Magnifica Humanitas
Reading/Guide Questions

Introduction

1. What is the "pivotal choice" humanity faces today?
   What biblical images does the pope utilize in this choice? Why, do you think?
   What do they mean to you in the context of discussing AI?

2. Why is consideration of new technologies important in the context of the Church's Social Doctrine?

3. What does it look like to "build the common good?"

4. He doesn't really define it, so what do you think Pope Leo means when he says we must remain "profoundly human?"
   What do *you* think it means to remain profoundly human?

5. Based on the Introduction, what does Pope Leo XIV seem to think about the relationship between humanity and technology?

Chapter 1

1. He tells us right up front his intention for this chapter – what is it?

2. What seems to be involved in the Church's relationship to human history?

3. The notion of a Church in dialog with the world is introduced pretty quickly; do you agree with the Pope's general position here? Why or why not?

4. Does Pope Leo want to say only Christians have a role to play in discerning a way forward for the common good? How does he explain his position?

5. What determines whether or not a socioeconomic system is just, according to St. John Paul II?

6. Having read through the brief history of the Social Doctrine and its development in different times, what seems to be a constant thread throughout, and what seems to distinguish the stages from one another in this development?
   What do you think this has to do with AI development?

Chapter 2

1. Based on the first two paragraphs, give a brief summary of Pope Leo XIV's themes and project in this chapter.

2. What is human dignity? From what does it arise?

3. What three categories of human dignity are identified? How are they distinct from each other?

4. What ideology regarding human dignity does the Pope find "particularly insidious"? Why? Do you agree?

5. What two "particularly serious dangers" does the Pope identify?

6. Pope Leo XIV presents four principles of the Church's Social Doctrine. Briefly name and describe each. Do you have a favorite? Do you think a principle is missing?

(chapter 2, cont.)

7. What is the State's responsibility to the people?

8. How are subsidiarity and solidarity linked up with one another?

9. How would you define social justice? How does the Pope define it?

10. How does the idea of social justice prevent us from claiming that poverty, for example, is only the result of bad personal choices?

11. Read paragraph 81 a couple of times. How are we doing, as a nation, in this regard?

12. How does Pope Leo XIV explain "integral human development?" What are the necessary principles/foundations for it?
    In the context of integral human development, how do we evaluate new technologies?

13. In a brief comment about the organization of church life, subsidiarity and solidarity are highlighted as key to proper function and ministry of the Church. Thoughts?

Chapter 3

1. Here, Pope Leo XIV turns in earnest to the issue of human dignity, or "grandeur of humanity" by way of his Babel vs Jerusalem imagery. What are some of the "great construction sites" of our time when it comes to human dignity, in your opinion? Why are they important to our understanding and safeguarding of human being?

2. How does the Pope define the "technocratic paradigm" framing life in the world today? What does he indicate are the main dangers of this paradigm? Are there any that you would add?

3. What two considerations must we keep in mind when discussing AI? What two-fold commitment is required by these considerations?

4. How/Why is artificial "intelligence" not the same as, or equal to, human intelligence?

5. What are the three aspects of AI we need to be wary of when engaging in *personal* use of AI? How do these issues play out on the community/public level?

(Ch. 3, cont.)

6. Paragraphs 102 - 111, in some ways, form a sort of core of the Pope's argument. Spend some time with them. What is his overall point here in this section? What stands out *to you* as particularly important for consideration here?

7. The Pope reminds us of our central question - what is that again? How does he clarify the necessity of balance?

8. What are the two primary assumptions of transhumanism and posthumanism? Why are these not helpful or good visions of what it means to progress?

9. How do human limitations, including suffering, actually offer space for expressions of human dignity and worth, according to the Pope? How do you feel and what do you think about this?

10. What factors must be in play to support technological progress "without allowing the heart to regress?" Can you think of examples of each?

(Ch. 3, cont.)

11. Leo XIV offers a nice little discussion of how we may, as authentically human, go beyond the limitations of our humanity. How does grace perform this work on and through us? Have you ever thought about grace in this way?

12. What are the two loves named by St. Augustine that the Pope highlights to conclude this chapter? Think of a few examples of each that you see and experience in day to day life, on a personal level, and on the societal level.

