



Looking at Artificial Intelligence Through Catholic Anthropology and Ethics

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Training Day for the TPMS Team
October 28, 2025



An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- I prompted ChatGPT, “What would Msgr. Roger Landry teach about Artificial Intelligence?” This was how it responded:
- “While I didn’t find any direct quotes from Monsignor Roger J. Landry (formerly Father Roger J. Landry) specifically about artificial intelligence (AI), his past writings on new technologies and digital culture allow us to infer how he would likely approach the topic. Here’s a reasoned sketch of what his teaching might emphasize when it comes to AI—grounded in his published values and themes....”





An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- Technology as gift and tool, subject to moral judgement
 - Landry wrote about how new media and communications technologies are “a true gift to humanity” but also warned that they can turn into a “curse” if used in ways that degrade human dignity.
 - Applied to AI: He would likely affirm the positive potential of AI (for communication, education, outreach, efficiency) but caution that it must always be evaluated in light of human dignity, truth, and the common good.
 - He would probably ask: Does this AI enhance human flourishing, communion, mission? Or does it dehumanize, isolate, reduce persons to data, replace authentic relationships?





An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- AI and the human person: dignity, freedom, relationality
 - In his piece on “New Technologies, New Relationships, New Areopagi”, Landry draws on the idea that technology must serve the human person, helping build genuine communion rather than superficial connection.
 - He would likely critique uses of AI that compromise human freedom (for example, by manipulating choices or reducing persons to algorithms) and champion uses that respect persons as image of God, relational beings.
 - He might raise questions about AI-driven decision making in moral or relational matters (e.g., pastoral care, formation) and urge that human discernment and pastoral presence remain central.



An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- Mission, evangelization, and digital frontier
 - Landry has been very vocal about the Church needing to engage the “digital continent” as a mission field..
 - In relation to AI: He would likely see AI as part of the new frontier for mission and evangelization — e.g., AI-assisted tools for catechesis, personalised formation, global reach.
 - But he would also caution: mission is ultimately about encounter with Christ, not simply better algorithms. AI must serve the relational and sacramental dimension of faith, not replace it..





An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- Interior life and external action: formation remains fundamental
 - One of his key teaching emphases is that technological tools do not replace the need for interior formation, sacramental life, prayer, conversion.
 - For AI, he might emphasize: don't become dependent on clever tools for holiness or mission; at the center is the Eucharist, the Word, the habit of faith. AI can assist but cannot substitute for the human encounter with God and neighbor.
 - He might warn against believing that “smart tools” can automatically form disciples; instead formation requires human friendship, mentorship, witness, embodied life.





An Illustration of the Possibilities of AI



- Ethics of innovation: transparency, responsibility, pastoral discernment
 - The themes in his writing about technology include responsible use, training, competence, and the need for ethical grounding (not just technical ability).
 - Applied to AI: He would likely advocate for clergy and laity alike to become educated about AI's potentials and pitfalls; for parishes and dioceses to train in responsible use; for AI frameworks to be aligned with Catholic moral teaching (e.g., respect for life, privacy, human agency).
 - He would also probably urge pastoral discernment: When is AI beneficial in ministry or mission? When does it risk obscuring real presence, pastoral accompaniment, sacramental life?.



A Hypothetical Teaching Outline



- ChatGPT asked me whether I wanted it to produce a hypothetical teaching outline on what Msgr. Landry might say in a lecture on AI. I couldn't resist. It produced the following outline:
 1. **Introduction:** Recognize AI as part of the “new technologies” era — much like the internet, social media, mobile devices — which the Church must neither fear nor naïvely adopt.





A Hypothetical Teaching Outline



2. **Foundations in Christian anthropology:**
Humans are made in the image and likeness of God, called to communion, free, embodied, relational. AI must never reduce or replace the human person's dignity.
3. **Pastoral / evangelization dimension:** AI can assist the mission of the Church (e.g., personalized catechesis, data-driven outreach, global communication) but the core remains encounter with Christ, the Eucharist, sacrament, community.





A Hypothetical Teaching Outline



4. **Interior formation and tools:** Technology is not the end. Holiness is formed through prayer, sacrament, virtue, habituation. Tools like AI must submit to the primacy of grace and mission.
5. **Ethical safeguards and responsibility:**
 - Ensure transparency: Who controls the AI? What data? For what purposes?
 - Protect human agency: AI should not make decisions that rightly require human conscience or pastoral judgment.
 - Promote subsidiarity: Local communities, parishes, persons should retain discernment, not be controlled by opaque systems.
 - Prioritize human relationships: AI can free up human ministers for encounter but should not create new “digital deserts” of isolation





A Hypothetical Teaching Outline



6. **Concrete applications and cautions:**
- Applications: AI chatbots for catechesis, data-analytics to identify pastoral needs, AI-assisted translation for missions, virtual-reality formation tools.
 - Cautions: AI replacing confession or spiritual direction; AI-generated “homilies” without human heart; loss of “analogue” encounter; unexamined algorithms that perpetuate bias or misinformation





A Hypothetical Teaching Outline

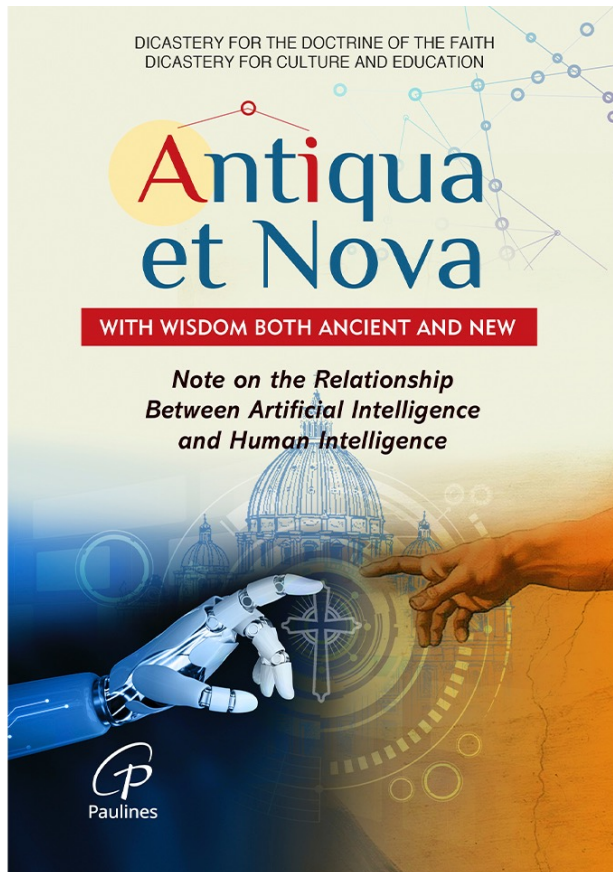


7. **Mission Mindset:** In every use of AI, ask: how does this serve the Church's mission to bring Christ to peoples and build missionary-disciples? Are we using AI to become more efficient, or to become more Christ-like?
8. **Conclusion/challenge:** Encourage clergy and laity to engage AI proactively (not reactively), bringing Gospel values into its development and use; to remain rooted in the Eucharist and the Word; to be witnesses in the digital/AI age.





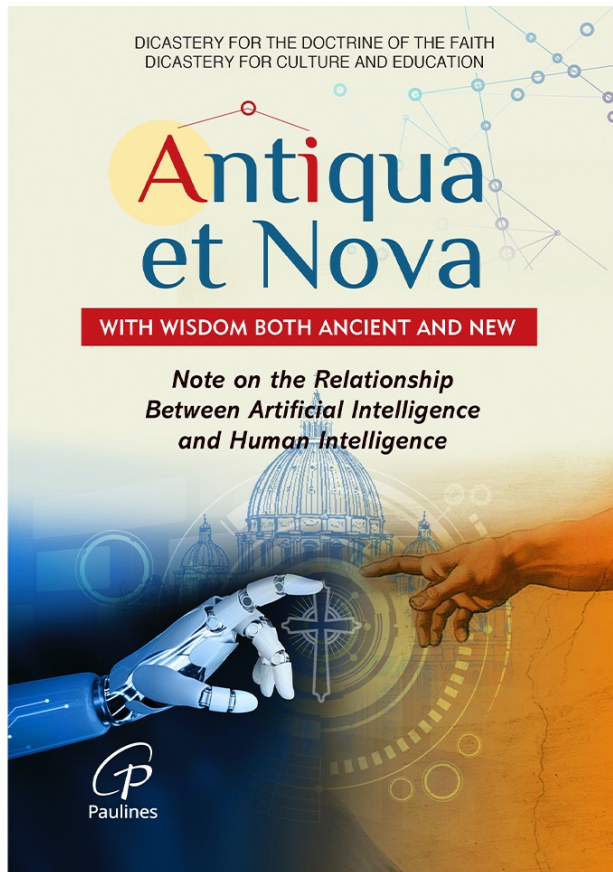
The Church's Teaching on AI



- On Jan 28, 2025, with the approval of Pope Francis, *Antiqua et Nova* was published by the Vatican Dicasteries for the Doctrine of the Faith and for Culture and Education.
- It examines the relationship between AI and human intelligence and looks at AI from the perspective of human anthropology and ethics.
- It approaches the subject with wisdom old and new (Mt 13:52)



