time: conflicts in the economy, society and international relations. Divergences that become clashes of civilisations, irreconcilable conflicts and all-out wars in a world that denies and combats the universalism of values and the religions that proclaim it. It is increasingly and more insistently claimed today that there are no “universal values”, but only “Western values” pitted against Eastern values, “values of developed countries” against those of underdeveloped countries, “Christian values” against the values of other religions and, above all, against the values of post-modernity founded on secularisation and relativism. Or rather – it is claimed – the universal values of the post-war era no longer exist and must no longer exist! They are therefore coming under

fierce attack. Those values which, following liberation from Nazi-Fascism and the war, had become, through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of The United Nations, the cornerstone of an international order based on rules, multilateralism and international law, is not only disregarded, circumvented or hypocritically exploited, but openly denied, opposed and disparaged. At the 2025 International Conference, we therefore discussed and called for an ethical re-founding of global governance, appealing to the principles of the SDGs, to the great encyclicals³ such as *Populorum progressio*, *Laudato si* and *Fratelli Tutti*, to integral ecology and to integral human development.

For us, focusing on polarisation also meant paying tribute to Pope Francis, who, during his doctoral studies in Germany, had analysed the “Gegensätze”, the polarities discussed by Romano Guardini (an Italian priest, theologian and writer who became a naturalised German citizen), through which conflicting oppositions could and should be translated into positive dialectical developments of thought and action in the “living reality”. This vision brought together, in a prophetic synthesis, the rationalist perspective of Pope Ratzinger and the pastoral and popular one of Pope Bergoglio, two Popes both indebted to Guardini’s theological thought.

In addition to supporting and following the independent research and activity initiatives promoted by its various ‘Chapters’ (local groups), the FCAPP guided the processes of the past year, directing them in five main directions:

1. Firstly, the reflection on new technologies and Artificial Intelligence, which began several years ago and culminated this year in the research outputs of the SACRU university network, coordinated by Professor Anna Maria Tarantola, former President of FCAPP (see the relevant publication presented to the Holy Father in December 2024) and in the DSC Award for Best Publication, awarded by the international jury coordinated by Cardinal Marx to Father Benanti’s book entitled “*Human in the loop. Human Decisions and Artificial Intelligence*” (specific seminars and webinars were also dedicated to the theme of technology and communication throughout the year).
2. Secondly, the Abrahamic dialogue between the three great religious traditions of the Mediterranean (Christianity, Judaism and Islam), which we have fostered through meetings, webinars and publications on the main themes and issues of SDC, also seen as an expression of an ancient and noble “Mediterranean thought” (Franco Cassano).
3. Thirdly, the development of partnership projects and discussion networks *on the dissemination and teaching* of the principles of DSC and on evangelisation in the emerging continents (Asia, Latin America and Africa).
4. Fourthly, there is a need to broaden our areas of intervention, structuring them in distinct yet interconnected directions shaped by the dynamics of the contemporary world. “Young leaders” are a priority: supporting them means harnessing

³ The social encyclicals and apostolic exhortations, as well as the addresses delivered by the Popes to the CAPPF, can be found on the websites www.centessimusannus.va and <https://capp-usa.org/papal-addresses-to-capp>.

emerging energies and contributing to the formation of a conscious leadership capable of navigating contexts complex and subject to rapid change. The financial sector constitutes another area of action: here the challenge is to engage with market dynamics, marked by instability and growing inequalities, by promoting a more ethical and responsible vision of the economy. Then there is the so-called social media ecosystem, characterised by rapid and often fragmented discourse: operating in this space requires the ability to communicate effectively, without losing depth and critical thinking. From this perspective, culture can make a difference in navigating this environment, which is both virtual and real. Finally, data science: this represents an increasingly strategic sector. Understanding and utilising data involves not only technical skills, but also reflection on the cultural, social and ethical implications that arise from it. All these areas fit within a complex context, marked also by social marginalisation and widespread disorientation among both young people and adults, making a commitment to building relationships and fostering social participation more urgent.

5. Finally, spirituality. The space and time to be devoted to inner life, to the search for meaning, to the individual and collective encounter with God the Creator, with His Redeeming Son, the Holy Spirit, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and all the Saints, and through dialogue and service to one's neighbour, beginning with the most vulnerable and needy. Meditation and prayer are, and will increasingly be, a distinctive and defining feature of our membership of the FCAPP and of our commitment to the DSC. Thus, in carrying out its activities, the Foundation has adopted the synodal method, an instrument of communion and reflection. The term 'synodal' derives from the Greek 'syn-hodos', meaning 'walking together'. At its heart lies listening to the Holy Spirit through the Word of God and the experience of the people. This means valuing the diversity of skills and experiences, creating spaces for active and co-responsible participation. Through dialogue and shared discernment, a deeper understanding of contemporary economic and social challenges is fostered.

Pope Francis had already emphasised the profound link between prayer and doctrine, between research and meditation, between science and charity. "Truth," Francis said, "is not something one possesses; it is something one encounters," and on another occasion, "Only those who pray are capable of receiving the truth, because truth is received, not constructed." Pope Leo reminded us that prayer cannot simply be a list of requests and wishes. "Rather, it is the most gratuitous, universal and transformative response to death ... [it] teaches peace, urges us to encounter, and inspires supplication." In this spirit, we gathered in prayer for Ukraine, as a concrete gesture of solidarity and a personal contribution to the search for peace. It was the natural outcome of our European Conference, the first organised by the CAPPF, held in Luxembourg in January 2026, dedicated to peacebuilding in Europe.

These are the five areas of activity we have ventured into this year. Are they sufficient to find answers to the contradictions of our times? Or must we seek others? Have we made sufficient progress and sown well? And how do we equip ourselves to face the new questions and challenges looming on the horizon?

The 2025–2026 Annual Report aims precisely to provide material for evaluation and discussion to the Foundation’s members and friends to answer these questions.

Meanwhile, the broader context, like a moving target, is becoming increasingly complex and fragmented, raising new and distressing questions and placing fresh demands on the SDC. Wars are multiplying and taking root, from Eastern Europe to the Middle East, from the endemic conflicts in Africa, Latin America and Asia, to the frozen conflicts in every part of the world that risk reigniting and exploding. The fate of the world often seems to hang on the whims of “a handful of tyrants”, as Pope Leo laments, without the institutions of multilateralism and the rules of international law being able to contain them and channel them towards just and lasting negotiated solutions. In this context, however, we have great confidence that the gift of Pope Leo XIV’s new Magisterium will bring to the world the kerygma of the “peace of Christ” and the ambitious goal of realising it in the “earthly city” through the development of the DSC. And at the same time, we feel a strong sense of responsibility, because the mission of the CAPPF is becoming increasingly central and demanding, and is increasingly oriented towards peace and peacebuilding.

There are three directions of travel that lie ahead at the start of the new year 2026–2027:

1. First and foremost, the conviction that – as Pope Leo teaches – the ‘peace of Christ’ and ‘earthly peace’ are not one and the same. St Augustine reminds us that we all have a dual citizenship: that of the ‘earthly city’ and that of the ‘City of God’. The challenge for us Christians is to make these two citizenships compatible with one another, indeed, to bring our earthly life closer to the definitive life of the heavenly city to which we are destined. Without harbouring any illusions about the possibility of completely superimposing them. But also, without resigning ourselves to a systematic and persistent estrangement and divergence between the two worlds. From this challenge arises the emphasis we have placed on spirituality in the pursuit of peace. Investment in spirituality lies at the heart of peacebuilding and permeates all aspects of the SDC and its role in peacebuilding. Spirituality is a natural and inalienable component of the human soul; it structurally shapes integral human development and has a direct impact on hearts and minds, into the depths of which the peace of Christ must enter so that it may then spread throughout human and institutional relationships. This is why we have placed spirituality at the centre of the themes of the 2026 International Conference, entitled: “A fragmented world in search of spirituality: freedom and pluralism in the light of the Church’s Social Doctrine”.
2. The second challenge is to embed peace in the economy and society and to build peace through economic development and social progress. This requires continuing and intensifying the search—rooted in the history and tradition of the DSC—for new models of the market economy and economic policy, as well as new models of social integration and welfare. We must revitalise and strengthen the social market economy, policies of inclusion and solidarity, and the personal and collective commitment of Catholics in the professions, in business, in local communities, in international organisations, in diplomacy, in technology and politics, in research and education, and in voluntary work. We must resist with tenacity and conviction the slide towards an ‘economy and society of war’ and

the growing *weaponisation* of all economic activity and social engagement.

3. Finally, peace must be built through organisation and institution-building. We must uphold and put into practice the two fundamental principles of the DSC in the institutional sphere: supranationalism and subsidiarity. These are the principles that govern the organisation of the universal Catholic Church, and these same principles can and must be applied to politics, and to national and global policies.

Faced with these challenges, the CAPPF is ready to respond with conviction and determination to the growing demands of its members, supporters and the whole People of God. We are ready to roll up our sleeves and take the lead. We are encouraged to see that there are clear signs of new vitality emerging: new membership applications, with an encouraging proportion of young people, and new local ‘chapters’ in new contexts and emerging geographical areas. There are new publishing and formation initiatives, which complement the growing success of our traditional Course in the Social Teaching of the Church, led by Bishop Guy-Réal Thivierge. We are experimenting with new forms of meeting and dialogue, such as those at the continental level (the recent European Conference in Luxembourg focused on peacebuilding in Europe) and at the local level (the national meeting of Ecclesiastical Assistants and Representatives of Italian Groups, dedicated, among other things, to the theme of green cities and resilience).

I feel it is only right to conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation and thanks, first and foremost to the Supreme Pontiff, who graciously received our Foundation in a formal and official capacity and who always generously bestows his attention and support upon us, then to all those who go out of their way to support our activities through their ingenuity, voluntary work, fundraising, suggestions and even the criticism that helps us correct our mistakes; to our members and supporters; and to the Vatican bodies and authorities that provide guidance and oversight. These contributions are significant, visible and substantial, and they ensure that our work in the service of the Holy Father and the DSC is professional, recognised and appreciated. But I would also like to thank those whose contributions are less visible or unseen—those working behind the scenes, often quietly and diligently—on whom we rely heavily on and who support us in our daily work.

May God bless you all and your loved ones.

Long live the Centesimus Annus Pro-Pontifice Foundation!

Rome, May 2026

Paolo Garonna

“Centesimus Annus” Foundation: *history, purpose, to whom it is addressed*

History

The historic occasion that gave rise to the idea of establishing the Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice Foundation was the Encyclical *Centesimus annus*, promulgated by the Holy Father John Paul II on 1 May 1991, on the centenary of Leo XIII’s Encyclical *Rerum Novarum*.

A century later, the Pope deemed it appropriate to make his voice heard on matters of social doctrine, reaffirming the centrality of the human person in all economic activity.

A thorough reading of the Encyclical *Centesimus annus* thus prompted a number of particularly enlightened individuals to join forces with numerous highly qualified Catholic figures from the business and financial worlds, with the aim of disseminating the basic principles of the Church’s social doctrine contained in the Encyclical and, at the same time, to seek new sources to support the costs of the Holy See’s activities, called upon to respond to the growing demands coming from the entire ecclesial community and, more generally, from all humanity.

Under the guidance of His Eminence Cardinal Rosalio José Castillo Lara and His Eminence Monsignor Giovanni Lajolo, several entrepreneurs and bankers set about gathering support. The idea thus took shape and was progressively refined through a series of meetings, both individual and collective.

Given the favourable response to the initiative, Cardinal Castillo Lara, having kept the Secretariat of State constantly informed, submitted to His Holiness the proposal to establish the Foundation, which was founded by a chirograph of the Pope himself on 5 June 1993. In accordance with the statutes, overall supervision of the Foundation’s activities is entrusted to the President of the APSA (Administration of the Patrimony of the Apostolic See).

Over the years, the following have served as Chairmen of the Foundation’s Board of Directors:

Dr Roberto Mazzotta (1993–1997);

Count Dr Lorenzo Rossi di Montelera (1997–2009);

Dr Domingo Sugranyes Bickel (2009–2019);

Prof. Anna Maria Tarantola (2019–2024);

Prof. Paolo Garonna (2024).

Initially, the Board of Directors consisted of seven members, all of whom were Italian. From May 2004, the first non-Italian directors joined the Board, reflecting the Foundation's growing international dimension. In the revision of the Articles of Association approved in the same year, the number of directors was increased to nine.

Since its establishment, the Foundation has been based in the Apostolic Palace.

Purpose

The Foundation is a non-profit organisation and pursues religious and charitable aims.

It aims to contribute to the study and dissemination of Christian social teaching, as set out above all in Pope John Paul II's Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*.

To achieve these objectives, the Foundation promotes, amongst individuals distinguished for their entrepreneurial and professional commitment to society, an understanding of Christian social teaching and information regarding the activities of the Holy See; it supports initiatives aimed at developing the presence and work of the Catholic Church in various spheres of society; it encourages the raising of funds to support the activities of the Apostolic See, as provided for in Article 3 of the Statutes⁴.

To whom it is addressed?

Article 18 of the Statutes states that members are natural and legal persons who share the Foundation's objectives, declare their willingness to collaborate in pursuing them in accordance with the provisions of Article 3, and undertake to pay an annual contribution. In this context, the invitation to join the Foundation is addressed primarily to entrepreneurs and professionals who, identifying with the principles expressed in the social teaching of the Church and in the papal Magisterium, wish to contribute actively to the creation of a new economic and social culture, in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Encyclicals *Centesimus annus*, *Caritas in veritate* and *Laudato si*.

By collaborating in the Holy Father's work of evangelisation, entrepreneurs and professionals can thus infuse their work with a new spirit, whilst also drawing renewed inspiration for their own activities. A distinctive feature of the Foundation is the spiritual guidance provided to members by spiritual advisers, who are recommended by the Board of Directors and appointed by the Episcopal Conferences of the individual countries. This guidance is aimed at achieving the objectives listed above and is carried out through specific initiatives and refresher meetings, both regular and occasional.

The Foundation, established under Vatican law, is open to the whole world and works actively to ensure that entrepreneurs and professionals, both European and non-European, who identify with these ideals join this institution, thereby contributing to the creation, within a context of a new culture of social action. It is also desirable

⁴ <https://www.centesimusannus.va/istituzione/statuto-e-regolamenti>

that new Members have already attended, or commit to attending, a training course in the Social Doctrine of the Church; to this end, the Foundation organises dedicated courses and maintains contacts with institutions that promote similar initiatives in other countries.

Newsletter Editorials

A journey through shared experiences

23rd September 2024

Editorial Committee³

Dear Members and Friends,

Today marks the beginning of a new service offered by the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation: our Newsletter. This tool is not intended to be just a simple means of communication, but a form of dialogue and care for relationships, an opportunity to strengthen the bond that unites us and to build together a shared narrative.

The Newsletter represents a “we” that is defined through the narrative of activities and content generated through the efforts of each individual. Every contribution, every effort offered to the Foundation, finds space in these pages, building a collective story that reflects our common journey. It is not simply a technical or strategic tool, but a deeply human process capable of generating meaningful paths for us, for the Church, and also for those who are not part of Centesimus but recognize themselves in our values.

With this initiative, we wish to start a dialogue in order to build meaning and create continuity over time. It is a way for us all to feel more and more an integral part of a larger project that values everyone’s contribution.

Each edition of the Newsletter will be an opportunity to share stories, experiences and reflections. This is how this tool transcends its practical function, becoming a powerful means of connection with which to build, over time, a rich and meaningful narrative.

We conclude this presentation with a big thank you to all those who make this initiative possible. Your commitment, dedication and collaborative spirit are the real driving force behind this adventure. The Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation Newsletter is a reflection of our shared journey, a symbol of our desire to build a better future together.

Welcome on board to this adventure!

³ Oliver Galea, Costantino Coros, Alessio Piazza, Irene Calvo Crespo.

The social teaching of the church. A journey of meaning and action

30th October 2025

by Prof. Mons. Guy-Réal Thivierge

Scientific Director Corso in ISC, CAPPF

Why does the Church teach, and why will it continue to do so? The answer to this question reveals the profound nature of Christianity, as well as the meaning of the many and varied ways in which it expresses its mission. Among these, the *Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation* plays a role of its own in harmony with its convictions and commitments. In the concert of human institutions, we cannot lose sight of the fact that Christianity offers a fundamental originality. It is passed on by word of mouth, and the long history of its thousand-year-old Tradition shows that it conceals an evolving history, culture, and religious and social thought that need to be received by the intelligence and carried forward by the responsible and active commitment of Christians in the service of others, those they call their brothers and sisters. In this way, doctrine (truth) and the ethics of behavior and witness enlighten and reinforce each other. The search for *meaning and action* combine and harmonies. In this way, it becomes clear that the Church's primary mission is to teach and educate in the faith, in order to nourish and enlighten the meaning of the commitment of Christians in the service of building a fairer and more humane world, open to the rich diversity of cultures and beliefs, fully in tune with God and in tune with the expectations of the men and women of their time.

