

Review of "*Antiqua et Nova: Note on the Relationship Between Artificial Intelligence and Human Intelligence.*"

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Abstract

The Latin title of this document "*Antiqua et Nova*"("ancient and new") was inspired by the text of Matthew 13:52 that says, " And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." Approved by Pope Francis on 14 January, 2025, AN was given in Rome, at the offices of the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith (DDF) and the Dicastery for Culture and Education (DCE), on 28 January, 2025. With it, the Church invites us to a positive anthropological and ethical discernment regarding Artificial Intelligence (AI). As a committed dialogue partner on global issues, she requests parents, teachers, pastors, bishops and those who share in the conviction that scientific and technological advances should be directed toward serving the human person and the common good to "dedicate themselves to this critical subject with care and attention."(no.5). AN has 117 paragraphs grouped into six sections including an introduction, a concluding reflection and an extensive reference list.

Introduction

In Section I ("Introduction," [nos1-6), AN., presents a road map of the entire document. Drawing from the Genesis creation account (Gen 1:27; 2:15) and the Sirach's affirmation that all human skills, abilities and scientific creativity come from God (Sir 38:6), AN, addresses the anthropological and ethical challenges raised by AI, including an imitation of the human intelligence that designed it in the first place. For instance, there is an ethical concern

about "the growing crises of truth, in the public forum," if a trained AI generates "artifacts" with a level of speed that rival or surpasses what human can do. This can lead to the production of texts or images indistinguishable from human compositions, or providing solutions not foreseen by the programmers. AN acknowledges that, today, marks a new and significant phase in human's engagement with technology, which has impacted

interpersonal relationships, education, work, art, healthcare, law warfare, and international relations.

In Section II ("What is Artificial Intelligence," [nos. 7-12), AN., appeals to the 1956 work of an American computer scientist, John McCarthy, et al., ("A Proposal for the Dartmouth Summer Research Project on Artificial Intelligence"[31 August 1955]), and defines artificial intelligence as "that of making a machine behave in ways that would be called intelligent if a human were so behaving." It adumbrates on its historical rapid advancement from "narrow AI" systems to Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). Narrow AI is designed to handle limited tasks such as translating languages predicting the trajectory of storm, classifying images, and answering questions. Some advance systems rely on using machine learning which relies mostly on statistical inference and algorithms, rather than logical deduction. These systems augment or supersede what humans can do in areas of data analysis, image recognition and medical diagnosis. AGI is single system capable of operating across all cognitive domains and performing any task within the scope of human intelligence, raising the fear of its "superintelligence," and the possibility of eclipsing the human

person(no.10). Assuming that "intelligence" can be used in the same way to refer to both "Human Intelligence" (HI) and Artificial Intelligence (AI), AN explains that, while HI is a faculty that pertains to the person in his or her entirety, AI is understood functionally, since the activities of the human mind can be broken down into digital steps that machines can mimic or replicate.

In Section III ("Intelligence in the Philosophical and Theological Tradition,"[nos. 13-35), AN lays emphasis on the "rationality," "embodiment," and the "relationality" of the human persons. This does not end with interpersonal communion of the human persons, but extends to their "relationship with the Truth," that finds its ultimate expression in God, who transcends the physical and the created world. AN, stresses on the biblical theology of creation (Gen 1-2, Wis 9:9; Jer 10:12; Dan, 2:2`-22; Isa 45:18; Ps 8; Ps 74:12-17 and Ps 104) and acknowledges the human persons as co-creators or stewards of the divinely created world, to cultivate and care for it, as stressed by Pope Francis (Encyclical Letter *Laudator Si'* [May 24,2015]). AN basically recommends "an integral understanding of the human intelligence." Intelligence from the Christian point of view, is "the integration of truth into the moral and

spiritual life of the person, guiding his or her actions in light of God's goodness and truth," (nos. 26-28). Human intelligence, according to AN, cannot be reduced to acquisition of facts, algorithms or the ability to perform specific tasks. Rather true intelligence is shaped by divine love, which, "is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom. 5:5).

Additionally, Section III, draws attention to the limits of AI. While AI is "an extraordinary technological achievement capable of limiting certain outputs associated with human intelligence, it operates by performing tasks, achieving goals, or making decisions based on quantitative data and computational logic"(no.30). Positively, AI can help humans integrate data from a variety of fields, model complex systems and foster interdisciplinary connections. Yet, AI is confined to a logical-mathematical framework exposing its inherent limitations. Contrarily, HI develops organically throughout the person's physical and psychological growth, shaped by myriads of live experiences in the flesh, including emotional responses, social interactions. AI lacks a physical body. It relies on computational reasoning and learning based on data sets and recorded human experiences and knowledge. AI can simulate aspects of human reasoning, and

perform specific tasks at a very high speed. But this is a fraction of the human mind who can make moral discernment, understand and actively engage with reality all dimension. AI lacks the richness of corporality, relationality and the openness of the human heart to truth and goodness. AN., cautions that the very use of the word "intelligence," in connection with AI can be misleading and risks overlooking the treasure that is in the human person. AI then, could be seen not necessarily as "artificial form of the human intelligence but as a product of it."(no.35).