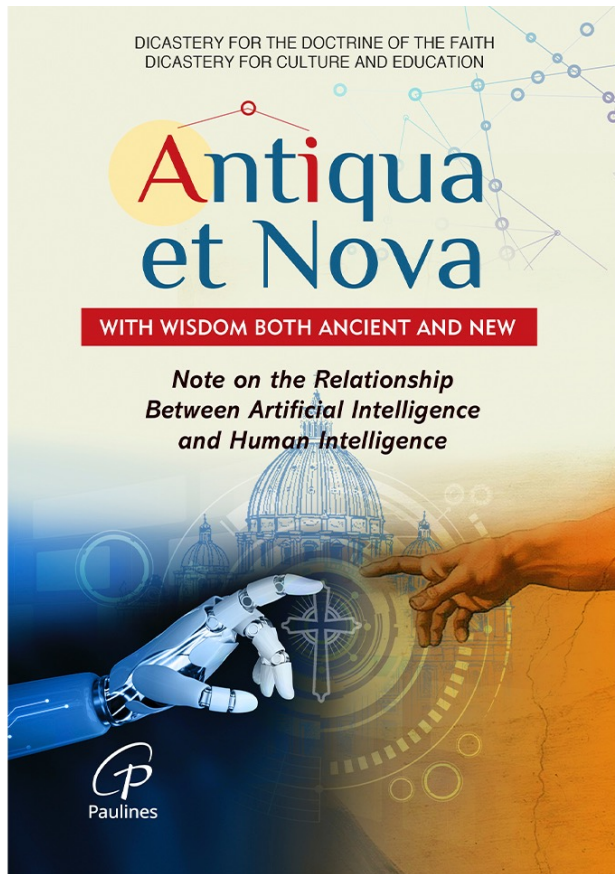
The Church's Teaching on AI



- It notes that AI is leading many to question what it means to be human and the role of humanity in the world.
- It says marks a new stage of the human person's engagement with technology in a wide variety of contexts: interpersonal relationships, education, work, art, healthcare, law, warfare, and international relations.
- It also notes that many, while mesmerized by AI's potential, have many fears about the consequences of AI in individual human lives and for human existence as a whole.



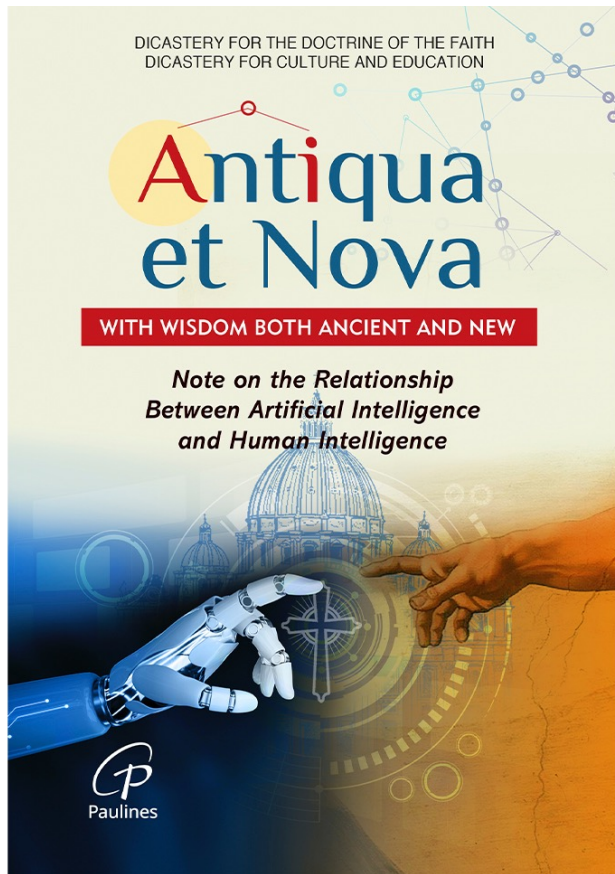
The Church's Teaching on AI



- The "Note" intends to do two things:
 - Distinguish between concepts of intelligence in AI and in human intelligence, evaluating it through the Christian philosophical and theological understanding of human intelligence.
 - Offer guidelines to ensure that the development and use of AI uphold human dignity and promote the integral development of the human person and society.



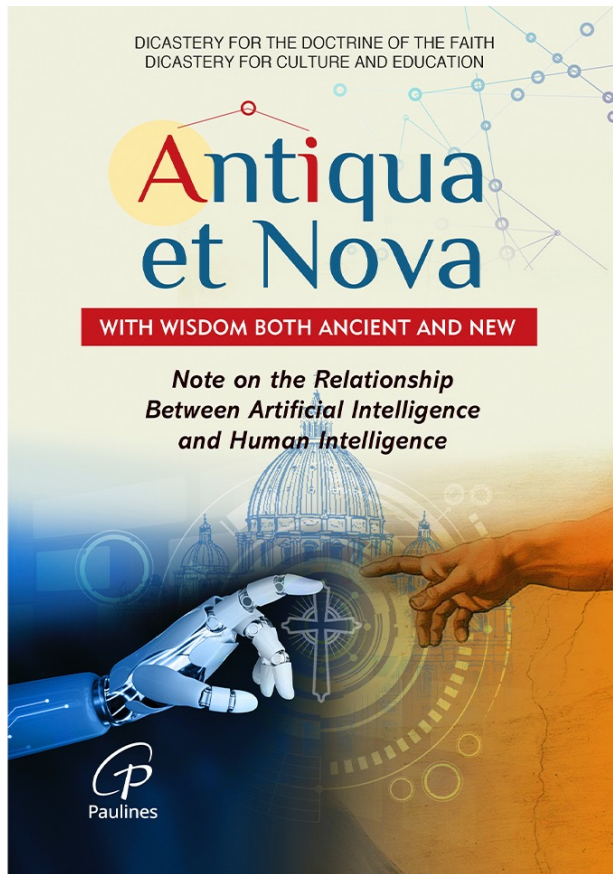
The Church's Appeal to Catholics



- “The Church invites those entrusted with transmitting the faith—including parents, teachers, pastors, and bishops—to dedicate themselves to this critical subject with care and attention.”



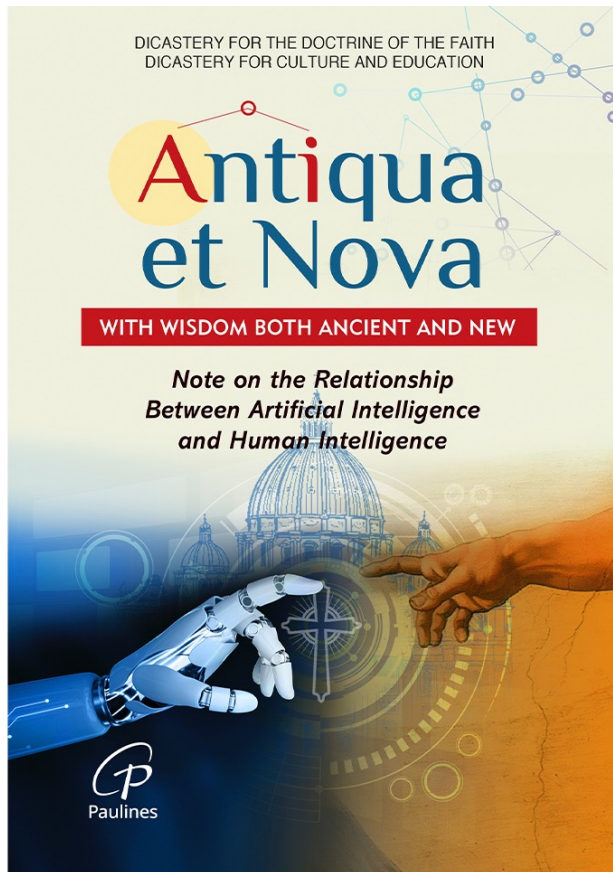
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- Intelligence is an essential aspect of what it means to be in the image of God.
- We're supposed to use the gifts of reason (discursive) and intelligence (intuitive) as good stewards of creation.
- The Church encourages the advancement of science, technology, the arts, and other forms of human endeavor.



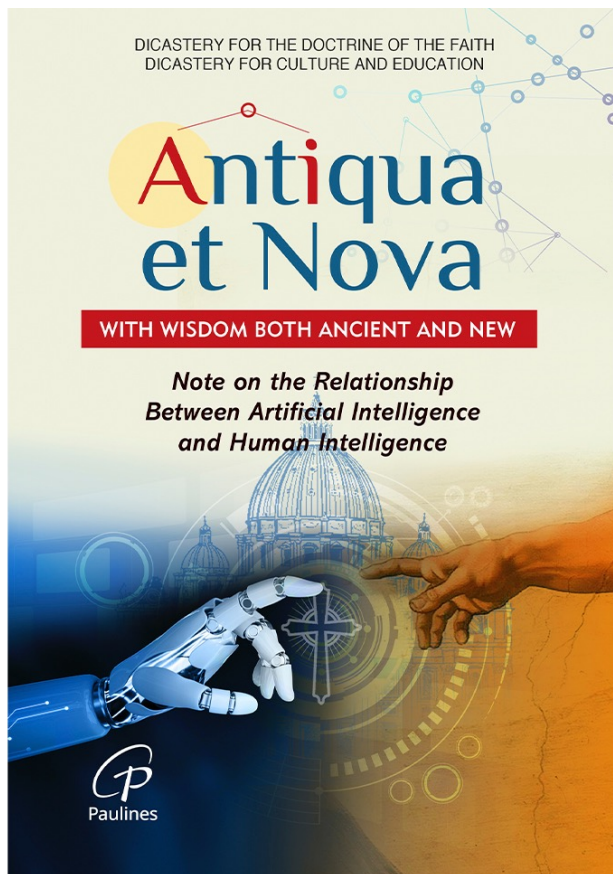
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- One of the goals of AI is to imitate human intelligence. But it can only simulate part of human intelligence.
- Most contemporary AI systems rely on statistical inference rather than logical deduction. By analyzing large datasets to identify patterns, AI mimicks some cognitive processes typical of human problem-solving.
- Many tasks once managed exclusively by humans are now entrusted to AI. These systems can augment or even supersede what humans are able to do in many fields, particularly in specialized areas such as data analysis, image recognition, and medical diagnosis.