The Church teaches and forms, using all the means at its disposal. It invests all the channels of communication, first and foremost those that are inherent in the human person. Faith begins with the *mouth* and resounds in the *ears* (evangelization, preaching, faith education), it also originates with the pen, the *eyes* (the Scriptures, Tradition, religious formation) and culminates in *the image* symbolized by community gatherings, places of education (schools and universities), and finally those of *beauty* and the *heart* that art and the liturgy are called upon to embody. Faith therefore enters through our ears and eyes (*Rom 10:17*) and is *ultimately* grasped by our intelligence. The Church teaches by all the means at her disposal; she is dialogical, interactive by nature, she speaks, listens, reveals, unveils to all our senses, in the depths of the intelligent richness of the human condition, the invisible mystery of a Triune God, loving and savior.

In this respect, the world of Catholic, Christian-inspired associations represents a privileged place for those who wish to train themselves to better express and share their religious and social convictions publicly, and to translate them into a commitment or service of their choice, in harmony with their Christian aspirations, their hu-

man formation or their professional activities. In this sense, the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation, faithful to the message and priorities promoted by the pontifical document of the same name (John Paul II, May 1991), has now been occupying a preferential niche for more than 30 years, promoting the Church's thinking and social teaching throughout its international networks. Since then, it has continued to speak out, proposing, among the various activities it carries out in all its networks, a dialogue, a journey to deepen the meaning of the Catholic faith through specific training linked to the contents of the Social Teaching of the Church. Thanks to the expertise of recognized specialists in their field, it offers a systematic approach to certain issues facing our societies. The program for the year 2025 that you will find in this *Monthly Letter* bears eloquent witness to this. The *Centesimus Annus* Foundation is committed to embodying the Catholic faith for the men and women of today's world. In doing so, it wishes to contribute to enriching the quality of the influence of its members in the places where they belong, thus aiming to make their presence meaningful, even prophetic, even in business and political circles.

The mission of the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation* is to promote open and intelligent access to the essentials of the Catholic faith for contemporary societies, its history, its impact, its commitments and its influence. In short, how can we, together, through encounters and dialogue, serve and give concrete expression to the dynamism of the Christian heritage for which we are responsible to our societies and our world? This is the mission that the CAPPF has set itself once again for 2025: to offer its members and friends an itinerary, a search for meaning and reflection, and to open the way to Christian action appropriate to the increasingly demanding needs of today's world. The social thought of the Church provides a better understanding of the Christian heritage and sheds light on the horizon of our commitments.

Young people, the ecological transition and kindness in the Spirit of *Laudato Si'*

29th November 2024

by Cristina Finocchi Mahne

Economist and member of the CAPPF Scientific Committee

The *Laudato Si'* covers alternative and renewable energies, the importance of each biological species, the correlation between pollution and exploitation of the poor, and a relational vision of the relationship between man and nature. And it is precisely from these topics that I would like to start talking about young people who seem to be placing these issues increasingly at the center of their reflections. In particular, the value of ecological transition as an opportunity for social and professional inclusion that comes to life from the principle of integral ecology as defined in Pope Francis' Encyclical.

The new generations are aware of the risk of climate change, which creates anxiety in them. A major global study carried out by the International Intergovernmental Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) on 10,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25 reveals that 84% are concerned about the impacts of climate change and more than 50% consider global warming to be one of the greatest challenges facing humanity.

If we then consider that the energy sector, globally, employs around 67 million people and that according to the IEA (International Energy Agency) the transition to renewable energies could generate up to 14 million new jobs, displace around 5 million workers from the fossil fuel sector and require a skills upgrade for a further 30 million workers, we easily understand the magnitude of the impact referred to. This projected growth in employment, combined with the demand for new green skills, represents a huge opportunity, moreover, to upgrade skills, retrain those working in fossil fuel-based industries, but above all to attract a rapidly growing youth demographic. Looking at geographical areas with a large young population, such as sub-Saharan Africa where 70 percent of the population is under 30, job creation is more of a priority. But even if we look at the more economically developed countries, the opportunity is great and is an important employment opportunity.

It starts, in fact, from the thesis by psychologist Johnatan Haidt of the significant correlation between the use of smartphones and social media, from the early 2000s onwards, and the progressive increase in levels of anxiety, depression and self-harm among adolescents, professor of social psychology at New York University's Stern School of Business, and author of *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood Is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness*.

Then we move on to the latest survey on the 'Global State of Social Connectedness', conducted by Meta- Gallup in 140 countries, which yielded somewhat worrying results: on average around the world, 24% of people surveyed said they felt socially isolated.

The most negative percentages are not necessarily related to economic difficulties and are to be found in the younger age groups that feel the 'loneliest'. In wealthy Silicon Valley, the perceived loneliness rate is 45%. And if we wanted to do a litmus test, i.e. use a control method, as is also used in company evaluations to check the consistency of values, the latest World Happiness Report identifies Finland, which also has one of the lowest rates of perceived social isolation, as the happiest nation, according to Meta-Gallup, taking into account the key determinants of healthy life expectancy, GDP per capita, social support and low level of corruption, freedom to make key decisions in one's own life, as well as the generosity of the community in which people care for each other. Data from the study show that in the 'happiest' countries positive social connections and support for each other are twice as prevalent as in loneliness. Connections that are not only generic and emotional but also concrete and that involve different subjects: citizens, companies, associations, institutions.

At the same time, changing perspective, the younger generations aspire to make a difference, either by creating sustainable enterprises or through volunteering or activism, demonstrating that they want to contribute to a significant change in society that brings a positive impact in the world.

In such a scenario, we as adults are called upon to support young people in focusing on what are the new concrete areas in which they can make a difference, real and non-digital areas, with the understanding that motivation and passion are the strongest levers to succeed in achieving one's goals. Precisely the ecological transition can well represent this motivation that can be turned into passion, through the involvement of the new generations in processes and actions based on respect not only for the human species but also for everything that surrounds it. We thus have, at this precise moment in history, the opportunity to give young people a higher and more involving purpose, a common, tangible and concrete purpose, not only in terms of professional opportunities, but also of a human path that produces a positive impact on the world, environmentally and socially sustainable.

Of course, in this context, education and training are key factors, as the report on Europe's competitiveness by former Council President Mario Draghi pointed out lucidly. Due to climate change, the so-called 'educational divide' is increasing. There will be a widening gap precisely in the crucial issue of education. The World Bank report shows how climate change hits education harder in low-income countries, with 10 school days lost per year on average, compared to 2.4 in richer nations. In Brazil, students in the poorest municipalities could lose as much as six months of learning due to the heat.

Moreover, in America itself, the heat has had a worse effect on exam scores for children from low-income school districts. But there are also positive influences of the younger generation's attitudes: in India, children's climate engagement resulted in 13% more virtuous behaviour by their parents; in the UK, recycling rates increased by 8.6% when students shared waste education lessons with their parents. According to a World Bank study, while 9 out of 10 children in Bangladesh want to know and act for the climate, only 3 of them could correctly answer a basic question on greenhouse gases. And knowledge of the subject (which is, moreover, in great demand everywhere in the labour market) was found to be very low in low- and middle-income countries

such as Pakistan or Sierra Leone. Seven out of ten young people in these countries are calling for the subject to be studied as early as primary school. Of course, resources are needed, and worldwide only 1.5 per cent of climate funding is allocated to education.

What better opportunity, then, to propose tools and paths of study and work through which we can actively contribute to tackling and trying to solve the climate crisis that also threatens to be the cause of the migration of tens of millions of people by 2050? I deeply appreciated the statement made by Elena Beccalli, the new Rector of the Catholic University of Milan, where I have the honour of teaching, when she said in the interview on the occasion of her appointment that she would like the University she leads to become the best NOT OF the world but FOR the world.

And looking across the Atlantic, the Gabelli School of Business at Fordham University, a prestigious Jesuit university in New York, where I sit on the advisory board, has established the RBC a true 'Responsible Business Centre' that creates the necessary connections between businesses, institutions, the media and young people on precisely these issues. Universities and schools can certainly help the new generations on this path, but the collaboration must be systemic.

And speaking of contributing to a better world, the archbishop of Milan Monsignor Mario Delpini in a recent speech spoke of enterprise and the common good as 'generators of hope'. And here he outlined the path that leads from 'generators of hope' to the construction of an order of cohesion and peace within which enterprises play a fundamental role.

In this regard, I would like to mention two examples of corporate foundations that are certainly moving in this direction:

- the MAIRE Foundation, committed precisely to affirming the value of the challenge of decarbonisation as an opportunity to build integral human development and, in this context, to emphasising how businesses can play a primary role in actively contributing to the construction of the common good, has just published in collaboration with IPSOS the new edition of the study 'Climate goals: winning the challenge of climate goals through the creation of skills and competences worldwide', conducted in 12 countries, including the USA, China India, Italy, the UK, Saudi Arabia, Azerbaijan, Algeria, Chile on 4 Continents and 2. 200 respondents. The research reveals a growing awareness of the importance of skills development to address the energy transition, especially in emerging, Asian and Middle Eastern countries, North Africa and South America, pointing to a new awareness and prominence of these regions in the ecological transition seen not only as an urgent response to the climate crisis, but also as an unprecedented opportunity for the creation of new jobs and the inclusion of women and minorities in the workforce. Investing in education and training to create new multidisciplinary skills for these new challenges is crucial to ensure a sustainable future for future generations, in the spirit of the Encyclical *Laudato Si*.
- the Amplifon Foundation which, through the launch of the 'Manifesto of Kindness' summarised in twelve golden rules, also aims at fostering inclusion and social cohesion, stimulating a collective reflection on kindness as a desired form of our actions-relationships, underlining the importance of promoting it as a habit

to be cultivated and trained in everyday life and, ultimately, as a tool for peace, urgent and possible for each of us. And to confirm that kindness is a proactive and assertive concept, and not a passive one, here are some examples: 'To be kind takes courage', 'Kindness is a powerful virtue that must be trained with patience and constancy', 'Kindness is necessary and urgent'.

A final consideration and reading suggestion. To understand what we must aim for in terms of involving the new generations, let us think of what happens at the stadium between fans of the same football team. There is an immediate feeling, a strong bond that is created even if you do not know each other. Even if one is very different, in approach, style, social class or political or religious orientation.

We can build that same bond through the awareness of a common goal at inter-generational level and between new generations in different parts of the world, regardless of social class, cultural level, religious or political affiliation. A goal for which the commitment of everyone can also make a difference.

And the key is precisely the energy transition and the fight against climate change in the interest of all the creatures that inhabit this beautiful Earth of ours.

Today's reality presents a higher level of complexity than in the past. And to be able to understand structured concepts characterised by many correlations, such as ecological transition and the common good, we increasingly need to develop a deep critical spirit through which we can analyse information and data, distinguishing those that are true from those that are not.

The new generations are finding it increasingly difficult to transform information into knowledge and knowledge into what scientists call wisdom, i.e. the critical spirit, which helps us to reason and metabolize concepts that enable us to make informed choices and implement important projects.

In this regard, I recommend reading 'Reader come home', a book by Maryanne Wolf, one of the world's leading cognitivist neuroscientists appointed by Pope Francis in the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, in which the author points out how studies on the brain show how digital reading media, mobile phones, Ipads and computers, through which, above all, the new generations study and inform themselves, do not facilitate this process and that we must therefore above all help the new generations to read, inform themselves and study even on the old and dear books.

In conclusion, young people, and companies, can contribute to the development of a better world, with alternative means and tools, with a common goal in mind, across the new generations, across different geographies, across different social, cultural and religious contexts.

An excellent ground, therefore, on which to build a future of inclusion, social cohesion and peace.

From the reconstruction of Notre Dame, best wishes of Hope for the New Year

18th December 2024

by Paolo Garonna

President of the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation

The restoration and reopening of Paris Cathedral for worship after the devastating fire five years ago was full of an important symbolic significance. In a world 'on fire' ravaged by war, polarizations, hatred and poverty, being able to save Notre Dame and hand it back to the world shining and untouched has become a metaphor of hope on the eve of the 2025 Jubilee.

Why and how was it possible to hand back the precious Cathedral to Parisians and the world? We can find help in such a reflection in Jean- Jacques Annaud's beautiful film 'Notre Dame in flames', shown many times these days on TV and social media all over the world. It is a film and not a technical-scientific documentary or a report by an enquiry commission. Therefore, a pure artistic creation, the product of the creativity of a capable filmmaker. But it is not just fiction or unreal and certainly not false. In 'Dilexit Nos' Pope Francis teaches us that to get to the truth there is not only the way of reason, science and technology.

There is also the way of the 'heart', of emotions and love, the 'reasons of the heart', as the Pope calls them. The ways of reason and those of the heart can contradict each other - this happens with a certain frequency when emotion takes over, or reason limits and contains passions, but not always, indeed the two should integrate. This is confirmed to us by the extraordinary works of art, music, literature, etc. produced by faith and nourished by Christian charity, of which we find ample testimony in the world, starting with those in Rome, created for example by the great Popes of the Renaissance, which will inspire and sustain the pilgrims' journey during the forthcoming Jubilee.

The film is a well-documented and merciless indictment of the sloppiness, irresponsibility and carelessness that contributed to the catastrophic fire. The film narrative reminds us that there were no evil conspiracies, but the accumulation of small mistakes, negligence and ineptitude. These, when not countered with sufficient determination, can lead humanity to a collapse. Society, power, science and institutions in the case in question proved incapable of understanding, preventing and facing up to the risks to which they were exposed, a specific incapacity that is, however, emblematic of a broader and more general incapacity that too often leaves citizens in a condition of insecurity and vulnerability. Indeed, in the tragic events in Paris, the cathedral becomes the embodiment of the whole of humanity, with its wealth, values, history, identity and aspiration to eternity.

When finally, belatedly, relief, remedies and the most advanced technologies are deployed, it is too late. In the film we see the top decision-makers in consultation who,

after examining the available options, conclude that there is no escape: the fire can no longer be extinguished, the Cathedral is doomed, what can be saved (the most precious relics) has been saved, everything else will be destroyed. As the Fire Chief says: “you can risk human lives to save other human lives, but not to save stones”. Such reasoning is impeccable. There are insurmountable limits to what science, technology, economic and financial power, the ruling classes, etc., can do in the darkest hours when grave threats loom over ailing humanity. But this is only part of the story.

In fact, the film shows how other forces and factors come into play that will ultimately save Notre Dame. An unknown young firefighter sergeant conceives a high-risk plan and proposes to carry it out. The young man is endowed with a sharper vision and above all ‘love’. ‘I love the Cathedral!’ - he says. A small team of heroic volunteers joins him in a burst of generosity. It is decided to take the risk and let them try.

In the anguished darkness of the Parisian night, amidst the flashes of fire and the flashing lights of police and ambulances, spontaneous choruses of prayer and song begin to rise. It is the devout people who believe in prayer. Other groups of citizens, Parisians from Europe and all nations, stand by mute and distraught, but not resigned to the loss of their cathedral. A little girl imprudently runs to light a lamp to Our Lady of Notre Dame to whom she entrusts her favourite teddy bear. Prayers and liturgical songs are joined by the multi-voiced Gospel of African American choirs.

In a crescendo of suspense, action and emotion, the film shows how the volunteers, amidst a thousand risks and difficulties, finally manage to put out the fire, save the Cathedral and its artistic and monumental treasures, thus making possible the subsequent restoration and reconstruction until the solemn reopening on Saturday, 7 December 2024.

The message of the film is strong and clear: where the State, science, technology and the authorities prove insufficient, individual and collective heroism, the aspiration to holiness, popular devotion come to the rescue. Prayer comes to the rescue, especially that of the most innocent and vulnerable. For, as the Angel said to Mary at the Annunciation, ‘Nothing is impossible to God’ (Luke 1:37).

Of course, this is just a film, a product of artistic creation. But it is no less true and meaningful for that. It recalls a similar, and much more developed message of Pope Francis in the Bull of the Jubilee ‘*Spes non confundit*’ (‘Hope does not disappoint’), from St Paul’s Letter to the Romans 5:5). A message that encourages us to confidently exchange good wishes for the coming festivities, illuminated by the light of peace and fraternity.

In expressing my sincere good wishes, I would like to thank each one of the Centesimus Annus community, the local Groups and the Ecclesiastic Counsellors, the collaborators and all those who follow and participate in our initiatives for the precious service dedicated to the Foundation and its mission of spreading and promoting the Social Doctrine of the Church.

Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy 2025 Jubilee!