Section IV stresses "The Role of Ethics in Guiding the Development and Use of AI," (nos.36-48), and attempts to find out how AI can be used with God's plan. This is possible since all scientific technology and achievements must be seen as gifts from God. In as much as many scientific developments have brought countless blessings to human beings, the negative sides must be checked. This includes those aspects that threaten the sanctity of life, the dignity of the human person, whom technological development must be directed to serve(no.38). AN, emphasizes the importance of moral responsibility grounded in the dignity and vocation of the human person who is a moral agent and not the machine. This must serve as a basic

criterion for developers, owners, operators and regulators and users of AI. The use of AI must be "accompanied by an ethic inspired by a vision of the common good, an ethic of freedom, responsibility and fraternity, capable of fostering the full development of people in relation to others and to the whole creation"(no.48).

Section V, raises 10 important "specific questions" that touch on the practical and ethical ways of using AI include: (1) AI and Society, (2)AI and human relationship, (3)AI, the Economy and Labor, (4) AI and Healthcare, (5) AI and Education, (6) AI, Malformation, Deepfakes, and Abuse, (7) Privacy and Surveillance,(8) AI and the Protection of Our Common Home, (9) AI and Warfare (10)AI and our Relationship with God. Commenting on some of these questions, AN, urges that, development and use of technology must recognize that we are one human family in agriculture, education and culture. AI must be used for the promotion of the common good in the society in relation with one another. No matter how we anthropomorphized AI, no AI application can genuinely experience empathy, love and compassion. Therefore, we must avoid misrepresenting AI as a person. AI in the economic-financial and

labor aspects must be carefully examined. While AI promises to boost productivity by taking over mundane tasks, care should be taken so that AI does not deskill workers or force them out of work and labor market, which is the logical consequence of "technological paradigm" that Pope Francis addresses in his *Laudato Si'* of May 2015. In fact, since work is part of human life, the goal of AI should not be to replace human work and labor. Same responsible use of AI in health care and education sectors are stressed in this section.

Citing the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (Declaration *Gravissimum Educationis*[28 October 1965, pars 1: AAS 58, 1966, 729]), the document insists that "true education strives to form individuals with a view toward their final end and the good of the society to which they belong," (no.77). Education, at any level should aim at holistic formation not mere passing of facts and data to human person. The relationship between the teacher and the student is indispensable, since teachers do more than just conveying knowledge. They are called to model human qualities and inspire the joy of discovery. Their presence motivates students both in the content they teach and the care they show their students. Teacher's bond must foster

trust, mutual understanding and the capacity to address each person's unique dignity and potential (no.79). As noted in Pope John Paul II (Apostolic Constitution *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* [August 15 1990, n.7]), "in the world today characterized by such rapid developments in science and technology, the task of a Catholic University assumes and ever greater importance and urgency,"(no.83). AN., also draws from Pope Francis (Apostolic Constitution *Veritatis Gaudium* [29 January 2018, 9-10), and appeals that, "in a particular way, Catholic Universities are urged to be present as great laboratories of hope at this crossroads of history. In an interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary key, they are urged to engage "with wisdom and creativity," no.83).

AI must not be used to spread false information or illegally violets people's privacy or limits other's freedom by illegitimate surveillance or abuse of our common home. Weaponization of AI can also be detrimental to the common good, rather it is important that AI recognizes that every gift, including technology is from God (nos106-107).

In the concluding reflections of Section VI (nos.108-117), AN, weaves together the preceding and discussed advantages and

delimitations of AI in light of the specific questions raise. It reminds every one of our anthropological and moral responsibilities in using AI. AN, does this, by pointing to Pope Francis (*Laudato Si'*, par.105). Here, Francis emphasizes the need for the growth of "human responsibility, values and conscience," proportionate to the growth in the potential that this technology brings (no.108). Echoes of this is heard in the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, (Pastoral Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* [December 7, 1965, par 34). *Gaudium et Spes* calls on humanity to recognize that "with and increase in human power comes a broadening of responsibility on the part of individuals and communities"(no.108).

AN also calls on all to reflect on the questions whether in the context of technological progress human beings are better spiritually, morally, and more aware of the dignity of their fellow human persons or more responsible and open to their fellow neighbors, especially the weak and the poor(no.109). AN, advises all to reevaluate how to use individual applications of AI and to avoid "digital reductionism,"(no.112). It recommends integration of "true wisdom" in the use of AI, so that we may not become spiritually and morally barren (no.113). Such

"wisdom of the heart," is "the virtue that enables us to integrate the whole and its parts, our decisions and their consequences." (no.114). *Antiqua et Nova* finally recommends our openness to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who "enables us to look at things with God's eyes" since the person's perfection is not measured by information or knowledge they possess, but, by the depth of their charity," manifested in how we incorporate or use AI to promote the common good as well as care for our common home (nos. 115-117).

We are very grateful to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education for this great service done not only to the Church and her institutions, including schools and hospitals, but to the society as a whole.

Reference

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