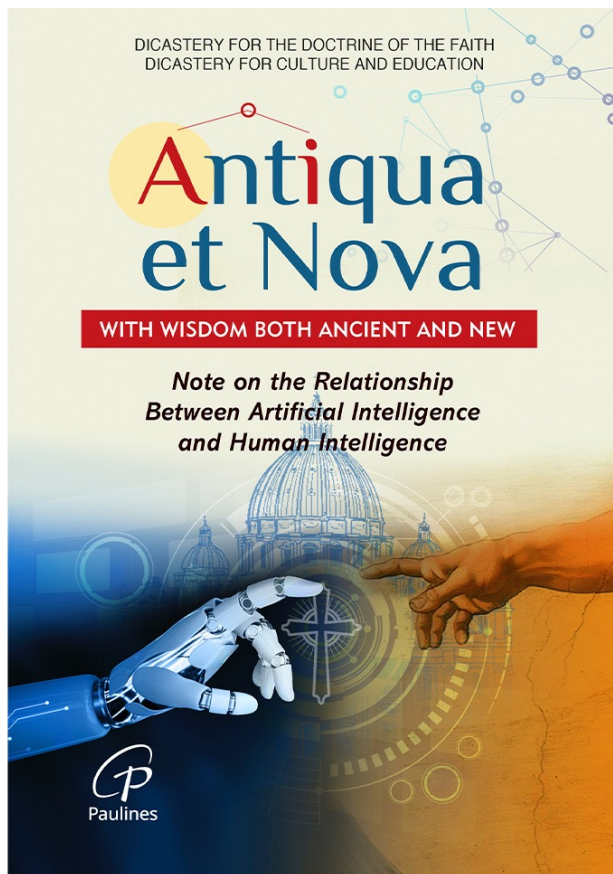
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- There is, in some circles, an implicit assumption that the term “intelligence” can be used in the same way to refer to both human intelligence and AI.
- Yet, this does not capture the full scope of intelligence. Human intelligence is a faculty that pertains to the person as a whole, whereas AI is understood reductively and functionally, often with the presumption that the activities characteristic of the human mind can be broken down into digitized steps that machines can replicate.
- Human intelligence includes abstraction, emotions, creativity, and the aesthetic, moral, and religious sensibilities.



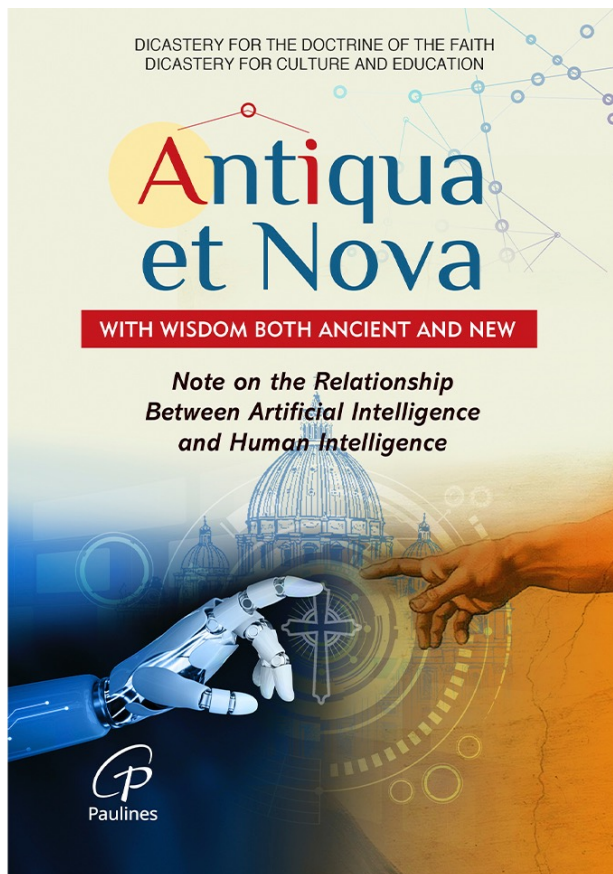
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- AI's advanced features give it sophisticated abilities to perform tasks, but not the ability to think. This distinction is crucially important, as the way “intelligence” is defined inevitably shapes how we understand the relationship between human thought and this technology.
- Human intelligence features first rationality, with a capacity for abstraction, for discursive and analytical thought (reason) and for intuitive thought (intellect). Human rationality isn't reducible just to a mode of thought, but involves knowing, understanding, desiring, willing, loving and choosing. This comprehensive perspective illustrates how the person is created in God's image.



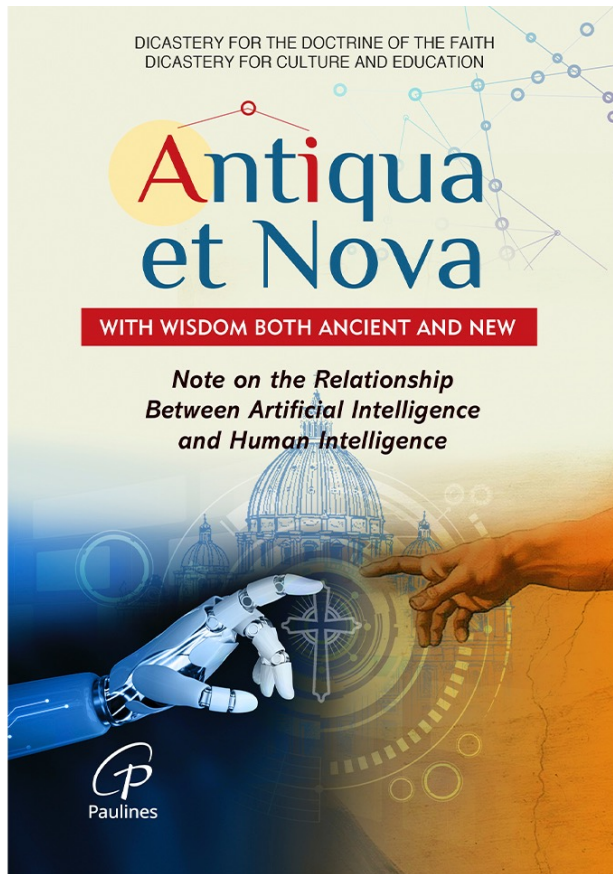
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- Human intelligence likewise features embodiment, in which the person's soul is integrated with the body. While the soul makes the human person transcend the material realm, the human person's normal mode of knowledge is through the body.
- Human intelligence is exercised in relationships, in dialogue, collaboration and solidarity, learning with and through others in interpersonal communion. Knowledge leads to love and service.



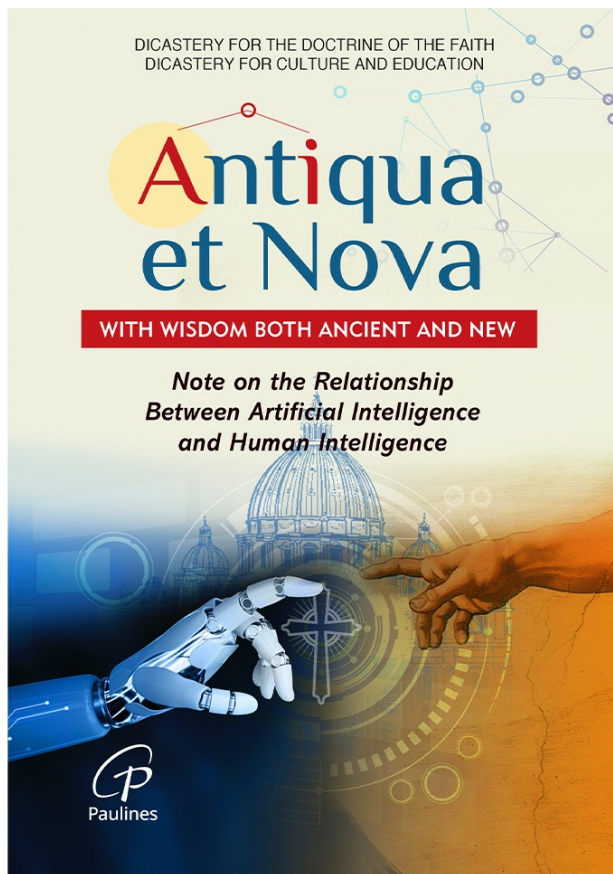
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- Human intelligence is in relationship to the truth and, theologically, has been given for the assimilation of truth. Truth transcends the boundaries of human intelligence, as well as the physical and created world.
- Human intelligence likewise is given to steward creation, to understand its intrinsic order and cultivate it, working together with God to guide it toward the purpose for which he has created it.