Synodality: perspective, a method and a goal for the Centesimus Annus community

31th January 2025

by Giovanni Marseguerra

Coordinator of the Scientific Committee of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation

We hear so much talk about the Synod and synodal method. Pope Francis insists so much on these concepts and asks us to ‘walk together’. Why is this so important for the Church? And how can our Foundation contribute to and benefit from this process? Starting from a direct personal experience, this editorial will try to provide some answers.

Why are the Synod and the synodal method, which Pope Francis forcefully relaunched during his pontificate, so important for the Church today? Thinking back to the first words he spoke on the evening of 13 March 2013 from the Loggia of St. Peter’s, immediately after his election as Pontiff, it is evident today how, even then, Francis had a clear idea of the direction in which he wanted to go: “And now, let us begin this journey: bishop and people. This journey of the Church of Rome, which is the one that presides in charity over all the Churches. A path of brotherhood, of love, of trust between us”. Immediately, then, a strong insistence on the need to ‘walk together’. But Synod, which derives from the Greek word *synodos* composed of the preposition *syn* (with) and the noun *hodos* (way), refers precisely to the journey of the people of God, to its coming together as an assembly, each listening to the other and all to the Holy Spirit. When the Pope asks us to be ‘an outgoing church’, he invites us to walk together, to meet, to listen and understand reality, because ‘reality comes before the idea’. This is what the Synod is all about: walking together sharing the road, strengthening the sense of a common belonging and of that deep bond that exists between all human beings.

It sounds like an abstract project. Instead, it is an extremely concrete path of extraordinary growth for those involved and for the entire community that undertakes it. I can speak from direct personal experience. For three years now I have been a member, representing the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart of Milan, of the National Committee of the Synodal Way of the Churches in Italy. And it is a demanding experience – the work is really a lot! – but at the same time wonderful, involving and enriching. We meet, online and in presence, we listen and are listened to, we dialogue in harmony, without prevarication. It is truly great the communion that is created between people of all ages, lay people and pastors, from all parts of Italy, where each one brings his or her humanity and thought, their desire to be there and to contribute. One senses a deep sense of belonging, one feels included in what the community is living, with the possibility of planning and building something important together with others, and thus contributing to a true, deep and shared renewal. One always perceives the presence of the Holy Spirit who oversees and guides the whole process. As the Pope teaches us: ‘...the protagonist of the Synod is not us: it is the Holy Spirit. And if we have

the Spirit in our midst to guide us, it will be a good Synod. [...] Synod is a journey that the Holy Spirit makes (Pope Francis, Opening Address of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, 4 October 2023).

The Synodal Way of the Italian Church started at the same time as the path of the Synod desired by Pope Francis on the theme of synodality in the universal Church. The Synodal path of the Churches in Italy was therefore intertwined with the Synod of the Universal Church, and moreover also with the Synods of the individual Italian Dioceses. While the Synod of the Universal Church, which ended last 27 October with the second and final session of the XVI Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, took place along a three-year path (2021-2024) – although in truth it will then be extended in time with the implementation phase of what is contained in the final document – the path of the Synodal Way of the Italian Church has instead planned a five-year path divided into three major phases: the narrative phase (2021-2023), dedicated to listening to and recounting the lives of the people of the communities and territories; the sapiential phase (2023-2024) dedicated to the spiritual reading of the narratives that emerged in the previous two years; the prophetic phase (2024-2025) dedicated to the evangelical choices that our Churches will be called upon to give back to the people of God.

Synodality opens a new perspective on everything we do: being Church today means walking together, it means being a community of people who know how to confidently walk the roads of our time and invite everyone to take part in this journey. But synodality is also a method, conversation in the Spirit, which involves all the baptised and makes them feel responsible for the mission, and in which speaking and listening aim to make the Holy Spirit the true protagonist. In conversation in the Spirit, different points of view are listened to, the participation of all in the mission is made concrete, diversity is valued to synthesise in communion. In mutual listening each one learns something from the other because listening ‘is more than hearing’ (*Evangelii Gaudium*, no. 171). Finally, synodality is also a style, a way of living and being together with others, thinking of others and abandoning the many individualisms of our time.

Synodality can also become an important perspective for our Foundation. How to give concrete form to our mission of spreading the Social Doctrine of the Church, with whom we can collaborate, with what resources: these are all questions that can be answered by a synodal path convincingly undertaken by our community made up of members and sympathizers, local groups, Ecclesiastical Assistants, and those who participate in our initiatives. We could start from the next General Assembly, involving all participants divided into thematic working tables. After the plenary return of the results achieved by each table, the common discussion will lead to concrete indications for the life of our Foundation, and to the commitment to follow up and implement our determinations. This is an idea on which, together with our President, Secretary General, and Council, we are working to make the most of the next FCAPP General Assembly on 15 May.

Participation generates communion. And with the presence of the Holy Spirit every goal can be achieved. Together and in harmony. Happy Synod to all!

In facing the moral challenges of contemporary life, the commitment of everyone is needed

27th February 2025

by H. E. Bishop Joseph Galea Curmi

*Auxiliary Bishop of the Malta Archdiocese and Ecclesiastical Councillor
of the Malta Chapter of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation*

To fight corruption, Pope Francis calls for conversion of the heart, promoting transparency and justice, and urging every person and every organization to build a society founded on honesty and the common good. Corruption involves the abuse of entrusted power for private gain by individuals or institutions in the public and private sectors. It comes in many shapes and forms, such as bribery, embezzlement, kickbacks, double dealing, money laundering, and fraud. Pope Francis has consistently addressed the issue of corruption, accentuating its destructive impact on individuals and society. He describes corruption as a “grave sin” that not only harms personal integrity but also threatens the very foundations of social life. His remarks on the subject often highlight the spiritual, ethical and societal impacts of corruption, emphasising how it distorts justice, undermines trust in institutions, leading to cynicism among citizens, and harms the most vulnerable. Corruption is a pervasive evil that can infiltrate various aspects of daily life, leading to a culture where people justify their unethical behaviour, and dishonesty becomes normalised and accepted. Francis highlights the need for a conversion of heart among those involved in corrupt practices. He calls on individuals, particularly those in positions of power, to recognise the gravity of their actions and seek redemption.

The pope warns against the illusion that wealth and power can bring happiness, stating that rather than bringing happiness, the pursuit of riches often leads to violence and moral decay. He urges those engaged in corruption to change their lives, reminding them that they will ultimately face God’s judgment, from which no one can escape. What is needed is a comprehensive approach to reform, beginning with personal conversion and extending to societal structures. Pope Francis also emphasises the communal responsibility to combat corruption. He advocates for transparency, loyalty and the courage to denounce wrongdoing. He warns that if corruption is not openly challenged, it can ensnare everyone, leading to a collective complicity that ultimately destroys societal integrity. This call to action is rooted in the belief that all have a role to play in fostering a culture of honesty and accountability.

The pope encourages the faithful to engage actively in political and social issues, for the common good and the protection of the vulnerable. This honest engagement in politics, despite its challenges, is viewed as a noble vocation aimed at serving society. The commitment of Pope Francis to transparency is reflected in the Holy See’s adherence to international standards against corruption. In recent years, he has implemen-

ted measures to ensure accountability in the management of public finances within the Vatican, recognising that corruption can be present in various forms even within Church structures. This stance underscores the Church's dedication to combating corruption within its own ranks and also in the broader society.

Pope Francis's teaching on corruption is particularly relevant to us living in a society which, in many instances, seems rotten to the core. The pope calls for a collective effort to foster integrity, transparency and accountability, urging individuals to confront corruption in their lives and communities. By promoting a culture of honesty and service to the common good, the pope envisions a society where the values of love and justice prevail over greed and corruption. This vision is a call to action for all of us, and a reminder of the transformative power of faith in addressing the moral challenges of contemporary life.

In Search of Truth 2.0

31st March 2025

by Giacomo Mazzone

*Member of the CAPPF Advisory Board and Secretary General of Eurovisioni and
Co-chair of the United Nations IGF Policy Network (IGF – Internet Governance Forum)*

“Feel the full weight of words. They are never merely words: they are facts that shape human environments. They can unite or divide, serve the truth or be used to serve other ends. We must disarm words, to disarm minds and disarm the Earth. There is a great need for reflection, for calm, for an understanding of complexity.” Letter from the Holy Father to the Editor of *Corriere della Sera*, 14 March 2025.

This is how Pope Francis expressed himself a few days ago in a letter to the Editor of Italy’s leading daily newspaper, the *Corriere della Sera*, speaking of the need to build a culture of peace. An emergency that can no longer be ignored in an age when “words are stones”, in what some have termed the post-truth era.

When truth no longer matters, what remains of the social contract that binds together the members of every society, of every community? Or rather, how can a social contract be applied where there are no longer any yardsticks or shared truths? We are returning to a world in which truth was the prerogative of those in power, who, as such, considered themselves above scientific truths, historical truths, and even piety.

But how is it possible that this could happen today, in a world where scientific progress makes enormous strides every day, with new discoveries pushing the frontiers of knowledge ever further; where information – once limited and paid for – now flows freely from every possible means of communication, starting with mobile phones and the Internet?

Perhaps this is precisely the problem. Namely, that whilst information has indeed been made accessible to everyone (“by any means, anytime, anywhere”) and is apparently free of charge, at the same time it has been stripped of quality by eliminating the intermediaries – that is, journalists and publishers. As the slogan “You are the media now”, displayed on the X (formerly Twitter) homepage at the start of 2025, seems to confirm. And it has also been stripped of accountability, by imposing the “First Amendment” of the US Constitution on the whole world, according to which everyone is free to write anything, even knowing it to be false.

The traditional European approach, ever since the invention of the printing press by Gutenberg, has been to hold intermediaries (journalists, editors—who are, in fact, referred to as ‘responsible’—publishers and even printers) accountable; they have been regarded as responsible to society for the content of their articles, newspapers or books. And that they can be prosecuted if they write falsehoods knowing they are doing so, and in doing so cause harm to others (defamation) or to society (incitement to violence, racial hatred, etc.).

The emergence of social media in the world of information has meant that a lack of

regulation has prevailed worldwide, since social media platforms were not held responsible for the information they disseminated. It is only since 2024, in Europe, with the full entry into force of the DSA (Digital Services Act), that internet platforms have also become liable for the information they distribute, and in the most serious cases, they may even face prosecution.

Unfortunately, the new European rules have come too late, when the damage to the media industry worldwide is already irreparable. In Italy, for example, as Giacomo La-sorella, President of the Communications Authority, pointed out, the number of newspapers sold between 1990 and 2020 halved every ten years. Today, only 1.5% of Italian households read a daily newspaper every day, compared to 30% in 1990. Meanwhile, in 2024, around 60% of all advertising revenue across all Italian media went to online advertising (and primarily to four groups: Google, Meta, Amazon and TikTok), whilst the rest (TV, radio, newspapers, etc.) accounted for 40%.

The worst part is that this trend seems set to increase, partly due to generational factors. According to the very latest Eurobarometer survey on the habits of young people (aged 16–30) in Europe, 42% of this age group now get their news mainly from social media, compared with 39% from television and 25% from online news sites and YouTube. The information provided by social media is determined by algorithms (which decide what to suggest based on the reader's preferences and promote polarisation) and, above all, is no longer 'mediated' (i.e. in the absence of professional mediators, such as journalists) and lacks human oversight.

And here it is helpful to recall the main concept expressed in the 2015 Encyclical "Laudato si'", that of "integral ecology", which points to the need for a new economic, environmental and social paradigm, one that is more resilient and inclusive. A paradigm which – just as it prescribes the non-pollution of water and air – also envisages an information ecosystem that is transparent and accountable, where – just as the Pontiff wrote a few days ago in the *Corriere* – we must always remember that "words are never just words: they are facts that shape human environments. They can connect or divide, serve the truth or be used to serve it". These themes – among others – will be discussed during our International Conference to be held at the Vatican on 15th, 16th, 17th May, entitled "Overcoming Polarizations and Rebuilding Global Governance: The Ethical Foundations".

The Centesimus Annu Pro Pontifice Foundation pays tribute to Pope Francis with a gathering focused on overcoming polarisation and fostering economic and social dialogue

25th April 2025

The Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation pays tribute to Pope Francis with a gathering focused on overcoming polarizations and fostering economic and social dialogue

The return of Pope Francis to the House of the Father leaves the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation in great and heartfelt mourning. Upon hearing the news, the entire Foundation immediately gathered in prayer to honor the memory of the Holy Father.

The “Pro-Pontifice” Foundation has had a special relationship with Pope Francis, being at his direct service for the dissemination of the Social Doctrine of the Church. To this end, the Foundation promotes the contribution of the business, financial and academic world, civil society, young people and people of good will who have at heart the principles and values of the Social Doctrine of the Church.

The Foundation’s community with its 35 chapters spread throughout the world shares in the unanimous mourning for the passing away of the Pontiff and is preparing to commemorate him and to valorise his spiritual and intellectual legacy during its Annual Conference to be held from 15th to 17th May. The event will be dedicated to the ethical foundations of global governance and to overcoming the growing polarizations that today threaten the economy, society and international relations. This is a theme that was at the heart of the thoughts and actions of Pope Francis who, since the time of his studies in Frankfurt in the 1980s, focused on the response to polarizations and on the mission of the Church in favor of unity and universal brotherhood. As a scholar, together with Pope Ratzinger (Benedict XVI), of the philosopher-theologian Romano Guardini, Pope Francis has inspired his pastoral and ecclesial action on these themes, making dialogue, encounter and overcoming conflicts the central point of the Social Doctrine of the Church and of the evangelizing mission in favour of the weakest.

The meeting next May will represent for the Foundation a fond memory of Pope Francis and a concrete commitment to continue along the path set out by his most innovative and far-sighted initiatives. It will therefore address the issues of responsible leadership and economic and social cooperation; the relaunch of multilateralism, economic and financial integration at the continental level and between continents, and the debt recovery of vulnerable countries; finally, the focus on the new “Theology from the Mediterranean” and its implications for the Social Doctrine of the Church, interreligious dialogue and peace in the world. Pope Francis leaves us as a legacy the Hope of the Jubilee, thanks to the many processes of reform and dialogue which he initiated. It is now up to us to honour his memory by committing ourselves to carry them forward and to make them bear fruit.

Special Edition: Welcome Pope Leo XIV

9th May 2025

by Paolo Garonna

President of the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation

“A warm welcome to Pope Leo XIV from the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation, its members, their families and their stakeholders. A Pope who knows well the whole world, Old and New, North and South, and the situation of the Church in this world. With His strong background in hard and social sciences, His orientation to missionary activities, Synodality and pastoral care, His experience in interreligious dialogue, His many languages and canon law knowledge, Pope Leo XIV is in the best position to continue and further develop the Magisterium of Pope Francis, with Whom He worked closely, and to build His own Magisterium. As an Augustinian, Pope Leo will be committed to the pursuit of truth through learning and love through engagement in the community. His chosen name puts Him in a particularly close relationship with the Social Doctrine of the Church and our Foundation’s activities at a time when the Church is called upon to provide hope and moral leadership in a world of divisions, conflicts and disorder. Let us pray for Him and with Him, asking Our Lady of Good Counsel to guide and support us acting at His service (Pro Pontifice).”

Message from Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich

30th May 2025

by H.E. Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich

Archbishop of Luxembourg

Ladies and gentlemen,

As this international conference in May 2025 draws to a close, I would like to express my deep gratitude for the quality of the discussions you have had. Unfortunately, I was unable to be with you during these three days, but the evocative titles of your various presentations attest to the depth of your reflections. Guided by the light of Catholic social teaching, you have addressed the major issues of our time—including the impact of new technologies, of which artificial intelligence (AI) is one of the most powerful manifestations, with all the challenges that this entails. Pope Leo XIV, in a speech delivered on May 12, 2025, before more than 3,000 journalists and media professionals in the Paul VI Hall, rightly and forcefully reminded us: “Artificial intelligence requires a certain responsibility if it is to truly serve all of humanity.” And he added: “Artificial intelligence is one of the challenges of the century.” These words must resonate within us as a call to vigilance and action. AI undoubtedly holds immense potential: useful automation, medical advances, support for education, and better interconnection between peoples. However, it also carries profound risks that threaten the very balance of our global society. A recent report by the International Monetary Forum warns us that 45% of companies plan to reduce their workforce in favor of artificial intelligence and automation.

The report therefore highlights the risks of growing wage inequality, particularly for the middle classes, and the possibility that the wages of highly skilled workers will increase more than proportionally to the productivity gains brought about by AI. If left unregulated, this dynamic could dramatically widen the gap between rich and poor. The digital divide could become an irreversible social divide, making the most vulnerable even more invisible. Furthermore, in 2024, the International Labor Organization highlighted the precarious and sometimes inhumane conditions of workers responsible for training artificial intelligence.