Chapter 4

1. The Pope knows how to preview a chapter! What three principles will we be exploring in this chapter? Without reading ahead, what do *you* think about each one?

2. Paragraphs 132-133 hit a little hard. What is required for truth? How does concentration of power among a few with access and wealth warp our access to and understanding of what is true?

3. As he has a few times in previous chapters, Pope Leo XIV distinguishes between what is true and what is useful/effective. Have you ever considered truth apart from

(chapter 4, cont.)

"results"? What's that mean to you? How does this underscore the understanding of truth as a good held in common by all people?

4. What elements work together as an "ecology of communication?"

5. What tension does the Pope see between education and technology?

6. Our schools matter! What challenges do schools and educators face in the face of AI's rapid development?

7. Concluding the discussion of truth, Leo XIV offers a list of human goods children need to be educated about and future generations have a right to enjoy, including transcendence. Why do you think he includes transcendence here with the others?

8. Why/how is work more than an instrument, a means to an end?

(chapter 4, cont.)

9. How is work related to the understanding that a person is always an end and not a means?

10. Paragraph 157 begins a quick takedown of so-called “trickle down”economics. By 162 we are reminded that “every choice has moral consequences,” and then warned that we cannot rely on the market’s “invisible hand” to establish a just economy. What are a couple of points that stand out to you? Does this kind of conversation make you nervous in some ways? If so, how?

11. In what ways is the family a primary social good?

12. The rest of this chapter weaves together human freedom and our shared responsibilities/duties in relation to technological development and human dignity. What tensions do you think might be held between such freedom and such dignity?

13. Briefly explain the relationship between “post-humanist” mentality, discussed in chapter 3, and the degradation of human freedom into a mere pursuit of efficiency?

Chapter 5

1. What danger does technological development, particularly considered apart from moral and policy-based restraints, pose in our considerations of war and conflict? How does this go against the main principles of the social doctrine of the Church (i.e., human dignity, universal destination of goods, etc.)?

2. In this chapter, Pope Leo XIV presents the culmination of his argument, and his challenge and exhortation to choose well between the two options facing us. Having read the first four chapters, how has your own understanding of his images of a new Babel contrasted with the life of a civilization of love? What would you add to his description of these images in paragraph 185?

3. The civilization of love is not static, but an ongoing cooperative project of shared life in the world. What must we develop in order to engage in this project?

4. How does the culture of power lead to issues like normalization of war, the right to unlimited use of force, and lack of genuine moral judgment in conflict?

5. How does the Pope understand the work of media in this process? Do you agree?

(chapter 5, cont.)

6. What are some primary changes in what war “means” according to the Pope?

7. What are the criteria for making a moral decision? What “non-negotiable requirements” do these criteria indicate for decisions related to war / armed conflict?

8. How is our multilateral system failing, or being corrupted by the grip of the culture of power? How does this affect peacebuilding?

9. Paragraphs 204-209 are the culmination of Pope Leo XIV’s discussion of the real harm caused by unbridled haste to achieve technological advancement. Read through it a couple of times, carefully.
   What is the false pragmatism and the false realism that together shape the “supposed political realism” he is pushing back against?
   What errors are normalized when nihilism and pragmatism intertwine?

(chapter 5, cont.)

10. So, how do we build a civilization of love among all of this, and what makes Christians both called and well-equipped to do this work along with all of our neighbors?

11. What comprises the foundation upon which such a civilization is built?

12. What five principles are our essential tools in this work? Give a brief definition/description of each.

13. Why is dialog essential to the civilization of love? How can we re-learn and cultivate the ability to be in dialogue with others, even in disagreement?

14. What does it mean to reject the mindset of violence?

(chapter 5, cont.)

15. How is multilateralism more or less an extending series of concentric circles of dialog? Why is this important, in fact necessary?

Conclusion

1. In what ability do we find the "standard" for the future of humanity? What do you think "welcome" has to do with this?

2. What is the plan and promise of "recapitulation"? What does this have to do with human dignity?

3. Why does Pope Leo XIV encourage us to develop a "Eucharistic spirituality"? What does this look like, feel like, etc.? How would your own spirituality shift if you intentionally lived into a Eucharistic model?

4. Why does the Pope look to Mary's Magnificat as an expression of the hope we are called to have? What does this mean for you, personally?