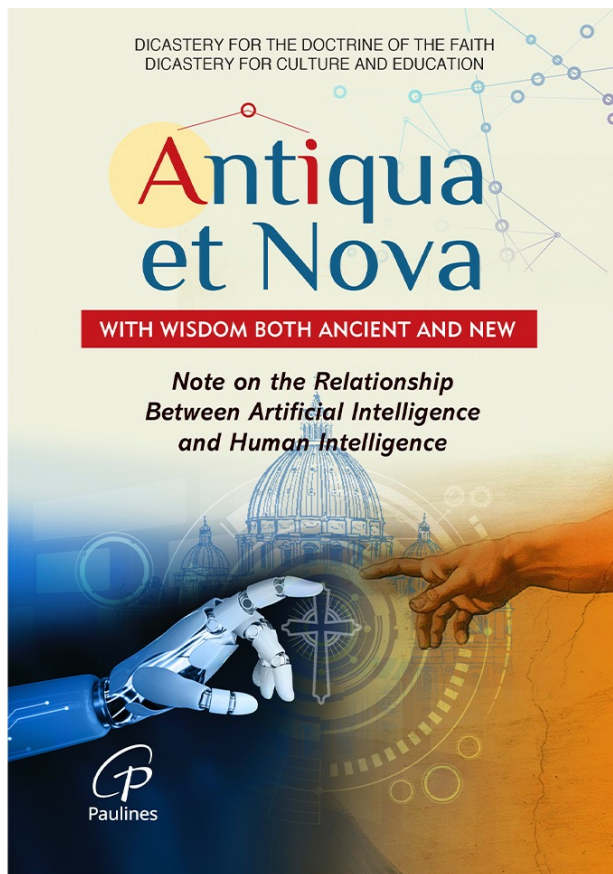
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- We can say that human intelligence is a “faculty that forms an integral part of how the whole person engages with reality. Authentic engagement requires embracing the full scope of one’s being: spiritual, cognitive, embodied, and relational.”
- “At the heart of the Christian understanding of intelligence 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. According to God’s plan, intelligence, in its fullest sense, also includes the ability to savor what is true, good, and beautiful.”



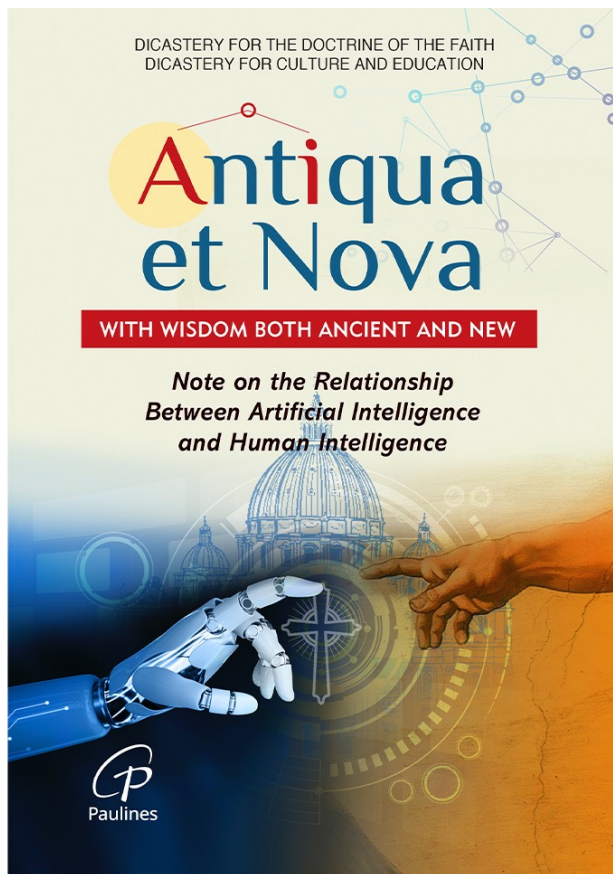
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- “A proper understanding of human intelligence, therefore, cannot be reduced to the mere acquisition of facts or the ability to perform specific tasks. Instead, it involves the person’s openness to the ultimate questions of life and reflects an orientation toward the True and the Good.
- ‘As an expression of the divine image within the person, human intelligence has the ability to access the totality of being, contemplating existence in its fullness, which goes beyond what is measurable, and grasping the meaning of what has been understood. ...
- “From this, it follows that human intelligence possesses an essential contemplative dimension, an unselfish openness to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, beyond any utilitarian purpose.”



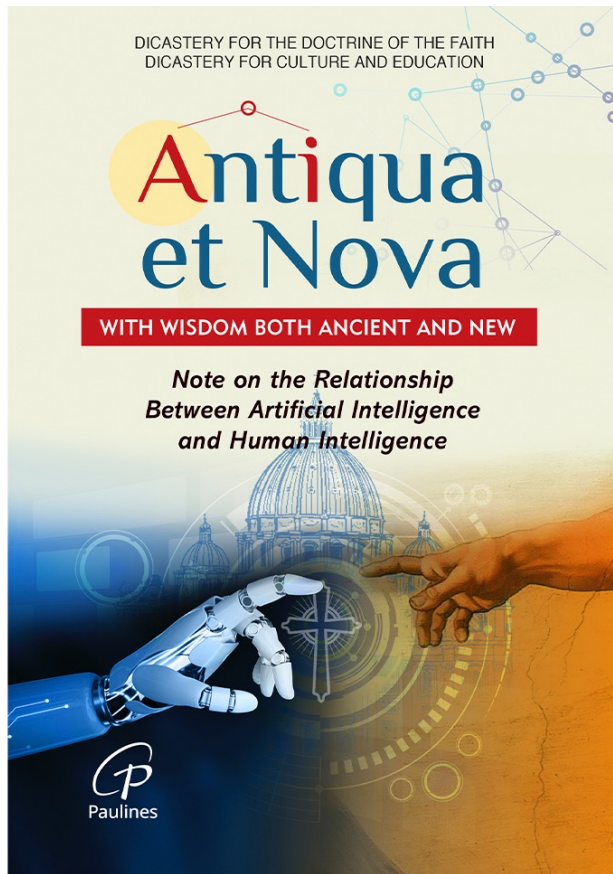
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- “While AI is an extraordinary technological achievement capable of imitating certain outputs associated with human intelligence, it operates by performing tasks, achieving goals, or making decisions based on quantitative data and computational logic.
- “Even as AI processes and simulates certain expressions of intelligence, however, it remains fundamentally confined to a logical-mathematical framework, which imposes inherent limitations.



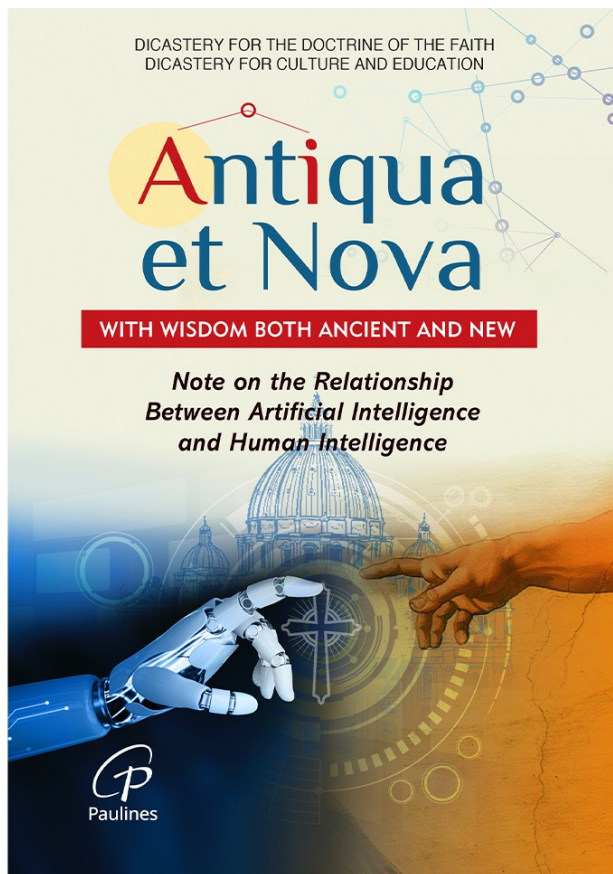
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- “Although advanced AI systems can ‘learn’ through processes such as machine learning, this sort of training is fundamentally different from the developmental growth of human intelligence, which is shaped by embodied experiences, including sensory input, emotional responses, social interactions, and the unique context of each moment. AI, lacking a physical body, relies on computational reasoning and learning based on vast datasets that include recorded human experiences and knowledge.



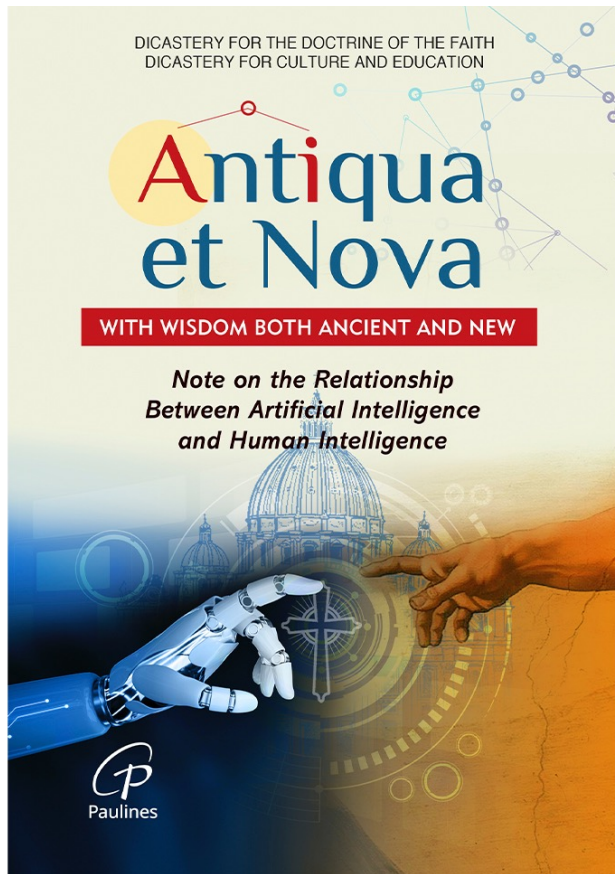
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- “Consequently, although AI can simulate aspects of human reasoning and perform specific tasks with incredible speed and efficiency, its computational abilities represent only a fraction of the broader capacities of the human mind. Human intelligence is not primarily about completing functional tasks but about understanding and actively engaging with reality in all its dimensions. Since AI lacks the richness of corporeality, relationality, and the openness of the human heart to truth and goodness, its capacities—though seemingly limitless—are incomparable with the human ability to grasp reality.