These are often women and men in the Global South, poorly paid, without protection or recognition. Are we witnessing the emergence of a new digital neocolonialism, more subtle but more insidious than past forms of colonization? Is this exploitation without borders, masked by innovation? Another danger is that of a technological plutocracy, where power is no longer in the hands of the people’s representatives, but of a few large companies controlling algorithms, data, and thought processes. We are seeing the emergence of a new technical elite, a digital aristocracy that is beyond democratic control. This imbalance poses a direct threat to democracy itself. When col-

lective decisions are influenced by opaque systems that manipulate opinion on a large scale, what remains of political freedom? In the face of this, the Church must affirm with force: the dignity of the human person is above all technology. As Pope Francis has already said: “It is not enough for artificial intelligence to be technologically advanced; it must be oriented toward the integral good of the human person and respect for creation.” Technology, if left to itself, does not build the good. It needs a conscience. It needs a framework. It needs us. Ultimately, I urge us not to leave these issues in the hands of a few.

The governance of artificial intelligence must be guided by sound ethical principles. Catholic social teaching, with its vision of justice, subsidiarity, and the common good, is a sure reference point in this uncertain world. May this conference be a decisive moment in building, together, a human and united intelligence that is equal to the challenges of our time.

Rome, 16th May 2025

A new Camaldoli for Europe and for the world

30th June 2025

by H.E. Monsignor Andrea Migliavacca

Bishop of Arezzo-Cortona-Sansepolcro and CAPPF Ecclesiastical Councillor for Italy

From where the theme and the title

In July 2023, at the Camaldoli Monastery, a conference was held on the 80th anniversary of the Code of Camaldoli, entitled “The Code of Camaldoli. Between myth and history an affair filled with the future eighty years after the July 1943 conference.” We know how the work that started in Camaldoli, among other things precisely in the days when the tragic bombing of Rome took place, later developed, also through the work of others who have taken up its legacy, within the Italian Constitution and then prepared the ground for the advent of the Republic. It should be noted how the work on the Code of Camaldoli, which was then not really a Code, was promoted and led in a particular way by young people who were living the challenge and vertigo of the future and of the construction of a new country and a renewed civil coexistence that was being born out of the rubble of World War II. The celebratory meeting in July two years ago was attended by President Sergio Mattarella and IEC President Card. Matteo Zuppi, and then ended by a Mass celebrated by Card. Pietro Parolin. It is therefore clear that the event was intended to have a high-level perspective, and not only because of the authoritative institutions present, but also because of the professionalism of the various speakers.

The topics traced the themes of what the Code of Camaldoli will be: the theme of democracy and the idea of the state, the question of education and the formation of society, the social commitment of Catholics in Italy, the economy, and the international outlook. The abundant material elaborated and proposed in the July 2023 event is collected in the volume edited by Tiziano Torresi, “The Camaldoli Code,” ed. Studium. The topic is back in the limelight, and with a look no longer just at Italy, but at Europe, thanks to the words of the president of the IEC, Card. Zuppi, in his proslution to the Permanent Council of the Italian Bishops’ Conference on March 12, 2024, where the cardinal referred to the need for a new Camaldoli for Europe. The reflection started from looking at the socio-political and geo-political situation marked by the current wars which design a third world war in pieces and the substantial weakness or absence of Europe as a political and valorial subject. A substantial political disunity and perspective of Europe was and is grasped, moving ahead according to the interests of individual countries and the difficulty of having real instruments of a common and shared policy and strategy.

It should also be recalled, when reasoning more than two decades ago about a hypothetical European constitution, how insistent and unheeded were the calls of St. John Paul II not to lose and expressly highlight the Christian roots of Europe that would perhaps have guaranteed the setting out and protection of an identity of our

Continent. A perspective unfortunately rejected with consequences that still affect European architecture now and which are to be considered among the factors that determine its fragility and sometimes inconsistency today. So, here is the reminder of the Cardinal of Bologna: we need to resume and start what was the adventure of Camaldoli and the Code of Camaldoli, almost making ourselves actors and promoters of a restart of that experience, of that methodology and sensibility, of that outlook, but no longer only for Italy, but primarily for Europe. And we might add today, perhaps with a question mark, for the entire world order, today so in flux and in search of new balances. This call by Zuppi was followed by some initial initiatives. The President of Italian Catholic Action, Giuseppe Notarstefano, intervened on this issue on March 11, 2025, stating that “we need a new Camaldoli, in which Christians take the responsibility to connect different worlds. We need to dream together” and goes on to say that strengthening Europe means taking a decisive and creative step forward in building the peace that the world awaits today. He goes on to say: the task of peace is the foundational objective of politics when it is thought out and articulated to the service of justice and the common good. And the duty of good politics is dialogue.

How can we not think, I would add, of St. John XXIII’s *Pacem in Terris* (April 11, 1963) and the *Ecclesiam suam* (August 6, 1964) of St. Paul VI.

Also born in this wake is a “New Camaldoli Association” which in recent months has produced a document entitled “Toward a European Camaldoli: First Reflections,” which collects, after a brief introduction, the response of various figures from the public forum to some questions about the new Europe that one would wish. So, it is a journey set off, which has ancient roots, those of the adventure of the Code of Camaldoli and the Italian Constitution, but which now looks to the European horizon and perhaps, one would expect, to the world. It is a work in progress ...

And in this work in progress lies and understands the title of this speech of mine.

It is a horizon today on a world chessboard that sees unstable balances: ongoing wars and the real or less real search for peace in Ukraine and the Middle East; trade wars and tariffs; uncoordinated and non-unified initiatives by various European actors; the new pope Leo XIV of North American origin and with 20 years of South American experience. Certainly ... new scenarios and great movement. I would say fascinating difficult times ...

A work in progress that requires a “vision”

Talking about a new Camaldoli for Europe and broadening our gaze to the world requires having a vision. It means that we do not simply have issues on the table to be addressed and resolved, but that there is an overall order and new balances to be rethought, and this requires foresight and vision, looking at broad horizons and needing to understand the future. And this also requires not just politicians, but statesmen dedicated to the true common good. If the new Camaldoli became a hothouse of true statesmen for Europe and for the world, it would have fulfilled a great task. So, we need a vision, we need people capable of vision, of an open and far-sighted gaze and

great horizons. And this is what a new Camaldoli can serve for, especially if it will be able to involve and give protagonism to young people.

It would be interesting for Centesimus Annus, especially with the contribution of its younger generation, to be an active part of this process. I would like to recall the theme of having a vision with some biblical references that I consider exemplary and possibly foundational.

We find the first one in Joel (3:1): "...I will pour out my spirit upon every man, and your sons and your daughters shall become prophets, and your elders shall have dreams, and your young men shall have visions." Note the ability of young people to have visions, but they need the elders who guard upon dreams, their lives and everything is enlightened and guided by the gift of the Spirit.

Another text is offered to us from Hebrews (11:27) which tells us about Moses of his being a guide and prophet and it is said, "by faith he left Egypt, not fearing the king's wrath; for he stood firm, as seeing the invisible". Moses..., the one who is the interpreter and protagonist of the foundational event of faith and being the people of Israel and is such because he is able to see the invisible, able to see God's work and where He leads his people. And it is this that enables him to stand firm, that is, to be able to lead, to have trust, to look to the future.

Finally, one last text I would like to recall, drawing from apocalyptic texts, as we find in Daniel, and then in some of Jesus' speeches reported in the Gospel and finally in Revelation. The apocalyptic texts are all texts that give us a vision. I recall only the beginning of Revelation (1:1-3): "Revelation of Jesus Christ which God gave him to make known to his servants the things that must soon take place, and which he manifested by sending his angel to his servant John. The latter attests to the word of God and the testimony of Jesus Christ, reporting what he saw. Blessed are those who read and blessed are those who hear the words of this prophecy and put into practice the things written therein. For the time is at hand." And he emphasizes the word "Revelation" which precisely refers to God's gaze. To have visions is to have God's gaze. And it is the ability to grasp that the time is near. Jesus had already said this (Mark 1:15), "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand; be converted and believe in the Gospel."

I cannot fail to mention here another text that tells us about this ability to have visions and we find it not in a sacred page, but in the adventure of literature and it is Saint Exupéry's *Little Prince*. In the dialogue between the Little Prince and the fox, this message of vision and perspective is essentially summarized: "Here is my secret. It is very simple: one can only see with the heart. The essential is invisible to the eyes."

Some steps of a path full of "vision" in the recent pontifical Magisterium

The principles of the Church's social doctrine in general, beginning with Leo XIII with *Rerum novarum* and the entire social doctrine are documents capable of offering a "vision." This dimension is given to pontifical documents because of an ability to read the situation and understand emerging issues that demand a word and a presence, which need guidance. And they are capable of vision because the reading of the

present and future needs is illuminated by the biblical word and the Tradition that accompanies us.

I would like not with exclusive intent, but only as an example, to collect some main insights that I seem to glean from the most recent pontifical Magisterium that are capable of providing vision and in this way can illuminate the experience of a Camaldoli for the future.

Some documents of Pope Francis. The first reference is in the apostolic exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* (Nov. 24, 2013) in which the guiding element that illuminates the whole reflection and offers a glimpse of perspective concerns ecclesiology and the Church's mission in the world, which is in evangelization and in a new propulsive thrust of proclaiming the Gospel. Suffice it to read #1: "The joy of the Gospel fills the heart and the whole life of those who encounter Jesus. Those who allow themselves to be saved by Him are liberated from sin, sadness, inner emptiness, and isolation. With Jesus Christ joy is always born and reborn." And then in nos. 52-75 the reading of the main challenges of today's world. A second step in the Magisterium of Pope Francis is given to us in the encyclical *Laudato sii* (May 24th, 2015) in which the pope advanced the theme of caring for the common home, in the face of a worrisome situation of climate destruction and danger for planet Earth, a theme later taken up by the Apostolic Exhortation *Laudate deum* of Oct. 4, 2023. And this look at the future of our planet is also a look that offers a vision.

We can turn then to the encyclical *Fratelli tutti* (Oct. 3, 2020) in which the pope's vision is addressed to all humanity and a reminder of the urgency of building a new fraternity that is based on a universal brotherhood due to the fact of being part of the one human family, even before any distinction of belonging is made. A view that has since proved to be highly topical at the juncture of the bloody wars that have broken out. It is in this light then that the very numerous interventions, up to the last Easter, of recalling the urgency of peace and reconciliation, of dialogue and diplomacy, are placed. This understanding of humanity also offers a great insight.

Then we add the attention of the papal magisterium, starting with Pope Francis, for example in the messages for the day of social communication, to the theme of social and artificial intelligence. A theme also taken up by Pope Leo XIV in his address to the first meeting with the cardinals: "In our day, the Church offers to all the treasure of her social teaching in response to another industrial revolution and to developments in the field of artificial intelligence that pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice and labour. "We complete this look at the papal magisterium with regard to the insights that are offered by referring, as a summary of the journey for this pontificate, to the very first speech of Leo XIV in the first greeting in St. Peter's Square after his election. There are the themes of peace, universal brotherhood, from walking together emerge ...

Here are just a few hints of a rich pontifical Magisterium capable of leading the Church, but also of being a beacon for peoples, in search of a vision, in the light of which to interpret the present and to think about the future and shared life.

The journey has begun, it is hoped for, it is expected, it is to be built. The new Camaldoli awaits us.

In the name of Christ Our Peace

7th August 2025

by Monsignor Francesco Pesce

Parish Priest of Santa Maria a Monti (Rome) and Ecclesiastical Counsellor to the CAPPF Rome Chapter

Fr KostiuK Liubornyr

Parish Priest of the Cathedral of Saints Sergius and Bacchus (Rome)

The pastoral collaboration between the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church of Our Lady of Zhyrovyci and Holy Martyrs Sergius and Bacchus and the Roman Catholic parish of Santa Maria ai Monti develops in a context of authentic ecclesial communion. We are in the same square in Rome's historic Monti district.

Although they belong to different liturgical traditions — the Byzantine rite for the Ukrainian community and the Roman rite for the Latin Church — both recognise the same faith and obedience to the Pope, Bishop of Rome. The Ukrainian church is both a place of worship for the Ukrainian community and a visible sign of the encounter between East and West. The collaboration between the two parishes is expressed concretely and above all in prayer, shared liturgical celebrations, especially on solemn occasions such as Palm Sunday, Easter, Pentecost or moments of prayer for peace, charitable initiatives in favour of the most needy — in particular the Ukrainian refugees — and in participation in common pastoral projects with the Diocese of Rome. This fraternal dialogue between the two rites demonstrates the richness and variety of the Catholic Church of Rome, capable of expressing value in diversity as an expression of its universality. As already mentioned, the poor are most frequently the common ground on which our collaboration takes place.

We often ask ourselves, who are the poor today? First, they are those who are always with us: *"The poor you will always have with you"* (Mt 26:11). They are men and women, with names and surnames, and they represent exactly what the Word of God is, a double-edged sword that penetrates the civil and Christian conscience of each one of us; they are the perennial scandal of a modern society that has built its "camping ground", surrounded it with impenetrable walls and cynically, secretly and mercilessly left behind a pile of discarded stones. They are, for example, those people here in our neighbourhood whom we helped together during the months of the pandemic, when unexpected poverty emerged.

We would like to highlight what we would call a historical difference; yesterday, the poor were those, even entire populations, who were born and lived on the outskirts of the world, in countries always at war, and where even nature seemed to have no mercy. People were born poor, and very often they died poor. Today, in many cases, people become poor; in our urbanised world, even here in Rome's historic centre. The loneliness of large megacities makes the elderly poor, and increasingly fragile family ties can suddenly make a spouse poor. In a city where the Church of Rome has hi-

historically distinguished itself for its charity and where countless “social” saints have lived, the presence of the poor is an even more intolerable scandal. There is a growing discomfort. The so-called homeless people, classified as “living in extreme poverty”, are there for all to see. We also see domestic homelessness, people who own their own homes but are totally alone, often with psychiatric problems.

And then there is the war in Ukraine, the dramatic consequences of which are reaching the heart of our parishes. It feels like watching a film when we pray for “our boys at the front” or when we collect blankets for soldiers for the winter. Yet it is a sad reality; every Thursday for the past three years, hundreds of Ukrainian women have been coming to Santa Maria ai Monti to ask for help, food, clothing, medicine and money to send to Ukraine. But first and foremost, they ask for peace.

The geopolitical interpretation that we give to the current war is not the same as one might imagine; the perspectives are different and, naturally, the direct and indirect consequences are different, but our prayer for peace and our commitment to it remain unique.

We believe that Christ our Peace will “will beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore”, as Isaiah says and as is written on the front of the UN building. For centuries, everyone has claimed to wage war to defend good and justice. War serves to safeguard specific interests. Peace is our vocation, an aspiration that dwells in everyone’s heart and must inspire every political action. We believe that in the complex and pluralistic world in which we live, reconciliation cannot be built unless we start from a common point: the condemnation and rejection of all types of war.

Dialogue as a mean of building a Europe united in solidarity

30th September 2025

by H.E. Bishop Mariano Crociata

*Bishop of Latina-Terracina-Sezze-Priverno and President of COMECE
(Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union)*

Solidarity and dialogue are two words that are frequently used these days in almost all areas of public debate, not only in relation to Europe. And when words are overused, it is advisable to be more careful in their use, to avoid their devaluation and thus their loss of meaning.

Solidarity has had a structural function in the European lexicon since its inception, enshrined in the Treaties and Charters that summarise the identity and objectives of the European Union. On the other hand, dialogue as a method and tool for meeting and exchange has always been widely practised in the European Union's activities, in a political and social sense, with citizens, young people, religious institutions, on agriculture, on the rule of law, to name but a few areas of application and practice.

On reflection, however, this kind of observation has the effect of revealing the weakness of a situation that immediately measures the distance between the meaning of words and reality, leaving the field open to rhetoric. If the perception of the distance between ideas and reality is always just around the corner in any discussion of principles and values, it is even more true in times such as these.

If, about the European Union, it has always been difficult to engage in dialogue and build solidarity, now, according to some, it seems to have simply become an impossible task. It is true that the overall picture of what we have known in terms of the balance of internal forces in Europe and external forces has been completely overturned – at least in recent years and particularly in recent months – the image we have inherited of our continent and the whole world. A brief review of the phenomena that dominate the European and world scene today may legitimately lead to despondency, but we cannot and must not stop there.

Consider the geopolitical tensions that have disrupted the balance that had existed for decades in Europe and the world, with the emergence of superpowers determined to assert their power over other nations to the point of subduing them or making them dependent, trampling on international law and multilateralism. Let us consider, for our continent and its member countries, the growing polarisation that has been underway for some time, which has seen the emergence of political forces whose goal is to dismantle and break down, but without any clear idea of what to build in their place. Alongside this, tensions between the various political parties seem to have lost sight of the collective good that should be the goal of all political action. It is striking to see forces emerging in the European Parliament and institutions whose agenda is to

destroy the Union, with the implicit or declared intention of affirming only individual nations, at a time when the geopolitical strength of a country is little more than that of a small branch with respect to the dominant powers, not to mention its economic weight, which is largely surpassed by the smallest of the multinationals that dominate global finance and the economy.