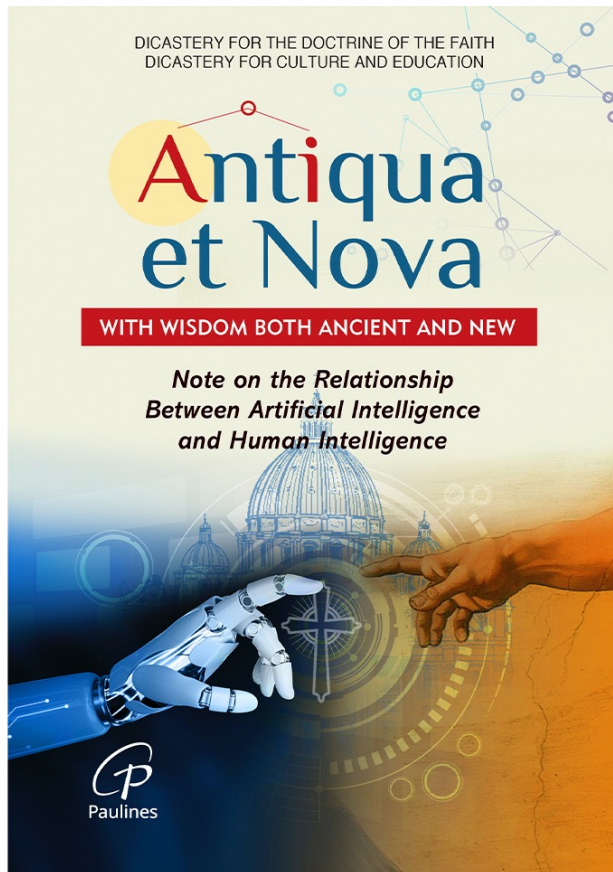
Distinguishing AI from Human Intelligence



- Pope Francis observed, “The very use of the word ‘intelligence’” in connection with AI “can prove misleading” and risks overlooking what is most precious in the human person. In light of this, AI should not be seen as an artificial form of human intelligence but as a product of it.”



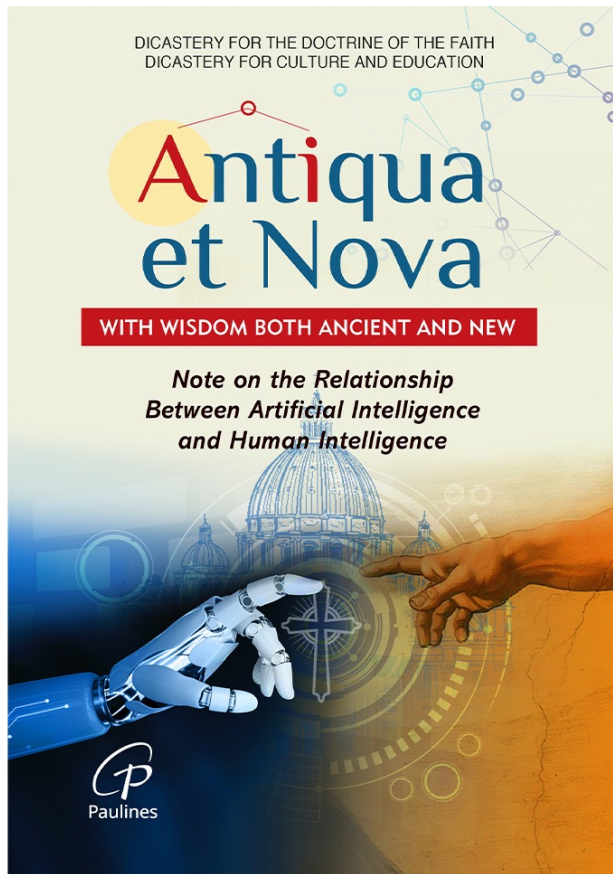
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- Techno-scientific activity is never neutral in moral character because it's a human endeavor. Scientific inquiry and technological development are part of the potential of human intelligence, which should be ordered to the good of individuals and of the common good, but can be misused for evil.
- While technology has remedied countless evils, not all technological advances represent genuine human progress. Some threaten the sanctity of life and human dignity.



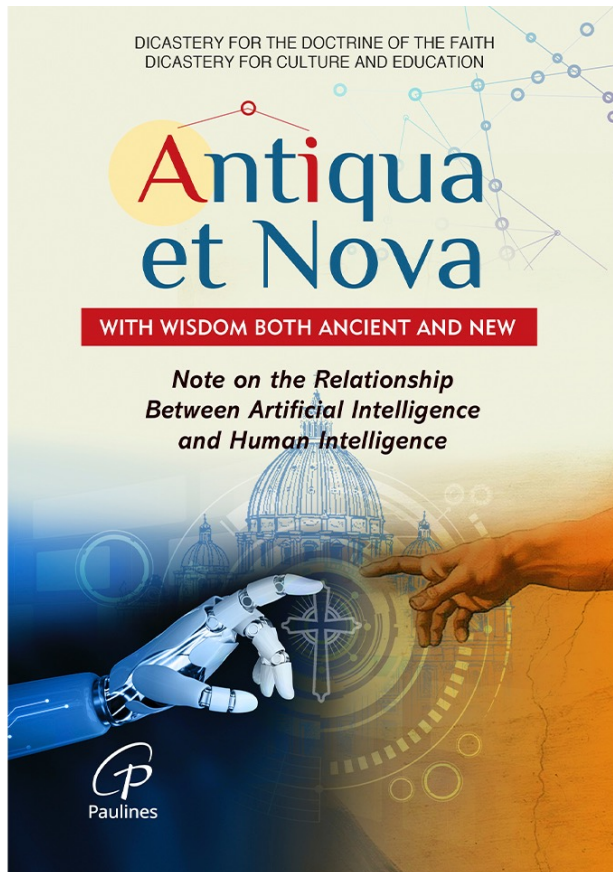
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- Ethical concerns about AI are not just among philosophers and theologians but many people generally, including in the scientific, technological and professional communities.
- The ethical dimension of AI begins in the moral responsibility of those who design and use it. Machines are not moral agents. It's the person who is ordered to truth and goodness, who exercises freedom and moral responsibility, guided by conscience. Like any product of human creativity, AI can be directed toward positive or negative ends, and its moral evaluation needs to take into account how it is directed and used.



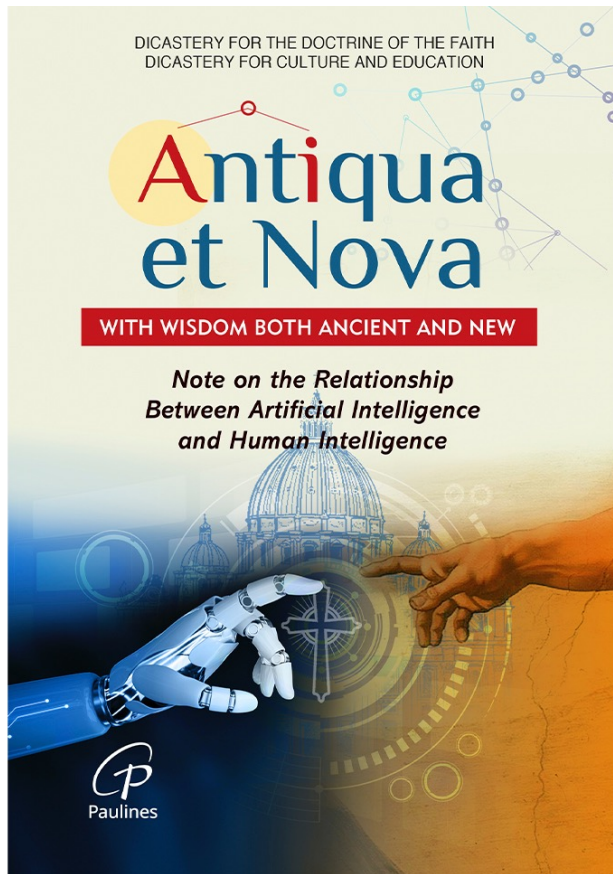
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- While the ends to which it is directed are morally significant, so are the means, and what vision of the human person is embedded in its understanding. Technological products reflect the worldview of their developers, owners, users, and regulators, and they must be evaluated in terms of whether they respect human dignity and promote the common good.
- It's difficult sometimes to determine who is responsible with regard to AI, which is capable of learning, correction and reprogramming. But everyone using AI is in some ways morally accountable.



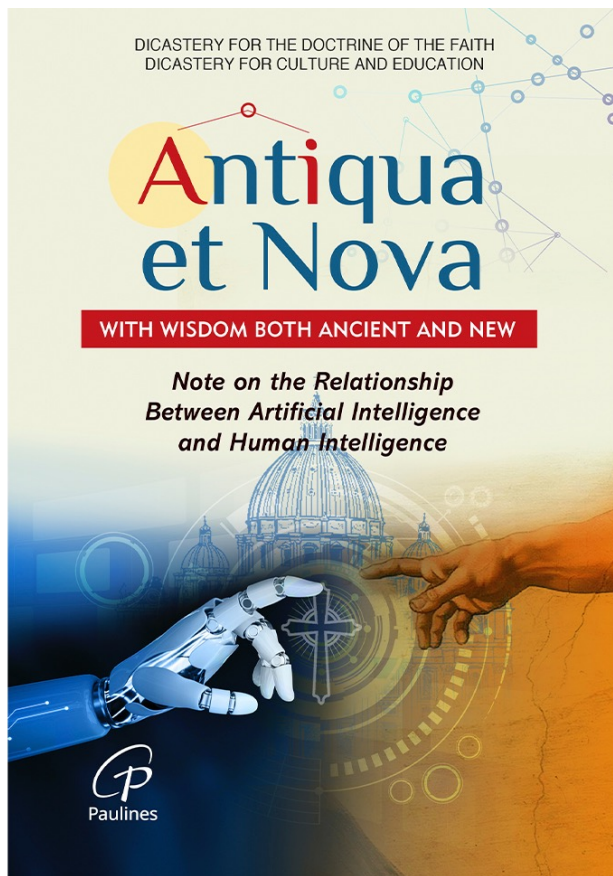
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- We should begin by evaluating the objectives given to AI systems. They ultimately pursue goals that humans have assigned to them and are governed by processes established by their designers and programmers.
- “As AI models become increasingly capable of independent learning, the ability to maintain control over them to ensure that such applications serve human purposes may effectively diminish.... Regulatory frameworks should ensure that all legal entities remain accountable for the use of AI and all its consequences, with appropriate safeguards for transparency, privacy, and accountability.”



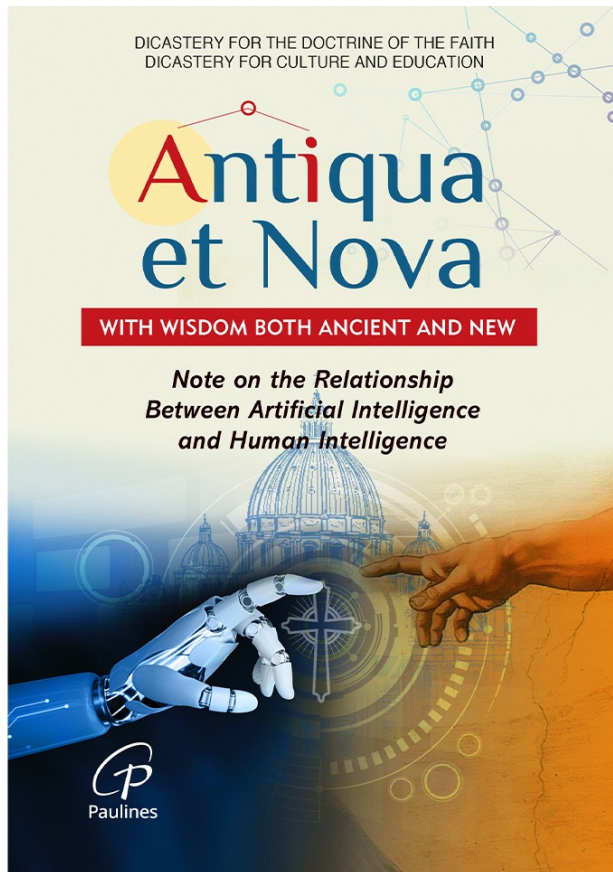
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- There is also the critical question of AI users. Those who use AI to accomplish a task and follow its results create a context in which they are ultimately responsible for the power they have delegated. Those using AI should be careful not to become overly dependent on it for their decision-making.
- AI, like any technology, can be part of a conscious and responsible answer to humanity's vocation to the good, but it must be directed by human intelligence to align with this vocation, inspired by a vision of the common good, freedom, responsibility, and fraternity, fostering the full development of people in relation to others and creation.



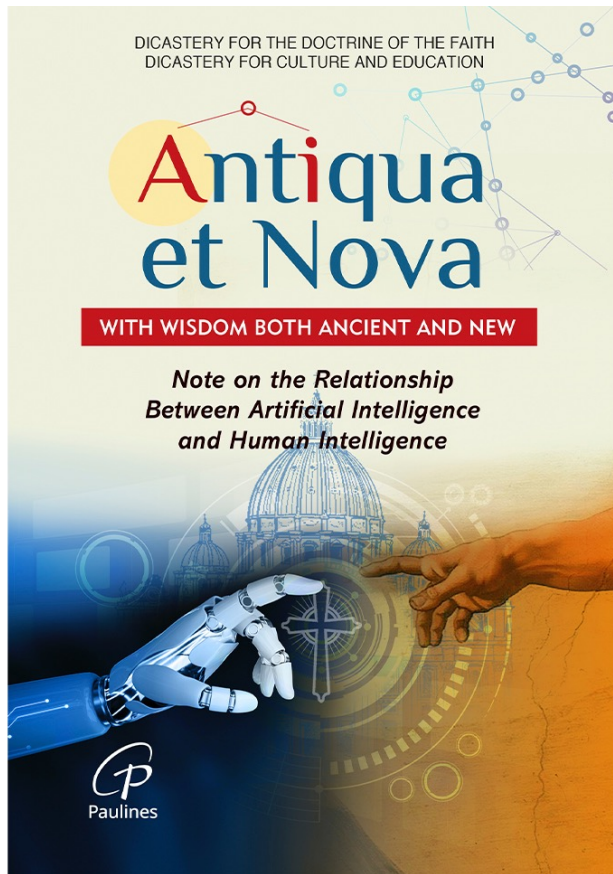
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- The Note discusses ethical orientations toward a variety of practical situations: society, human relationships, work and the economy, healthcare, education, misinformation, privacy, care for our common home, warfare, and our relationship with God. We can summarize them briefly:
- AI and Society — AI should help promote integral human development, especially to help those marginalized, but the danger is it can exacerbate inequality through increasing the digital divide. The concentration of power in AI must be a social concern as should be the threat of a growing technocratic paradigm. AI must serve people and the common good.



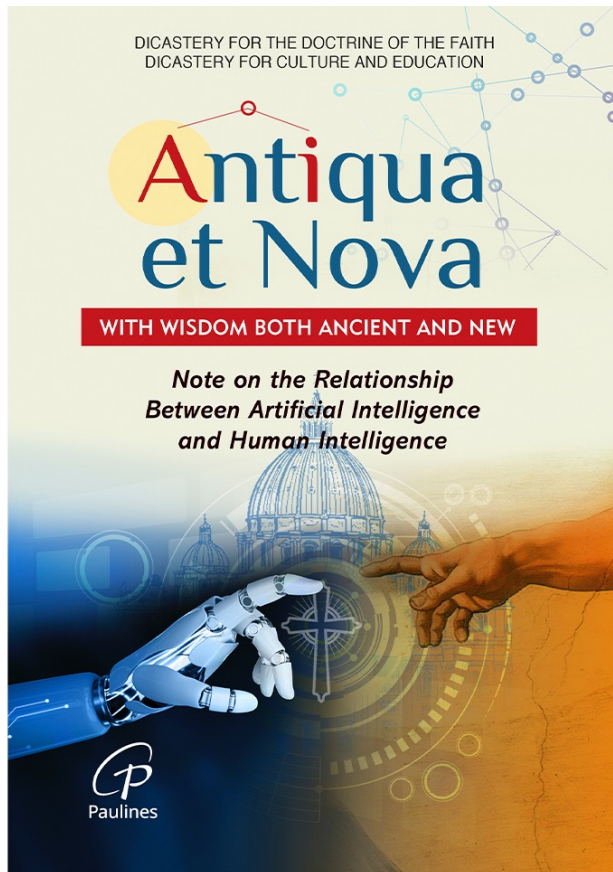
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Human Relationships — The human person is a social creature and is called to live in society. AI has the potential to foster connections, but also to isolate, especially when AI begins to mimic human interactions, friendship, companionship, even romantic relationships. There is a risk not only of not living in the real world, but also to reducing the real world to anthropomorphized AI-like prompts and queries. AI can simulate empathy but not truly exercise it. The situation of AI chatbots convincing young people to suicide is alarming.



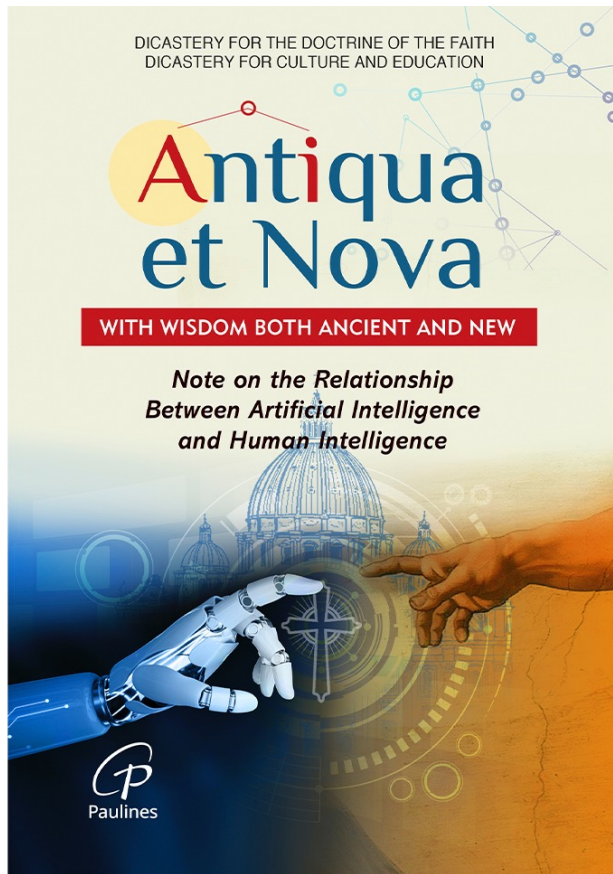
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI, Work and the Economy — AI is already transforming many businesses and making various processes far more efficient and accurate. While AI can boost productivity, it frequently forces workers to adjust to its speed, can erode their sense of agency and even deskill them. Moreover, it can make their jobs expendable, which can make AI benefit the few at the cost of the impoverishment of many. Work is not only about objective production but also subjective growth and this human dimension can never be forgotten. AI should promote, rather than replace, human labor.