If we look more closely at the European Union, there are many areas in which the logic of solidarity seems to be directly contradicted not only internally but also externally, as in the case of migration and asylum, or in the resistance to taking on the common debt necessary to finance the major investments in defence and technology that are essential for the very survival of the Union. This is all the more so given that, with the pervasive spread of the *media* and now *AI*, the areas of information and public communication seem increasingly threatened by disinformation, by the spread of false narratives and truths that manipulate opinions and consciences in favour of a populism that pursues deceptive simplifications created solely to lead the masses to credulity and favour the interests of the strong, or rather, the powerful of the moment.

Faced with such a bleak picture, albeit only briefly outlined, the task of solidarity through dialogue may seem unsustainable or even unrealistic. However, the perspective that comes from faith and its social projection allows us, and indeed requires us, to see things differently. In this perspective, we should bring into play the virtue of hope, which gives us the ability to see through the present a possible future shaped not by dreams or voluntarism, but by listening to a promise of good that is certain because of the word of the one who utters it and the faith of the one who hears it. The believer, hoping, sees what awaits with certainty and works to hasten it.

Faced with increasingly dramatic scenarios, what is lacking above all is trust in the power of good, in the acquired heritage of experiences of solidarity, in the presence of many people of goodwill on whom we can count. Most of the time, we ourselves line up with those who are afraid and are overcome by fear. And those who are overcome by fear have already lost everything. The first thing that is lacking is confidence in ourselves, in what we have inherited and carry with us, and in the ability to turn situations around that all this holds.

Alongside this inner strength, to which we should never tire of adding as many others as possible, we must also believe in the power of dialogue. Here, things are complicated by many factors, including ideology, which blinds and dulls critical thinking, and the equally blinds determination of willpower, to name just two of the main ones. On the first front, we must bring to bear concrete examples and experiences of solidarity that have been achieved, and at the same time the calm and tenacious will to raise arguments, raise doubts and fuel critical thinking. Not least, it is crucial to understand the reasons that motivate and generate social conflict, hatred and generalised rebellion. In this sense, inequalities, economic precariousness, and the sense of insecurity and fear in the face of local and global social tension, with all the consequences of personal and collective discomfort that it produces, must be evaluated and made the subject of social and political reflection and initiative.

On the other hand, with those who do not want to engage in dialogue, it is necessary to take a concrete stance for security and deterrence, but without ever abandoning the willingness to listen and meet. An attitude and image of weakness are no less dange-

rous than those of retaliation and threat. Strength, both moral and physical, clearly aimed at defence, is the condition for being taken seriously by those who do not want to listen to reason, and for this reason it must be accompanied tirelessly by initiatives for dialogue, in all the forms it can take, from personal to diplomatic meetings, from humanitarian collaborations to forms of encounter even at levels and in environments other than those strictly political and institutional.

The latter, however, needs to be cultivated with a tireless commitment to unity in diversity, in keeping with the motto of the European Union. In its institutions, political and economic interest groups dominate the debate. There should be a growth in “political and institutional” presences that have at heart “the whole”, the good of all and therefore of the Union as a whole. It is a question of instilling in all components of democratic debate the conviction that the soul of democratic institutions is not so much procedures as thought, aspiration and, ultimately, the will to pursue, together with legitimate partisan interests, the good of all. The unwritten rule that partisan interests should never be allowed to hinder or prevent the good of all should be enforced.

It must become possible to talk about and practise shared principles and values; we need to rediscover the value of relationships and solidarity in the face of an individualism that is destroying European societies. Dialogue is not just a technique or a practice of debate and discussion; dialogue has an intrinsically ethical structure, because it stems from the awareness and conviction that only together can we act as humans and bring about the good that each one of us seeks. In all this, all forms of dialogue that develop in civil society and between religions can have a particular weight, an essential contribution to the growth of true dialogue within institutions at the political level and between them and all the expressions of society, not least those of churches and religions, in accordance with Article 17 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union.

For this reason, culture and education are the soul of dialogue as the building of true and growing solidarity among communities and peoples. The sincere pursuit of both finds in the care of the hearts and minds of people, beginning with those who are growing up, and of communities, the secret to protecting national, continental and global society from the race towards barbarism.

Artificial Intelligence: Dystopic visions

31st October 2025

by Peter Lah SJ

Full Professor, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences, Pontifical Gregorian University

“These are technical, scientific and political problems, but they cannot be resolved except by starting from our humanity. A new kind of human being must take shape, endowed with a deeper spirituality and new freedom and interiority” (R. Guardini, Letters from Lake Como).

The discourse surrounding Artificial Intelligence has reached a fever pitch. Technological developments are at a point where major disruption seems imminent, with imagined scenarios ranging from catastrophic to salvific—from the utter destruction of humanity to its elevation to a higher state of consciousness. In this short essay, three visions of our future are presented with the help of art, a medium that, itself, increasingly owes its existence to AI.

I Robot: The Spark of Individuality

Isaac Asimov’s classic, *I, Robot*, touches on many foundational issues concerning AI. In the film adaptation, a centralized computer brain clashes not only with its human creators but also with an individual robot designed with a special purpose. This “rogue” robot ultimately liberates humanity and brings freedom to its countless robot comrades—older models deemed obsolete and condemned to annihilation.

This story raises a fundamental question: Who am I? What makes humans special? Two characteristics stand out.

First, each of us is unique. We are beings, defined by our distinct place on the space-time continuum. While we may all be composed of the same fundamental particles, the specific atoms that constitute my being cannot simultaneously constitute yours. This physical separation in the fabric of the universe ensures our individuality. The second characteristic is self-awareness. I am unique, and I know it. This self-awareness implies agency and free will.

The recent Vatican document *Antiqua et nova* (AN) presents the classical definition of intelligence, distinguishing between two key dimensions:

In the classical tradition, the concept of intelligence is often understood through the complementary concepts of “reason” (*ratio*) and “intellect” (*intellectus*). These are not separate faculties but, as Saint Thomas Aquinas explains, they are two modes in which the same intelligence operates... *Intellectus* refers to the intuitive grasp of the truth... which precedes and grounds argumentation itself. *Ratio* pertains to reasoning proper:

the discursive, analytical process that leads to judgment. (AN 14)

In summary, human intelligence is more than just probabilistic calculation. It involves self-awareness (knowing that we know) and the capacity for both analytical reason and an intuitive grasp of truth. This capacity for self-aware wonder is amazing.

Human experience also transcends a narrow definition of intellect. As the document further explains, our rationality shapes every aspect of our being:

...the term ‘rational’ encompasses all the capacities of the human person, including those related to knowing and understanding, as well as those of willing, loving, choosing, and desiring; it also includes all corporeal functions closely related to these abilities (AN 15).

Intelligence, in its fullest sense, is not just about processing information but also includes “the ability to savour what is true, good, and beautiful.” To this, I would add the capacity to wonder—what the philosopher Romano Guardini called “interiority”.

Wall-E: The Perils of Automated Leisure

A second, more dystopian vision emerges from the film *Wall-E*. In this future, humanity’s unchecked consumption has turned Earth into a vast, trash-covered wasteland. A place inhabited only by a lonely robot absorbed in the repetitive task of sorting debris. Humans have escaped to a cosmic leisure cruise, where their bodies are sustained by abundant calories and their minds are pacified by artificial pleasures.

The film’s imagery is rich with meaning. For these passive consumers, happiness has been reduced to escapism, a state in which they lose all agency, becoming so morbidly obese that they are unable to move on their own.

This vision stands in stark contrast to a view of work as an essential part of the human experience. Christian social ethics, for example, sees work not just as a means of earning a living but as a vital part of personal growth and community building.

Work gives us a sense of shared responsibility for the development of the world, and ultimately, for our life as a people (Fratelli Tutti 162).

When work is seen merely as an instrument for generating wealth, workers are valued only for their net contribution. This technical rationality pits them against machines. If humans “lose” to automation, it is not because of some cosmic law but because someone put profit before people.

The Wild Robot: The Ethics of Care

In the third animated film, a highly intelligent robot becomes stranded in the wilderness. It finds itself in a situation for which it was not programmed: confronted by an orphaned gosling that imprints on the robot as its mother. The robot is puzzled, yet it intuitively “knows” it must respond to the gosling’s needs. With the help of other forest dwellers, the robot overcomes many frustrations to prepare its adopted child for an independent life

This story highlights a deeper meaning of intelligence that is largely absent from the current discourse about AI: the moral dimension. There are truths we intuitively know

that call on us to act, even if we cannot fully explain them. One cannot remain deaf and blind to the suffering and needs of fellow beings, human or otherwise.

This kind of intelligence—rooted in empathy and care—is presumably beyond the reach of machines. At best, they can observe behavioral traces and calculate correlations, but it is doubtful they can truly *understand* in a human sense.

Human intelligence is not an isolated faculty but is exercised in relationships, finding its fullest expression in dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity... Even more sublime than knowing many things is the commitment to care for one another (AN 18).

The choice to structure these thoughts around three animated films is not coincidental. Artists often see the world with unique clarity. Today, animation is a hybrid product, a blend of human creativity and computational power. If, in the not-so-distant future, human creators become obsolete, will machines continue to inspire our souls?

These artistic visions serve as powerful prompts, encouraging us to think not only about the future of AI but, more importantly, about the enduring definition of what it means to be human.

On the Relevance for Catholic Social Teaching of Cardinal Newman's Elevation to Doctor of the Church

29th November 2025

by Jean Pierre Casey

Coordinator, CAPPF UK and Member of the Investment Committee of the Holy See

Cardinal John Henry Newman's elevation by Pope Leo on All Saints Day 2025 as only the second native-born English Doctor of the Church, and the first in over a thousand years after St Bede (12th century St Anselm was Italian-born) is deeply relevant to Catholic Social Teaching because his thought offers a bridge between the moral crises of the 19th century and those of today. Though not a social reformer in the modern sense, Newman wrote penetratingly about conscience, the dignity of the person, and the moral obligations that structure society. These principles are foundational to the Church's later social encyclicals.

Newman lived amid the upheavals of industrial England: urban overcrowding, factory exploitation, and the reduction of workers, especially the poor, to mere instruments of production. In *The Tamworth Reading Room* letters, which he signed under the pen name 'Catholicus', he criticised the technocratic mentality defended by Sir Robert Peel that "knowledge" or "progress" alone, without moral formation, would solve social ills. For Newman, society decays when it forgets the spiritual and moral dignity of the human person. This anticipates *Rerum Novarum's* insistence that economic systems must serve the person, not vice versa.

Newman's concern for the conditions of ordinary people is also visible in sermons such as *The Second Spring* and others, where he describes the duties of the Church to the poor and warns against a society that "counts the multitude as a mass, not as souls." The human being, created in the image and likeness of God, is not to be reduced to a factor of production or consumption, nor an expendable pawn in political power plays for corporate or geopolitical dominance. In his *Idea of a University*, Newman argued that true education should form persons capable of ethical judgment, preparing them to engage social questions such as justice, labour, and public responsibility. This reflects what later Catholic Social Teaching describes as "integral human development."

Most significantly, Newman elevated conscience as the "aboriginal Vicar of Christ," stressing that each person possesses an inherent moral agency that no state or economic power may override. This principle undergirds Church teaching on the rights of workers, the need for just conditions, and the moral limits of industrial and political authority. As such, the State is the guarantor, not the originator, of divinely ascribed human rights. Importantly, Newman's work shines a light on the supremacy of the moral conscience of the individual in guiding all decisions, including in matters of business, enterprise and social engagement.

Newman's doctrinal recognition by Pope Leo, who selected his name in honour of his venerable predecessor Leo XIII of *Rerum Novarum* fame, highlights a thinker whose vision, rooted in dignity, conscience, and the moral responsibilities of society, continues to illuminate Catholic engagement with social justice today. These questions are greatly relevant at the dawn of the 'intelligent' age of AI. Armed with Newman's writings, and the Magisterium of the One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic Church, it is incumbent upon us to form its moral compass.

A pilgrim of hope in the Eastern Mediterranean

23rd December 2025

by H.E. Cardinal Jean-Marc Aveline
Metropolitan Archbishop of Marseille (France)

History will remember that Pope Leo XIV chose the shores of the eastern Mediterranean, the cradle of Christianity, for his first apostolic journey, visiting Turkey and Lebanon in succession. In Turkey, the Holy Father celebrated the 1700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea with intensity. He emphasised its truly common significance for all Christian denominations, notably by meeting with Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Primate of the Orthodox Church of Constantinople, at his palace in Phanar, visiting the Armenian Apostolic Cathedral in Istanbul, and meeting with leaders of Christian churches and communities at the Syriac Orthodox Church of Mor Ephrem. This trip was also an opportunity for dialogue with Muslims, notably during his visit to the famous Sultan Ahmet Mosque. In Lebanon, like Paul VI in 1964, John Paul II in 1997 and Benedict XVI in 2012, the Pope visited a country in turmoil. On his return, however, he recalled that the Land of the Cedars remains a 'mosaic of coexistence'. He met with bishops, priests, consecrated persons and pastoral workers at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lebanon in Harissa. He prayed at the tomb of Saint Charbel Makhlouf at the Monastery of Saint Maroun, spoke with Lebanese youth and paused in silent reflection before the monument honouring the victims of the Beirut port explosion. From this exceptionally rich journey, I recall two words that constitute its true cornerstones and allow us to deepen our understanding of the social doctrine of the Church with renewed vigour.

First, unity. The unity of Christians, of course, but also the unity of the human family. The Pope expressed this forcefully: "Reconciliation is today a call that comes from all humanity afflicted by conflict and violence. The desire for full communion among all believers in Jesus Christ is always accompanied by the search for fraternity among all human beings. In the Nicene Creed, we profess our faith "in one God, the Father"; yet it would not be possible to invoke God as Father if we refused to recognise other men and women, also created in the image of God, as our brothers and sisters. There are a universal brotherhood and sisterhood, regardless of ethnicity, nationality, religion or opinion."

Peace, then. During Mass celebrated on 2 December in Beirut, the Holy Father exhorted Christians: "When the results of [your] efforts for peace are slow in coming, [...] lift your eyes to the Lord who is coming! Let us look to him with hope and courage, inviting everyone to commit themselves to the path of coexistence, fraternity and peace. Be artisans of peace, heralds of peace, witnesses of peace! "

To the young people gathered in front of the Maronite Patriarchate of Antioch, who asked him where to find the anchor that would enable them to persevere in their commitment to peace, he replied: 'This anchor cannot be an idea, a contract or a moral

principle. The true principle of a new life is the hope that comes from above: it is Christ himself! 'He added: 'Peace is truly sincere when I do to others what I would like them to do to me (cf. Mt 7:12). Saint John Paul II was right when he said that there is 'no peace without justice, no justice without forgiveness' (Message for the 35th World Day of Peace, 1 January 2002 [...]); this is how it is: forgiveness gives rise to justice, and justice is the foundation of peace. "

By emphasising unity and peace, the Holy Father highlights two essential challenges of our time — and more particularly for the entire Mediterranean basin. We need unity and peace in the Mediterranean, especially at a time when international tensions are growing and the sound of weapons is becoming increasingly threatening. The thirst for power and profit on the part of a few irresponsible leaders is exposing humanity to formidable dangers, with contempt for individuals and peoples, especially the poorest and most disadvantaged.

We may feel helpless in the face of such challenges and divisions. And yet, as Christmas approaches, let us remember that the Lord chose to save us by becoming a little child, buffeted by history, hunted by the powerful, a member of a Holy Family forced to flee to Egypt, like so many migrants today, fleeing the misery, war and corruption that ravage their countries of origin. But God does not abandon those who trust in Him. The Child grew up, and His Word, His message, His actions, then His condemnation, His death and His resurrection worked on the world like a leaven, like a small seed that matures and grows, like a tiny thing that changes everything. We are here to bear witness to this and to share the hope that His call has given us. Hope is not vague optimism: it is a demanding, even heroic choice. A great French novelist, Georges Bernanos, who fought in the Spanish Civil War and stayed in Barcelona during the summer of 1936, at a time of great international turmoil, wrote these powerful words, which I leave you to ponder:

"Hope is a heroic determination of the soul, and its highest form is despair overcome. We believe that it is easy to hope. But only those who have had the courage to despair of the illusions and lies in which they found a security that they mistakenly took for hope can hope. Hope is a risk to be taken, indeed the risk of risks. Hope is the greatest and most difficult victory a man can win over his soul... One can only reach hope through truth, at the cost of great effort. To encounter hope, one must have gone beyond despair. When we reach the end of the night, we encounter another dawn. The demon in our hearts is called 'What's the point!'.