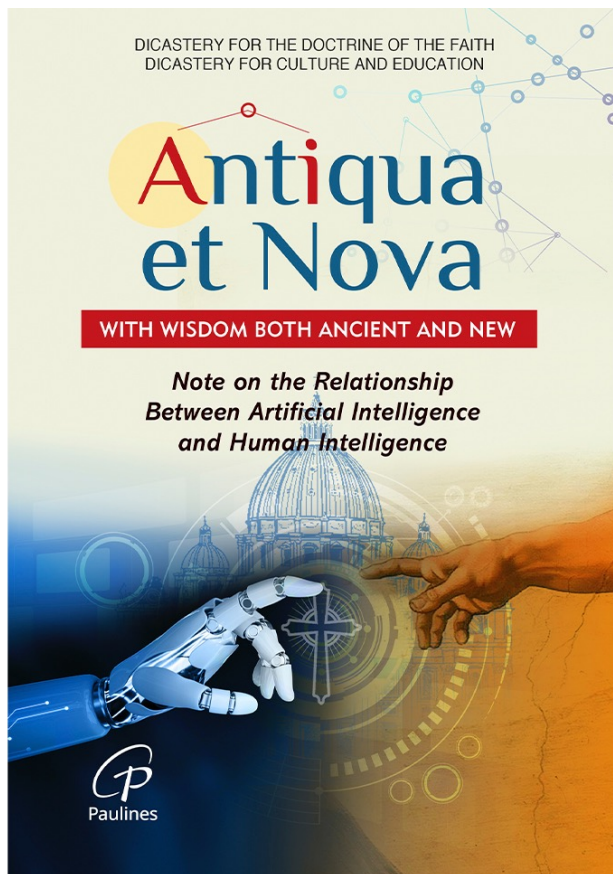
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Healthcare — Since medical personnel are guardians and servants of human life, healthcare has an intrinsic ethical dimension. AI has immense potential in assisting diagnostic work. The danger is that AI can displace the relationship between patient and healthcare worker, potentially worsening the loneliness that accompanies illness. Using AI to determine who should receive treatment based on economic metrics must be rejected. There must be vigilance to make sure that AI in healthcare does not worsen existing healthcare inequalities but serve the common good.



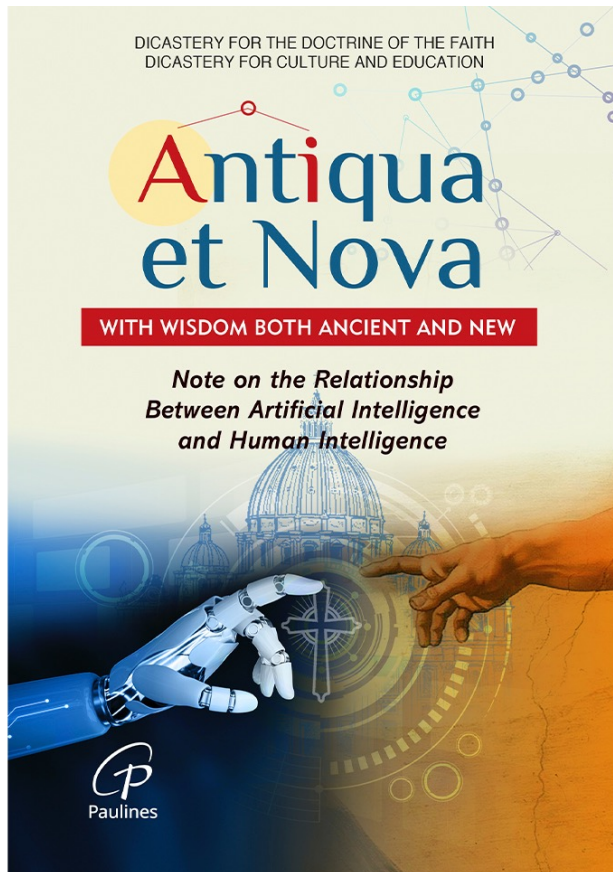
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Education — Education is not just passing along facts and intellectual skills, but integrally forming individuals intellectually, culturally and spiritually with a view toward their final end and the good of the society to which they belong. The role of a teacher is not just to convey knowledge and information but to form through teaching and example, generating a genuine desire to know and grow. AI has enormous potential to help teachers teach and students to learn, but must lead to a well-formed mind, rather than hyper-reliance on technology. AI must help form students in critical thinking skills, including with regard to AI, rather than replace those skills. Catholic education is particularly important in educating the young in this larger context.



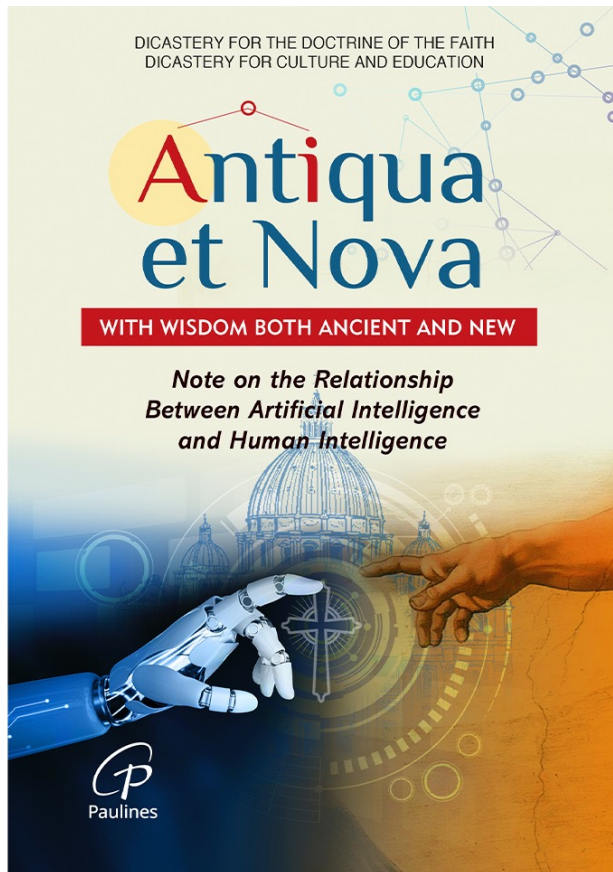
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Misinformation — AI obviously can help people understand complex concepts or direct them to sound resources in support of their search for the truth, but it also presents a serious risk of generating manipulated content and false information, which can easily mislead people due to its resemblance to the truth. It does this first through “hallucination,” in which generated false information becomes the premises to other false conclusions. But there’s also the potential for intentional manipulation of information for political, economic and other ends. There has been the use of deep fakes for mendacious or injurious purposes. “AI-generated fake media can gradually undermine the foundations of society,” the Note says, by undermining a sense of truth and trust. People must verify.



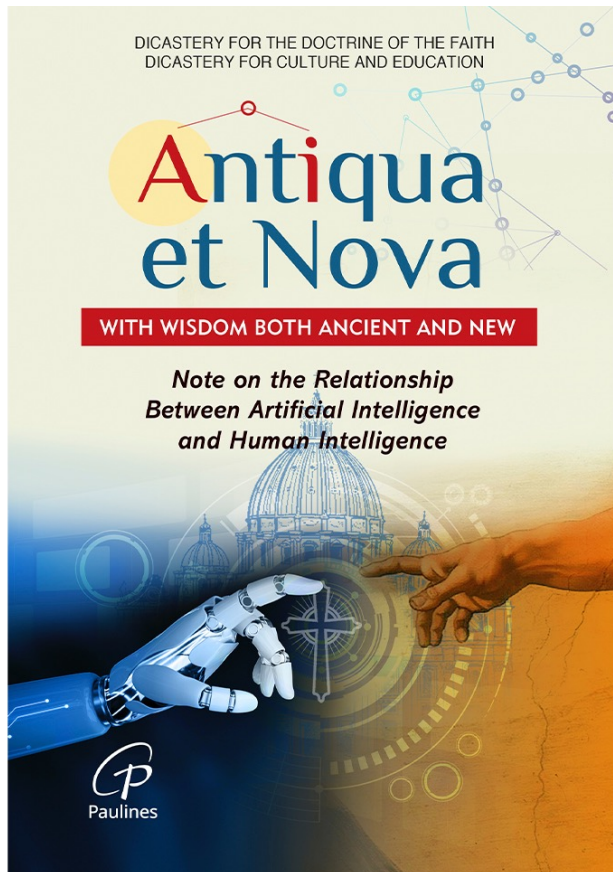
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Privacy — The data each person generates in the digital world can be seen as an objectified expression of his or her relational nature. Having this data can sometimes lead to a sense of power over another. Thus, the importance of privacy and the need for clear guidelines with regard to surveillance lest a person’s inner life, religious freedom and human dignity are not violated. The risk of surveillance overreach must be monitored by appropriate regulators to ensure transparency and public accountability. The person must be protected from harm or undue intrusion. We refuse to allow the uniqueness of the person to be identified with a set of data or a “social score.” We must likewise ensure that a person’s past behavior cannot be used absolutely to deny the possibility to change, grow, and contribute to society.