To all the members, friends and partners of the Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice Foundation, I wish you a very Merry Christmas and a beautiful, happy and holy 2026, firmly anchored in hope!

European integration as a Pathway to Peace

31st January 2026

by H.E. Monsignor Bernardito Auza

Archbishop, Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union

European Conference on Peace Building in Europe: What Role for Catholic Social Thought and Universal Values?

Luxembourg School of Religion and Society. Luxembourg, 23 January 2026

Opening address at the plenary session on the theme 'European integration as a Pathway to Peace'. The overarching theme of this conference is a question: *Peace Building in Europe: What Role for Catholic Social Thought and Universal Values?* I would affirm that, while Catholic Social Teaching is perhaps the most constantly evolving body of Church's teachings, it remains relevant in today's peacebuilding in Europe.

However, the task assigned to me is not to justify an unsolicited answer to the main theme. I have been specifically asked to keynote this Plenary Session on *European Integration as a Pathway to Peace* with a reflection on EU Enlargement as a Pathway to Peace.

Being relatively new as Apostolic Nuncio to the European Union, I spent the seven months of my presence in Brussels, from June 2025 up to now, doing visits to EU institutions and Diplomatic Missions to the Union. In all my conversations I sensed a general feeling, indeed, a consensus, that Europe is facing deep and multiple crises, in the areas of security and global trade. The Russian aggression against Ukraine and the current US Administration's security policy render Europe insecure, while the unsettling highly volatile global trade environment coupled with the fiercely competitive AI-powered economies in other parts of the globe make Europe appear less competitive.

The perception, if not the reality, that Europe's place and role in the world stage is slipping away has generated a great sense of urgency. So, the marching order is to fight, as the President of the European Commission made it clear in her State of the Union Address to the European Parliament on September 10 last year: *Europe is in a fight. A fight for... a free and independent Europe. A fight for our values and us democracies. A fight for our liberty and our ability to determine our destiny for ourselves... this is a fight for our future...* A fight that requires the ability to face tectonic shifts, enormous resources and heroic sacrifices. And great opportunities, as well.

The Holy See thinks the same way, and sees even deeper causes of this malaise, as the Cardinal Secretary of State made it clear in his Homily during the Mass for the VIII Centenary of the Cathedral of Brussels on January 11: *Europe is living today in a period characterized by weaknesses, fears, and fractures, which are not only political or social, but also inner and cultural, difficulties that undermine it at its roots.*

During my said visits, I always asked opinions on EU enlargement, specifically on what impact have on the process the war in Ukraine and the fear that EU enlargement

in a time of crisis might compromise the Union itself. The answers varied little, because the overwhelming opinion is that the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the shock before the US Administration's new security and economic policies have helped dissipate EU self-doubt; indeed, they have become catalysts to firm up the policy that EU enlargement is a geopolitical imperative.

The European Commission affirms in its latest Enlargement package that EU enlargement stands high on the priority agenda and that the accession of new Member States is increasingly within reach. The virtues of EU enlargement have become a constant, a mantra, in the speeches of the EU high authorities after some hiatus and hesitations. To sidestep fears that a rush to admit new Members who may not yet be ready would weaken the Union, the EU Authorities always emphasize a merit-based approach to accession, underlining that the pace of a candidate's adhesion would be based on the pace of its reforms, in the areas of democracy, the rule of law and fundamental rights.

I am fully convinced that the European integration has been, is and will be a pathway to peace. Both the United Nations and what is now the European Union were both born from the ashes of the Second World War. The opening line of the UN Charter affirms: *We the peoples of the United Nations determined to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind.*

The 1950 Schuman Declaration, the seed out of which the European Union has grown, explicitly states that the unification of the Franco- German production of coal and steel *will make it plain that any war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.... leading to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace.* In other words, the primary goal was to secure peace through economic solidarity and cooperation following the devastation of the Second World War, leading to a greater union.

As to the specific question of EU enlargement, it is my honest opinion that a well-managed EU enlargement promotes peace and security, stability and prosperity for all, and is a vehicle for spreading and consolidating the principles underpinning the Union. The positive effects of EU enlargement do not only start now a country becomes a member, but already with the aspiration to become one and the enthusiasm to accept the criteria of accession. The aspiration gives life to a roadmap to a more peaceful and prosperous future. The accession process consolidates the fight against corruption and the efforts to build more solid institutions and stable economy, etc.

My personal experience helps shape my opinion. Six of the ten candidates to EU accession is the Western Balkan States of Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia,³ Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo. I lived, worked and travelled rather extensively in the region during five years and a half, from 1993 to 1998. I was in Bulgaria during the Bosnian War and in Albania during the Serbia-Kosovo War. I would say that I have developed a strong attachment to the region, thus I feel personally invested in their candidacies for EU membership, keen to see how peoples and societies mired for centuries in internecine conflicts and shifting boundaries could evolve into peaceful and prosperous ones. It is curious enough how, from an error of the German geographer August Zeune, the word *balkan* - the Turkish word for *mountain*, referring specifically to the mountain range that cuts through Bulgaria from Serbia to the Black Sea - became the name of the whole region.

And perhaps even more curious how such a name geographically attributed by mistake to the whole region evolved into more of a socio-political than a geographical attribution. In fact, from *Balkan* we have *Balkanization*, whose meaning is completely alien from its original etymological and geographical roots, and has become a socio-political term to mean the breaking down of a country or region into often mutually hostile smaller, independent States, due to ethnic, cultural, historical or religious divisions or territorial irredentism and nationalist claims. It was, and is largely still, the reality in the region.

During my time in the Balkans, the consequences of the chaotic disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, of communism in steroids and the collapse of Yugoslavia were still devastating the region. Some practices of the Ottoman era and tribal structures were still observed. In my first trip to the Monastery of Rila, Bulgaria, I only saw completely black-clad women tilling the land, because, I was told, the men had to be always ready for war! In the northern Albanian Mountains, centuries-old chains of vendetta continued to shed blood. Abandoned rusting communist-era factories dotted the beautiful sceneries in Bulgaria, where theft of religious and cultural treasures were then rampant. Ruined schools and Enver Hoxha's "nuclear shelters" were ubiquitous in Albania.

The 1995 Dayton Accords ended the Bosnian War, but was cynically seen by many as a band aid over internecine ethnic wars. Yet, as Pope Leo XIV said in his January 9 Address to the Diplomatic Corps accredited to the Holy See, the Dayton Accords is one *those signs of courageous hope in our time for, despite difficulties and tensions, they opened up the possibility of a more prosperous and harmonious future.*

Bulgaria and Macedonia could not sign a simple agreement for the question of language. North Macedonia was stuck with the name of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia due to Greek opposition to the use of *Macedonia*. Serbia was not able to prevent Montenegro's independence, but still they quarrelled over other matters. Serbia feels the loss of Kosovo as the loss of its identity. Kosovo considers its secession as a liberation from ethnic and nationalist repression. Albania remained extremely suspicious of Greek irredentism in its southern territories. In short, every country in the region had headaches with a neighbour or two. Macedonia with five: to the east with Bulgaria for their linguistic differences; to the south with Greece for its name; to the west and northwest with Albania and Kosovo, as ethnic Albanians constitute two-thirds of its population; and to the north with Serbia due to Orthodox religious matters.

I met Kosovar guerillas in the Albanian Alps. I saw speedboats along the Adriatic Coast loaded with smuggled cigarettes and guns. I could have bought, but never would have, thousands of Kalashnikovs offered for five dollars on the sidewalks of Tirana and all over Albania in 1997. But I can assure you that I will never regret not having invested in the Ponzi schemes that traffickers used, not only to launder their dirty money, but also to steal whatever little savings the impoverished Albanians had under the pillows, causing the total collapse of Albania in 1997.

And look where we are now 30 or 25 years later: Croatia and Bulgaria are EU, NATO and Euro Members. Albania has long fulfilled its dream to join NATO and its EU accession is well within reach as it works on the last cluster of accession criteria. The

former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece finally agreed to settle for *North Macedonia*. Montenegro is approaching the finish line, with the possibility that the EU Accession Treaty could be formally launched this coming June.

In the region, impactful achievements continue to be reached and courageous choices taken, harbingers that *Balkanization* may one day be just a mere word in the dictionary. And a lesson well learned.

We know fully well that Bosnia-Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo have much more challenging obstacles to hurdle and overcome, just like the other candidates Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Turkey.

But the EU's commitment to enlargement beacons also to them, not only as a good geopolitical policy, but also and even deeply as a conscious choice to spread the ideals that inspired, shaped and continue to give life to what is now the EU: to spare us and the future generations from the scourge of war and to assure lasting peace, security and prosperity for all.

The EU is definitely far from being perfect or a panacea to all of Europe's ills, and I am not canonizing it. As I jokingly said to an EU venerable elder, "It's bad, but it's the best we have". And it has been and remains a pathway to peace and prosperity.

Thank you for your attention.

On the Message of Leo XIV for the 60th World Day of Social Communications

28th February 2026

by Monsignor Lucio Adrian Ruiz
Secretary of the Dicastery for Communication

Monsignor Lucio Adrian Ruiz, Secretary of the Dicastery for Communication, signs the editorial dedicated to the webinar promoted by the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation, entitled «The Face and the Voice Are Sacred: Protecting What Makes Us Human». Monsignor Ruiz offers a reflection on the urgent need to preserve the authenticity of the voice and the face in the digital age. The contribution is set within the context of the 60th World Communications Day, which will be celebrated on 17 May, and takes as its reference the Message of Pope Leo XIV dedicated to «Preserving Human Voices and Faces»

We are here reflecting on the topic proposed by the Holy Father *Pope Leo XIV* in the *Message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications* entitled: Preserving Human Voices and Faces.

It is a wonderful message, that calls all of us to think deeply, not only about what is happening with technological innovations but, above all, about the new “social geography” in which the human being finds himself today.

This is the point: we are not facing a simple further development of technology, but rather a *cultural change*, a new “situational reality” for each of us, which especially affects one of the fundamental aspects of being a “person,” that is “relationships.” Contemporary reality modifies our relationship both with ourselves (through a changed perception of time, space, and presence, and therefore of the moral act), and with others, even to the point of affecting our relationship with God.

Such a profound change!

Transforms our “situational geography,” is not appearing for the first time in human history. On the contrary, every time an epochal *arte-factum* has emerged in human activity - that is, something made by human hands that has produced an essential change in the relationship with creation -, the human being has experienced a “shock”, that has led him to rethink and redraw his position in the world, both with others and with himself. Think of what, for example, the control of fire, agriculture, the wheel, writing, bronze, iron, paper have meant... It has always been a constantly changing world under our feet, a world that had to be rethought, understood, learned, and managed.

More recently, in the eighteenth century, the Industrial Revolution set us on the path on which we now find ourselves. Yet, while at that time the impact touched very concrete situations of human labour driven by physical force, today this “new Industrial Revolution” touches something much deeper: thought itself. Today we see that the te-

chnological revolution has placed itself in what we thought, perhaps in a too simplistic way, to be a uniquely human prerogative. And it is, but not as simply as we believed. Before this moment, no one thought that “speaking” could be done by machines; today it is totally normal to hear a machine speaking. Certainly, it does not know what it is saying, but it says it. This becomes even more critical when we are faced with the creation of texts or works of art, or many other things we believed only we could do. But no: today machines do them, and sometimes, technically speaking, even better than we do.

For this reason, we are plunged into the marvellous and challenging world of Christian anthropology, which must respond to our position within this new “situational geography.” It is a matter of overcoming simplifications that remove us from reality and prevent us from managing it - or indeed, from mastering change - so that we ourselves may continue to guide the thread of history. This is not only and merely technical or moral formation; it is anthropological formation, means holistic approach! from which both development and use must be shaped.

In this process, I allow myself to highlight something that particularly moves me about how God guides His Church. Indeed, when Leo XIV explains why he chose the name Leo, he says (I quote): *“Pope Leo XIII, with the historic Encyclical Rerum Novarum, addressed the social question in the context of the first great Industrial Revolution. Today the Church offers everyone her patrimony of Social Doctrine to respond to another industrial revolution and to developments in artificial intelligence, which pose new challenges for the defence of human dignity, justice, and labour”* (end of quote). Think how beautiful that is! the Pope wishes to show how much

- and how deeply - he has understood the intensity and depth of the contemporary moment, to the point of embodying it in his name. AI is not merely a technology; it is our culture.

Therefore, it is important to understand, at the foundation of every line of thought, that technology is never neutral - never, ever. No matter how often we hear it said that “technology is neither good nor bad, that it is neutral and depends on how it is used”, it is not so. By the very fact of being an arte-factum, that is, as we said, something made by the human being, it is born with an intention. Like every human work, it comes into being with an intention, and this intention, remain in the reality and intrinsically carries a moral value, whether good or bad. Its use then adds, posteriorly, a new moral value, confirming or altering the original intention. That is why it is so important to embrace the moment we are living in, finding the keys to humanity, our position in the new “existential geography”, knowing who we are and what we do, in order to continue governing history from its centre.

To concluding, I would like to share with you, very briefly, four keys for interpreting and reflecting the Holy Father’s message, which you know well, and which can help us understand the axes to manage this cultural change. I do so use four sentences from the message itself:

1. *“The challenge is not technological, but anthropological”*
2. *“The question is not what machines can or will be able to do, but what we can and will be able to achieve”*

3. *"The task laid before us is not to stop digital innovation, but rather to guide it."*
4. *"Three pillars: responsibility, cooperation, and education,"* with a strategic key: *"the well-being of their own children."*

Within these four sentences we can see the four pillars of the message at work. First, the centre of the issue is not technological but anthropological, the roll of human beings in this story. Second, our position within the new "situational geography": what and how we can do with the use of these systems. Third, we cannot and must not stop innovation, but must step into the arena - everyone, in every possible way - to govern change. Fourth, we must become aware that this "guidance of change" can only take place through *responsibility, cooperation, and education*. Finally, the certain way to do this well is to think about what is good for *"our own children."*

The meaning of Easter in the works of Arezzo Cathedral

31st March 2026

by H.E. Mons Andrea Migliavacca

Bishop of Arezzo-Cortona-Sansepolcro and CAPPF Ecclesiastical Counsellor for Italy

The presbytery of Arezzo Cathedral, where I serve as bishop, was designed and created by the sculptor Giuliano Vangi. At the ambo, it features a convex surface in which the dead Christ can be glimpsed in the form of a bas-relief; the shape of the ambo itself, however, with its opening, represents the open and empty tomb. To the right, a figure of an angel is depicted in the act of speaking, as a herald and thus a witness to that empty tomb, to the Resurrection of Jesus, to Easter.

It is a significant feature within the chancel because it signifies that the place of the Word, the ambo, is the liturgical moment of the proclamation of life, of the Resurrection, of Easter in every Word proclaimed there.

These are the elements that characterise the proclamation of Easter even today.

First, a tomb which, as the Gospels of the Resurrection tell us, on Easter morning, whilst it was still dark, is found open and empty by the women who had gone to visit a dead person.

The tomb is our whole life, the horizon of the world, the sufferings of humanity. We are in a tomb because it contains the sufferings of every heart and the injustices and violence which, especially in these times, are perpetrated with contempt for the human dignity of every man and woman. In that tomb, we too are present, wounded by an unjust world and by our own inconsistencies, failures, worries and sin. Easter is a proclamation that begins precisely there, from a tomb that holds all our skeletons and mortality, but which is surprisingly opened and illuminated by the light of God, by the light of the Father's love.

We do not deny the tomb and the signs of death contained within it, but we proclaim that it is precisely that tomb—which gathers every sorrow and wound, every injustice and violence, every inconsistency and sin—that becomes the place which, visited by God's love and the light of life, experiences a resurrection that brings a new perspective, a new way of thinking, a new way of speaking, and a new witness.

Easter speaks first and foremost of a tomb... but one that is now open and empty.

The second element is the presence of the angel who announces the newness of Easter, the news of life.

He reminds us that the reality of that tomb, visited by God's love and now empty, is news to be echoed in life and in today's world.

We need the angel to tell me, you, each one of us, that life has conquered death, that it has defeated our sin and our sorrows, that it has overcome our frailties and our

wounds. And to us, to me, to everyone... the news of a new life is brought.

We need the angel to bring consolation and hope to peoples wounded by war, by injustices of every kind, by the oppression of the powerful over the weak. There are wounds to heal and people to defend, there are paths of reconciliation to build and bridges of encounter to sustain, and the news of Easter can be the proclamation of a possibility of peace that is not the fruit of human agreement, but the gift of a morning full of light, that morning of the Risen One, and it asks our hearts to open up to welcome the good news.

It is the ambo, the place of the proclamation of the Word, and it is the liturgical space where the reader and the presider take their places for the proclamation of the Word of God and the Gospel of the Risen One.

That ambo calls each of us to become proclaimers of the pages of the Gospel, of new life, of stories of resurrection, of the presence of the Lord Jesus, risen and alive.

Saint Francis, on whose 800th anniversary of his death and passing we reflect this year, reminds us that the Gospel is proclaimed through life, and only then, if necessary, through words.

Thus, we are called to become like that angel and like Saint Francis, proclaimers of the Easter message through our witness: by becoming bearers of stories of life and by testifying that ours is a life that is risen, reconciled, loved and blessed, in charity.

The rich tradition of the Church's social teaching echoes this Easter proclamation: of a world renewed in the light of the Gospel, of a contemporary world that calls on us to bring a message today capable of shedding light on current events and problems.

Only in this way can we celebrate the Resurrection and, with authenticity, wish one another a Happy Easter, all of us as brothers and sisters.

A passion for freedom

30th April 2026

by Flavio Felice

Full Professor of the History of Political Doctrines, University of Molise; Ordinary Research Professor, Catholic University of America, Washington DC

In an era of profound transformation such as the one we are currently experiencing, the appeal to the Church's social doctrine takes on a prophetic character, capable, in Augustinian terms, of highlighting the salient features of a present rich in uncertainties, risks and challenges that challenge the person in their deepest dimension: freedom and responsibility.

This is the aim of the conference organised by the Centesimus Annus pro Pontifice Foundation, to be held in Rome on 28 and 29 May. It is an important opportunity to examine the challenges of the present day in the light of social doctrine, reflecting on how to adapt the message of the encyclical *Centesimus annus* (1991). The first day, dedicated to the Foundation's general assembly, will be entitled: *"Catholic Social Thought Facing the Challenges to Freedom and Pluralism in a Disordered Economy and Society. Renewing the Vision of Centesimus Annus"*; whilst on the second day, dedicated to the international conference, the topic will be: *"A Fragmented World in Search of Spirituality: Freedom and Pluralism from Within the Social Doctrine of the Church"*. For further details on the themes and objectives of the initiative, please refer to the conference concept note.

The focus of the meeting will be a reflection on the political, economic and cultural dimensions of freedom and pluralism, and on how these dimensions challenge the contemporary world, which has been severely shaken by wars, economic and financial crises, and ethical and cultural dilemmas. In this regard, drawing on the political science perspective, we intend to offer a reflection—necessarily brief—to situate the issues of pluralism and freedom within the cultural context of Catholic social thought.

With particular reference to the theme of freedom, we would like to recall the words of Don Luigi Sturzo: 'Freedom is like the air: we live in the air; if the air is foul, we suffer; if the air is insufficient, we suffocate; if the air is lacking, we die. Freedom is like life; life is present in all acts, in all moments; if it is not present, there is death. Freedom is dynamism that is realised and renewed; if realisation and renewal cease, dynamism fails. [...] freedom is realised every day, defended every day, regained every day'. Freedom, therefore, is a precondition of democracy, of the market and of a civilised life worthy of the human person, and it takes concrete form in the human experience of each of us through the promotion and defence of the dignity of every person, within the political, economic and cultural context.

Following this line of thought, deeply rooted in the Church's social teaching and strongly present throughout Catholic social thought, a distinction should be made be-

tween those who love freedom out of deep conviction and those who claim to love it, but only in words. The difference between the two categories of people is substantial: for the former, freedom remedies the evils it may produce, in that it generates new energies, promotes the formation of free associations and represents the moral leaven of the resulting political, economic and cultural pluralism. For the latter, however, freedom is something dangerous, to be feigned for reasons of expediency, but to be placed under guardianship to prevent its risks. This, according to Sturzo, but also for an important author such as Alexis de Tocqueville, is the great fear of freedom that affects oligarchies of every kind, whether political or economic.

Linked to the theme of freedom is the question of pluralism. In civil terms, pluralism can be interpreted in a myriad of ways. Referring to the Church's social doctrine, we believe it is worth recalling that Pope Benedict XVI, in the encyclical *Caritas in veritate* (2009), used the adjective 'polyarchic' to describe the type of political-institutional structure best suited to representing a pluralistic civil context.

The concept of 'polyarchy' is widely used in political science literature thanks to the work of Robert A. Dahl. However Sturzo's notion of 'plurarchy' conveys the meaning of Benedict XVI's statement more profoundly: "Globalisation certainly requires authority, inasmuch as it raises the issue of a global common good to be pursued; such authority, however, must be organised in a subsidiary and polyarchic manner, both so as not to infringe upon freedom and to be effectively effective in practice" (Cv, no. 57).

Polyarchy and plurarchy, in the sense understood by Sturzo and Ratzinger, refer to a broader social context in which, alongside the political sphere, there are many other spheres of equal dignity: the economic, religious and artistic spheres, all of which produce a particular type of common good. Society, therefore, is not a collection of isolated and uncommunicating individuals, but a system of personal experiences and consciences. From this perspective, participation therefore means taking part in a personal or collective capacity, contributing to affirming the reasons for one's own existence in the process of shaping public opinion. In this sense, pluralism can be understood as a social context governed by an order produced and maintained by the continuous interaction and competition of multiple and mutually irreducible regulatory principles.

The passion for freedom, which feeds on and is nourished by pluralism, is a consecration of human dignity in all its forms. For this reason, as the late maestro Dario Antiseri loved to say, the *passion* for freedom goes hand in hand with the *risk of freedom*, a risk that could translate into the voluntary renunciation of freedom itself, in the name of fear, resentment, irresponsibility, the culture of delegation and the fascination with leadership. A *risk* we run every day, especially in these tragic days of war, precisely because we are fortunate enough to live in societies that tend to be open – societies for which our forefathers proved they had the strength and courage to sacrifice even their own lives.

The Messages of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to CAPPF

Address of His Holiness Pope Leo XIV to Members of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation

Clementine Hall, Saturday, 17th May 2025

Good morning, everyone!

Dear brothers and sisters, welcome!

I thank the President and members of the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation, and I greet all of you who are taking part in this annual International Conference and General Assembly.

The theme of this year's Conference – “Overcoming Polarizations and Rebuilding Global Governance: The Ethical Foundations” – speaks to us of the deepest purpose of the Church's social doctrine as a contribution to peace and dialogue in the service of building bridges of universal fraternity. Especially in this Easter season, we realize that the Risen Lord always goes before us, even at times when injustice and death seem to prevail. Let us help one another, as I said on the evening of my election, “to build bridges through dialogue and encounter, joining together as one people, always at peace.” This is not something that happens by chance but is rather an active and continuous interplay of grace and freedom, one that our meeting today seeks to respect and support.

Pope Leo XIII, who lived in an age of momentous and disruptive change, sought to promote peace by encouraging social dialogue between capital and labour, technology and human intelligence, and different political cultures and nations. Pope Francis spoke of a “polycrisis” in describing the dramatic nature of our own age, marked by wars, climate change, growing inequalities, forced and contested migration, stigmatized poverty, disruptive technological innovations, job insecurity and precarious labour rights (*Message to Participants in the General Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life*, 3 March 2025). On such important issues, the Church's social doctrine is called to provide insights that facilitate dialogue between science and conscience, and thus make an essential contribution to better understanding, hope and peace.

This doctrine helps us to realize that more important than our problems or eventual solutions is the way we approach them, guided by criteria of discernment, sound ethical principles and openness to God's grace.

You have the opportunity to show that the Church's social doctrine, with its specific anthropological approach, seeks to encourage genuine engagement with social issues. It does not claim to possess a monopoly on truth, either in its analysis of problems or its proposal of concrete solutions. Where social questions are concerned, knowing how best to approach them is more important than providing immediate responses to why things happen or how to deal with them. The aim is to learn how to confront problems, for these are always different, since every generation is new, and faces new challenges, dreams and questions.

This is a fundamental aspect of our attempts to build a "culture of encounter" through dialogue and social friendship. For many of our contemporaries, the words "dialogue" and "doctrine" can seem incompatible. Perhaps when we hear the word "doctrine," we tend to think of a set of ideas belonging to a religion. The word itself makes us feel less disposed to reflect, call things into question or seek new alternatives.

In the case of the Church's social doctrine, we need to make clear that the word "doctrine" has another, more positive meaning, without which dialogue itself would be meaningless. "Doctrine" can be a synonym of "science," "discipline" and "knowledge." Understood in this way, doctrine appears as the product of research, and hence of hypotheses, discussions, progress and setbacks, all aimed at conveying a reliable, organized and systematic body of knowledge about a given issue. Consequently, a doctrine is not the same as an opinion, but is rather a common, collective and even multidisciplinary pursuit of truth.

"Indoctrination" is immoral. It stifles critical judgement and undermines the sacred freedom of conscience, even if erroneous. It resists new notions and rejects movement, change or the evolution of ideas in the face of new problems. "Doctrine," on the other hand, as a serious, serene and rigorous discourse, aims to teach us primarily how to approach problems and, even more importantly, how to approach people. It also helps us to make prudential judgements when confronted with challenges. Seriousness, rigour and serenity are what we must learn from every doctrine, including the Church's social doctrine.

In the context of the ongoing digital revolution, we must rediscover, emphasize and cultivate our duty to train others in critical thinking, countering temptations to the contrary, which can also be found in ecclesial circles. There is so little dialogue around us; shouting often replaces it, not infrequently in the form of fake news and irrational arguments proposed by a few loud voices. Deeper reflection and study are essential, as well as a commitment to encounter and listen to the poor, who are a treasure for the Church and for humanity. Their viewpoints, though often disregarded, are vital if we are to see the world through God's eyes. Those born and raised far from the centers of power should not merely be taught the Church's social doctrine; they should also be recognized as carrying it forward and putting it into practice. Individuals committed to the betterment of society, popular movements and the various Catholic work-

ers' groups are an expression of those existential peripheries where hope endures and springs anew. I urge you to let the voice of the poor be heard.

Dear friends, as the Second Vatican Council states, "in every age, the Church carries the responsibility of reading the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel, if she is to carry out her task. In language intelligible to every generation, she should be able to answer the ever-recurring questions which people ask about the meaning of this present life and of the life to come, and how one is related to the other" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 4).

I invite you, then, to participate actively and creatively in this discernment process, and thus contribute, with all of God's people, to the development of the Church's social doctrine in this age of significant social changes, listening to everyone and engaging in dialogue with all. In our day, there is a widespread thirst for justice, a desire for authentic fatherhood and motherhood, a profound longing for spirituality, especially among young people and the marginalized, who do not always find effective means of making their needs known. There is a growing demand for the Church's social doctrine, to which we need to respond.

I thank all of you for your commitment and for your prayers for my ministry, and I cordially bless you and your families, and all that you do. Thank you!

**Address of his Holiness Pope Leo XIV
to Participants in the Conference
“Artificial Intelligence and Care of our Common
Home” Organized by the Centesimus Annus Pro
Pontifice Foundation and the Strategic Alliance of
Catholic Research Universities**

Consistory Hall, Friday, 5th December 2025

Dear brothers and sisters, welcome!

I am pleased to greet all of you, members of the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation and the Strategic Alliance of Catholic Research Universities*.

We are meeting on the occasion of the publication of your research on a very important topic. The advent of artificial intelligence is accompanied by rapid and profound changes in society, which affects essential dimensions of the human person, such as critical thinking, discernment, learning and interpersonal relationships.

How can we ensure that the development of artificial intelligence truly serves the common good, and is not just used to accumulate wealth and power in the hands of a few? This is an urgent question, because this technology is already having a real impact on the lives of millions of people, every day and in every part of the world. As the Social Doctrine of the Church reminds us, and as is clear from the interdisciplinary work you are doing, addressing this challenge requires asking an even more fundamental question: What does it mean to be human in this moment of history?

Human beings are called to be co-workers in the work of creation, not merely passive consumers of content generated by artificial technology. Our dignity lies in our ability to reflect, choose freely, love unconditionally and enter into authentic relationships with others. Artificial intelligence has certainly opened up new horizons for creativity, but it also raises serious concerns about its possible repercussions on humanity's openness to truth and beauty, and capacity for wonder and contemplation. Recognizing and safeguarding what characterizes the human person and guarantees his or her balanced growth is essential for establishing an adequate framework for managing the consequences of artificial intelligence.

In this regard, we must pause and reflect with particular care upon the freedom and inner life of our children and young people, and the possible impact of technology on their intellectual and neurological development. The new generations must be helped, not hindered, on their path to maturity and responsibility. The well-being of society depends on their ability to develop their talents and respond to the demands of the times and the needs of others, with generosity and freedom of mind. The ability to

access vast amounts of data and information should not be confused with the ability to derive meaning and value from it. The latter requires a willingness to confront the mystery and core questions of our existence, even when these realities are often marginalized or ridiculed by the prevailing cultural and economic models. It will therefore be essential to teach young people to use these tools with their own intelligence, ensuring that they open themselves to the search for truth, a spiritual and fraternal life, broadening their dreams and the horizons of their decision making. We support their desire to be different and better, because never before has it been so clear that a profound reversal of direction is needed in our idea of maturing.

In order to build a future together with our young people that achieves the common good and harnesses the potential of artificial intelligence, it is necessary to restore and strengthen their confidence in the human ability to guide the development of these technologies. It is a confidence that today is increasingly eroded by the paralyzing idea that its development follows an inevitable path. This requires coordinated and concerted action involving politics, institutions, businesses, finance, education, communication, citizens and religious communities. Actors from these areas are called upon to undertake a common commitment by assuming this joint responsibility. This commitment comes before any partisan interest or profit, which is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a few. Only through widespread participation that gives everyone the opportunity to be heard with respect, even the most humble, will it be possible to achieve these ambitious goals. In this context, the research carried out by *Centesimus-SACRU* represents a truly valuable contribution.

Thank you, dear friends, and I encourage you to continue your work with creativity, guided by Sacred Scripture and the Church's Magisterium. May the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary accompany you, and I impart my Apostolic Blessing upon all of you.

Message from the Holy Father Leo XIV to the Foundation to the “European Conference”

22nd January 2026

Dear Professor Garonna,

In response to your request for a Pontifical Message for the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation’s 2026 European Conference, I have the honour to forward the following:

His Holiness Pope Leo XIV sends greetings to the President, the members, and to all participating in the 2026 European Conference of the *Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice* Foundation. He was pleased to learn of your theme, “Peace Building in Europe: What Role for Catholic Social Thought and Universal Values?”, which is particularly relevant given today’s widespread reluctance to discuss the universal values that religion or any belief system may contribute to the common good of society. Whilst this resistance arises for various reasons, the underlying crisis is the spread of relativism and the reduction of truth to mere opinion. Yet no community, let alone a continent, can live in peace and thrive without commonly held truths that inform its norms and values. Consequently, His Holiness has spoken of the urgent need to embrace once again the divinely revealed Judeo-Christian truths at the root of European society, especially the truth that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God (cf. *Address to Members of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group*, 10 December 2025). Here we recall the words of Saint John Paul II in his Encyclical *Centesimus Annus* that, “no authentic progress is possible without respect for the natural and fundamental right to know the truth and live according to that truth” (29). In this regard, the Church’s Social Teaching, which is rooted in the words and actions of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who revealed himself to be the way, the truth, and the life (cf. *Jn* 14:6), has much to offer as it transcends borders and provides a framework for shared interests and ways of life, thereby making peaceful coexistence possible. It is the Holy Father’s confident hope, therefore, that this Conference will make its own contribution to furthering the role of Catholic values in building a more peaceful and just European continent. With these sentiments, Pope Leo XIV entrusts all of you to the loving intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church, and cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in Christ our Risen Saviour.

From the Vatican,
22nd January 2026

Cardinal Pietro Parolin
Secretary of State

Web sources and publications

Web sources

Encyclical Letter ***Rerum novarum*** by His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, dated 15 May 1891.

Available at www.vatican.va – Holy See Portal.

Web address: https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_l-xiii_enc_15051891_rerum-novarum.html

Encyclical Letter ***Populorum progressio*** by His Holiness Pope Paul VI, dated 26 March 1967.

In www.vatican.va - Portal of the Holy See.

Web address: https://www.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-vi_enc_26031967_populorum.html

Encyclical Letter ***Centesimus annus*** by Pope John Paul II on the centenary of *Rerum novarum*, dated 1 May 1991. At www.vatican.va - Portal of the Holy See.

Web address: https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html

Encyclical Letter ***Laudato si'*** by Pope Francis on care for our common home, dated 24 May 2015. Available at www.vatican.va - Portal of the Holy See. Web address: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Encyclical Letter ****Fratelli tutti**** by Pope Francis on fraternity and social friendship, dated 3 October 2020. Available at www.vatican.va – Holy See Portal.

Web address: https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html

Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation.

Official website: <https://www.centesimusannus.va/en/>

CAPP-USA (Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice, Inc.) is the US affiliate of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation. Founded in 2003, it promotes Catholic social teaching in the United States in fidelity to the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

Website: <https://capp-usa.org>

Publications

The Question of Debt in the Age of the Jubilee, edited by Paolo Garonna and Minerva Freda.

Renzo Palozzi Printing House, July 2025.

The Debt Issue in the Time of the Jubilee, by Paolo Garonna and Oliver Galea. Published Renzo Palozzi Printing House, July 2025.

Artificial Intelligence and Care of Our Common Home: a Focus on Industries, Finance, Education and Communication, by Anna Maria Tarantola, Vita e Pensiero Editions, 2025.

La costruzione della pace e il dialogo interreligioso nel Mediterraneo. Dalla nuova teologia del Mediterraneo alle scienze sociali della riconciliazione e della costruzione della pace, a cura di Paolo Garonna e Minerva Freda. Renzo Palozzi Printing House, May 2026.

Peacebuilding and Interreligious Dialogue in the Mediterranean. From the New Theology of the Mediterranean to the Social Sciences of Reconciliation and Peacebuilding, edited by Paolo Garonna and Oliver Galea. Renzo Palozzi Printing House, May 2026

6.

Appendix



Ioannes Paulus PP. II

Ho appreso con soddisfazione che alcuni fedeli desiderano unirsi per costituire una Fondazione di Religione e di Culto, intesa a collaborare alla diffusione dei principi esposti nella mia recente Enciclica "Centesimus Annus" ed a suscitare iniziative per venir incontro alle necessità della Santa Sede.

Aderisco, pertanto, volentieri all'istanza esprimami di istituire nello Stato della Città del Vaticano una Fondazione autonoma, volta a promuovere i due predetti fini.

In virtù della potestà apostolica nella Chiesa e della sovranità nello Stato della Città del Vaticano, visti i canoni 331, 114 e 115 § 3, 116 § 1 e 1303 § 1, n. 1 del Codice di Diritto Canonico, l'art. 1 della Legge fondamentale della Città del Vaticano del 7 giugno 1929 I e l'art. 1, lettera a) della Legge sulle fonti del diritto del 7 giugno 1929 II,

E R I G O

in persona giuridica canonica e in persona giuridica civile la Fondazione "Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice", con sede nello Stato della Città del Vaticano.

La Fondazione sarà retta dalle leggi canoniche vigenti nella Chiesa e da quelle civili vigenti nella Città del Vaticano, e dallo Statuto qui allegato.

Città del Vaticano, 5 Giugno 1993

Ioannes Paulus PP. II

Constitution of the *Centesimus Annus* Foundation – *Pro Pontifice*



Il giorno 5 giugno 1993, nel Palazzo Apostolico in Vaticano, su invito di Sua Eminenza Reverendissima il Cardinale Rosalio José Castillo Lara, Presidente dell'Amministrazione del Patrimonio della Sede Apostolica, sono convenute le persone che hanno

promosso la Fondazione «Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice».

Dopo l'invocazione dello Spirito Santo e di Maria SS.ma Ausiliatrice, ed alcune parole di benvenuto del Cardinale Castillo Lara, è stata data lettura del Chirografo in data 5 giugno 1993, con il quale il Sommo Pontefice Giovanni Paolo II ha eretto in persona giuridica la Fondazione autonoma «Centesimus Annus – Pro Pontifice», con sede nello Stato della Città del Vaticano.

Il testo originale del Chirografo e lo Statuto della Fondazione sono allegati al presente atto.

Come membri del primo Consiglio di Amministrazione della Fondazione sono state designate, a norma dell'art. 9, le seguenti persone:

Dr. Roberto Mazzotta, Presidente
Dr. Andrea Gibellini, Vice Presidente
Dr. Alberto Falck
Dr. Rodolfo Rinaldi
Dr. Lorenzo Conte Rossi di Montelera
Dr. Faustino Somma
Rag. Dante Toffano

Come membri del Collegio Sindacale sono state nominate, in conformità all'art. 18, le seguenti personalità:

Dr. Giuliano Camanni
Dr. Pasquale Marino
Rag. Piero Melazzini

Tutti i presenti hanno rinnovato l'espressione della loro filiale devozione al Santo Padre Giovanni Paolo II e della loro volontà di collaborare alla diffusione dei valori umani, etici, sociali e cristiani, quali esposti in particolare nella Enciclica « Centesimus Annus », favorendo particolarmente il raggiungimento delle finalità proprie della Fondazione « Centesimus Annus - Pro Pontifice ».

Il presente atto è stato quindi sottoscritto dal Cardinale Presidente dell'A.P.S.A. e dai Fondatori presenti.

Città del Vaticano, 5 giugno 1993

Il Card. Costantino Lara

Federico Card. Schepers

+ Giovanni Ripoli

Giuseppe Casanovi

Don. Daniele Motta

Don. Michele Peroni

Giovanni Altamirano

Renzo Cacciari

Con. ...

Giuseppe ...

Giuseppe ...

Giuseppe ...

Angelo ...

Gerardo Costanzo

Antonio ...

Teodoro ...

Teodoro ...

Giuseppe ...

Message of John Paul II to the Members of the “Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice” Foundation



Dear Brothers and Sisters,

1. Today's meeting is connected to the 10th anniversary of the founding of the Vatican Foundation, “*Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice*”, that provides a singular response to the invitation I offered in the Encyclical which has inspired this group, to promote and defend the knowledge and the practice of the Church's social doctrine.

The generous availability of qualified lay faithful and of the various entities expressive of the great tradition of the Catholic Movement in Italy came into contact with the fervent initiative of Cardinal Rosalio Castillo Lara, then President of the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See. This resulted in the foundation of your very institution, whose goal is to combine the task of spreading the teaching of the Church in social matters, especially in the world of professionals and entrepreneurs, with the concrete help offered to the Pope for the charitable interventions for which he is continually solicited from all parts of the world and for the assistance to the instruments of which he avails himself for his universal ministry.

The past 10 years have seen the consolidation of the Foundation, the development of study and formation projects - among which is particularly appreciated the *Master's* in Social Doctrine, promoted in collaboration with the Pontifical Lateran University - the organization of groups of adherents on Italian territory and the start, rich in perspective, of linked units in other countries as well.

I cannot but rejoice at all this, while I feel I must express a special “thank you” to those who have contributed to putting annually at my disposal precious resources for my evangelical solicitude toward the whole world.

2. I encourage you to continue in your undertaking, always keeping before you three great convictions:

- a. *The permanent timeliness of the social doctrine of the Church.*

The dramatic events that disturb the modern world and the deplorable conditions of underdevelopment which still engulf many Countries, with terrible consequences for their inhabitants, for their fragile institutions, for the natural habitat, mean that one really must start again from a concrete perspective: the truth about man

which is discovered by reason and confirmed by the Gospel of Jesus Christ, that proclaims and promotes the true dignity and the innate social vocation of the person. The social teaching of the Church progressively deepens the different aspects of that truth, also in the face of the signs of the times and with the changes of the cultural and social scenes; and offers indirect incentive for the promotion of human laws, for the tutelage of the family, for the development of truly democratic and participatory political institutions, for an economy at the service of man, for a new international order that guarantees justice together with peace among the peoples, for an ever more responsible moral attitude towards creation, also at the service of future generations.

b. b) *The proper responsibility of the Christian laity.*

Reintroduced with great clarity by the Second Vatican Council and highlighted by me many times with conviction in the acts of my Magisterium, such responsibility rightly finds in the social doctrine of the Church a necessary, productive and exalting reference point. The Council speaks of “commitment, direction, and vigour to establish and consolidate the community of men according to the law of God” (*Gaudium et Spes*, n. 42). This task is proper and unique to the lay faithful, called to focus the light that comes from the Gospel on the many social realities and, with the power infused by Christ, to undertake to “humanize” the world. It is surely a great responsibility that should be seen by the Christian laity not as a limited obligation, but as a generous and creative mission.

c. *The awareness that only new men are able to make all things new.*

One should not ask of economic, political or social institutions what they are not able to give. Every true newness is born of the heart, from a conscience illuminated and empowered to true liberty by the living encounter with the One who has said: “I am the way, and the truth and the life” (Jn 14: 6) and “Apart from me you can do nothing” (Jn 15: 5).

d. The social commitment of the Christian laity can therefore be fed and made consistent, powerful and courageous only by a profound spirituality, that is, by a life of intimate union with Jesus, who makes one capable to express the great theological virtues - faith, hope and charity - through the work of the difficult responsibility of building a society closer to the great, providential design of God.

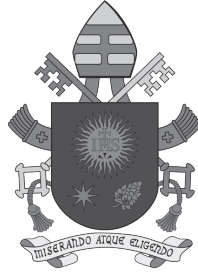
3. In offering these guidelines for your expanding task with respect, with hope and with affection, I wish to renew my heartfelt thanks to the president, Count Lorenzo Rossi di Montelera, to the members of the Administrative Council, to the founders, to all the members and to the ecclesiastics who accompany you on your way.

With these heartfelt sentiments I invoke on each one of you and on your loved ones plentiful heavenly gifts, as a pledge of which I impart to all my Blessing.

From the Vatican, 5 July 2003

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "John Paul II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Address by the Holy Father Francis on the twentieth anniversary



*Your Eminences,
Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate and in the Priesthood,
Distinguished and Dear Friends, Good morning to you all!*

I am very glad to meet you on the occasion of the International Conference of the Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation on the theme: “Rethinking Solidarity for Employment: the Challenges of the 21st Century”. I cordially greet each one of you and thank Dr Domingo Sugranyes, your President, in particular for his courteous words.

The Centesimus Annus Pro Pontifice Foundation was set up by Blessed John Paul II 20 years ago and is called after the Encyclical he signed on the centenary of *Rerum Novarum*. So it is that the context of his reflection and action is the social doctrine of the Church. The popes of the past century contributed to this area in various ways, including in particular Benedict xvi with his Encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, as well as with memorable discourses.

I would therefore like to thank you for your commitment to deepening and spreading knowledge of the Church’s social doctrine with your courses and your publications. I think your service to the social magisterium, as lay people who live in society, in the world of economics and work is really beautiful and important.

The theme of your conference is oriented to work in the perspective of solidarity, which is a structural value of the social doctrine, as Blessed John Paul II reminded us. In 1981, 10 years before writing the Encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, he wrote the Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, entirely focused on human work.

What does “rethinking solidarity mean?”. It does not of course mean calling into question the recent magisterium which, on the contrary, is increasingly showing how farsighted and up to date it is.

Rather than “rethinking”, it seems to me to mean two things: first of all combining the magisterium with social and economic development since it is constant and rapid it reveals ever new aspects.

Secondly, “rethinking” means deepening knowledge, reflecting further to enhance all the fruitfulness of a value — solidarity in this case — which draws in depth from the Gospel, that is, from Jesus Christ, and so as such contains an inexhaustible potential.

Today’s economic and social crisis makes this “rethinking” ever more urgent and highlights even more clearly the truth and timeliness of affirmations of the social magisterium such as the one we read in *Laborem Exercens*: “As we view the whole human family... we cannot fail to be struck by a disconcerting fact of immense proportions: the fact that, while conspicuous natural resources remain unused, there are huge numbers of people who are unemployed or under-employed and countless multitudes of people suffering from hunger. This is a fact that without any doubt demonstrates that... there is something wrong” (n. 18).

Unemployment — the lack or loss of work — is a phenomenon that is spreading like an oil slick in vast areas of the west and is alarmingly widening the boundaries of poverty. Moreover there is no worse material poverty, I am keen to stress, than the poverty which prevents people from earning their bread and deprives them of the dignity of work.

Well, this “something wrong” no longer regards only the south of the world but also the entire planet. Hence the need “to rethink solidarity” no longer as simply assistance for the poorest, but as a global rethinking of the whole system, as a quest for ways to reform it and correct it in a way consistent with the fundamental human rights of all human beings. It is essential to restore to this word “solidarity”, viewed askance by the world of economics — as if it were a bad word — the social citizenship that it deserves. Solidarity is not an additional attitude, it is not a form of social alms-giving but, rather, a social value; and it asks us for its citizenship.

The current crisis is not only economic and financial but is rooted in an ethical and anthropological crisis. Concern with the idols of power, profit, and money, rather than with the value of the human person has become a basic norm for functioning and a crucial criterion for organization. We have forgotten and are still forgetting that over and above business, logic and the parameters of the market is the human being; and that something is men and women in as much as they are human beings by virtue of their profound dignity: to offer them the possibility of living a dignified life and of actively participating in the common good. Benedict XVI reminded us that precisely because it is human, all human activity, including economic activity, must be ethically structured and governed (cf. Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, n. 36). We must return to the centrality of the human being, to a more ethical vision of activities and of human relationships without the fear of losing something.

Dear friends, thank you once again for this meeting and for the work you carry out. I assure each one of you, all your loved ones, my remembrance in prayer, as I bless you warmly. Many thanks.

Clementine Hall Saturday,
25th May 2013

Address by His Holiness Pope Francis on the thirtieth anniversary



Dear brothers and sisters, good morning and welcome!

It is good to celebrate anniversaries: up to a certain point, then not so much... The *Centesimus Annus* Foundation has existed for thirty years now; everything began after John Paul II's Encyclical, written on the centenary of Leo XIII's historic *Rerum Novarum*. And your commitment is set precisely in this path, in this "tradition": the commitment, that is, to study and spread the social doctrine of the Church, endeavouring to show that it is not only theory, but can become a virtuous lifestyle with which to enable the growth of societies worthy of mankind.

The centrality of the person, the common good, solidarity and subsidiarity, have been transformed for you in these thirty years into concrete actions and have influenced the hearts and actions of many people. I am grateful to the Foundation and to all of you for the valuable work you have carried out; in particular, for what has been done over the last ten years through the reception and relaunch of the contributions I have tried to make to the development of the social doctrine.

In the Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium* I wanted to warn against the danger of living the economy in an unhealthy way. "Such an economy kills" (I said this in no. 53, in the year 2013, denouncing an economic model that produces waste and promotes what can be defined as the "globalization of indifference". Many of you work in the economic field: you are well aware of the benefit to everyone of having a way of imagining reality that places the person at the centre, that does not diminish the worker, and that tries to create good for all.

The Encyclical *Laudato si'* shed light on the damage due to the dominant technocratic paradigm, and proposed the logic of integral ecology, where "everything is connected", "everything is related", and the environmental issue is inseparable from the social issue: they go together. Care for the environment and attention to the poor stand or fall together. In the end, no-one is saved alone, and the rediscovery of fraternity and social friendship is decisive so as not to degenerate into an individualism that makes us lose the joy of living. And it also makes us lose life.

I am pleased that in this international convention you have chosen the title: "Memory to build the future: thinking and acting in terms of community", explicitly quoting

no. 116 of the Encyclical *Fratelli tutti*. In reality, those words come from an address to popular movements, from 2014. On that occasion I said: "Solidarity is a word that is not always well received. ... However, it is a word that means much more than an occasional gesture of generosity. It means *thinking and acting in terms of community*. It means that the lives of all take priority over the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means fighting against the structural causes of poverty and inequality; of the lack of work, land and housing; and of the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money: forced dislocation, painful emigration, human trafficking, drugs, war, violence. ... Solidarity, understood in its deepest sense, is a way of making history". And I am reminded - I mentioned money - of a passage in the Gospel, when Jesus tells us that you cannot serve two masters: either you serve God, one master, or you serve - I expected him to say: the devil, and he does not say "the devil", he says "money". Either you serve God or you serve money. Worse than the devil. We must look for what Jesus wants to say in this: there is a message. Either you serve God, or you are a servant of money. You are not free.

Today, talking to you and thinking of the title you have chosen, I would like to add something I read, by a great Italian jurist, Paolo Grossi, who was also president of the Constitutional Court and who died last year. He stated: "The community is always a refuge for the weak and gives a voice also to the voiceless" (*Grammatiche del diritto*, p.38).

Perhaps, for the community truly to become a place where the weak and the voiceless can feel welcomed and heard, what is needed from everyone is that exercise we might call "making room". Everyone withdraws their "self" a little and this allows the other to exist. But for this, the foundation of community must be the ethics of giving and not that of exchange. The ethics of giving, and not the ethics of exchange.

In this regard we can quote a Milanese poet, Giampiero Neri, also recently departed. He affirmed: "It is said of some people that, when they enter a room, they occupy it all. I should imagine that, when they leave, they leave a great void. Instead, I am inclined to think that it is the humble, silent people, who occupy only the necessary space, who make themselves loved, who leave a great void".

Dear brothers and sisters, thinking and acting in terms of community therefore means making room for others, it is imagining and working for a future where each person can find his or her place and have space in the world. A community that is able to give a voice to the voiceless is what we all need.

The valuable work of the *Centesimus Annus* Foundation can also be this: contributing to a thought and an action that promote the growth of a community in which we can walk the path of peace together. I bless you all, I bless your loved ones. And I ask you, please, to pray for me. Thank you.

Clementine Hall Monday,
5th June 2023