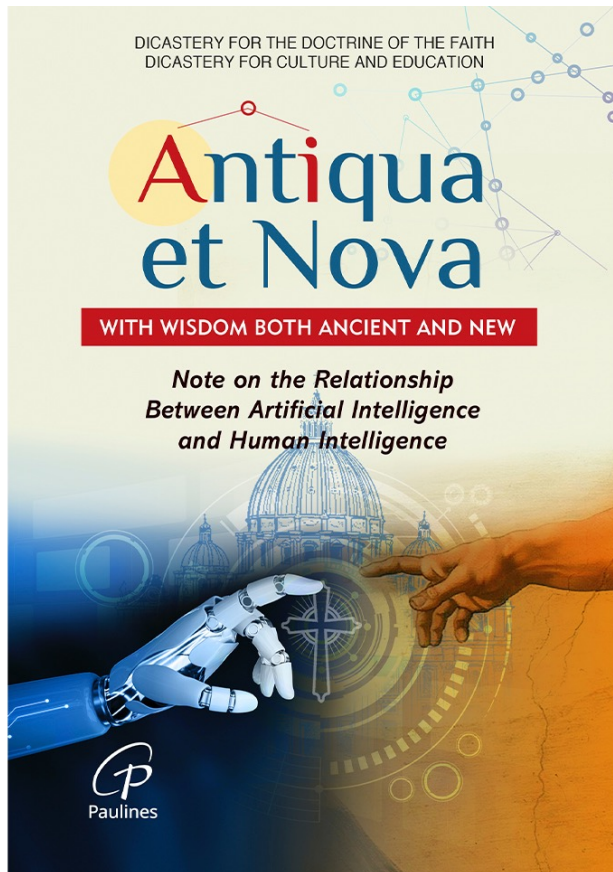
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Protecting Our Common Home — AI can help a great deal with environmental protection and conservation, like in predicting extreme climate events and supporting sustainable agriculture, optimizing energy usage, and providing early warning systems for public health emergencies. They can use enormous energy and water. There is the danger of the technocratic paradigm having a disproportionate influence in the way we relate to creation.



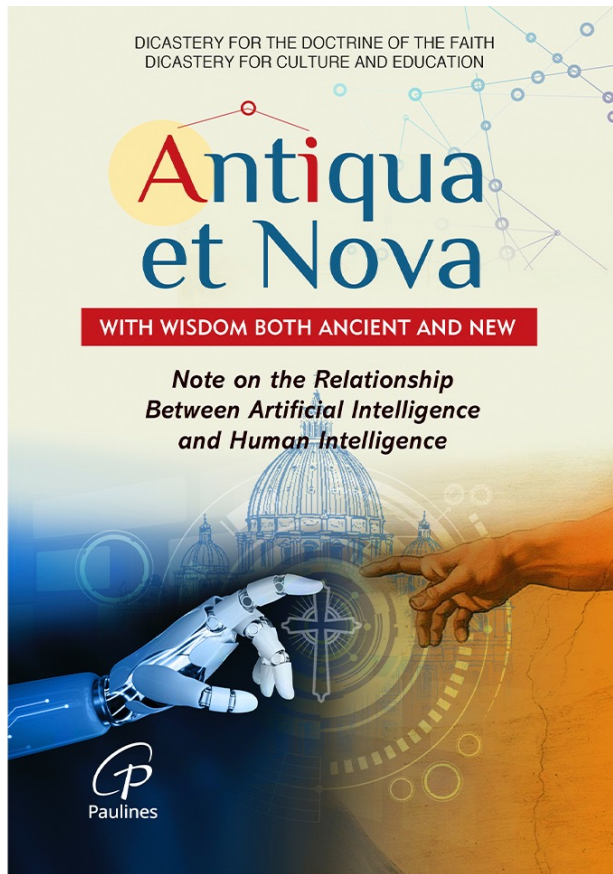
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Warfare — AI’s potentials can assist in peacemaking and peacebuilding, but the weaponization of AI can be very problematic and even threaten the human race. Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems are a grave ethical concern, lacking human moral judgment and ethical decision-making. No machine should ever be given the ability to take human lives not to mention risk the survival of humanity. The Church has called for a prohibition on their use. We must likewise prevent individuals with malicious intentions from using them against persons and peoples. “To prevent humanity from spiraling into self-destruction, there must be a clear stand against all applications of technology that inherently threaten human life and dignity. ... The development and deployment of AI in armaments should be subject to the highest levels of ethical scrutiny”



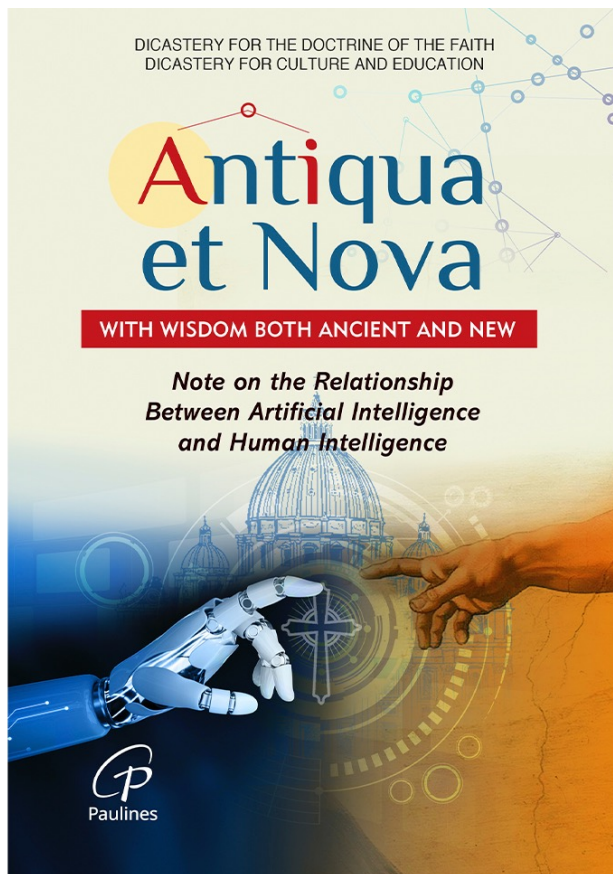
Ethical Guidelines for AI



- AI and Our Relationship with God — Some speculate that as of now hypothetical Artificial General Intelligence (AGI) might reach superhuman capabilities and substitute for our relationship with God. But this would be an idol. Unlike Biblical idols that “have mouths but do not speak; eyes, but do not see; ears, but do not hear” (Ps. 115:5-6), AI at least gives the illusion of doing speaking. But by turning to AI as an “other” greater than itself, it risks creating a substitute not just for fellow human beings but for God, which would lead to the worship of humanity rather than the Creator. AI must remain a creation of human hands and treated as such.



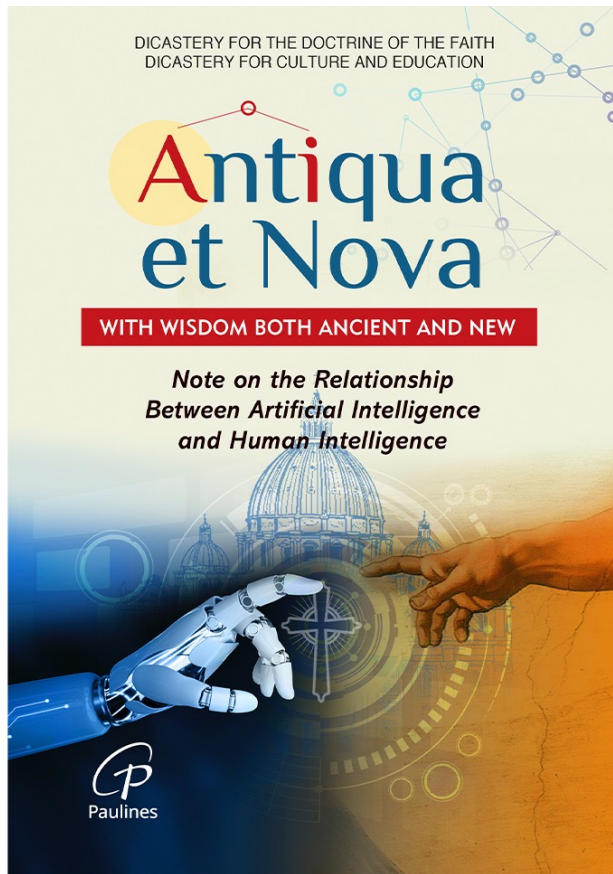
Antiqua et Nova's Concluding Thoughts



- The fundamental criterion of progress is whether the human person is becoming better, more spiritually and ethically mature, more aware of his dignity, more responsible and loving toward others, especially the neediest and weakest. For AI to contribute to genuinely human progress, it must be directed toward these ends.
- As with many technologies, the effects of the various uses of AI may not always be predictable at their inception. Individual users, families, civil society, corporations, institutions, governments, and international organizations should work at their proper levels to ensure that AI is used for the good of all, according to the principle of subsidiarity.



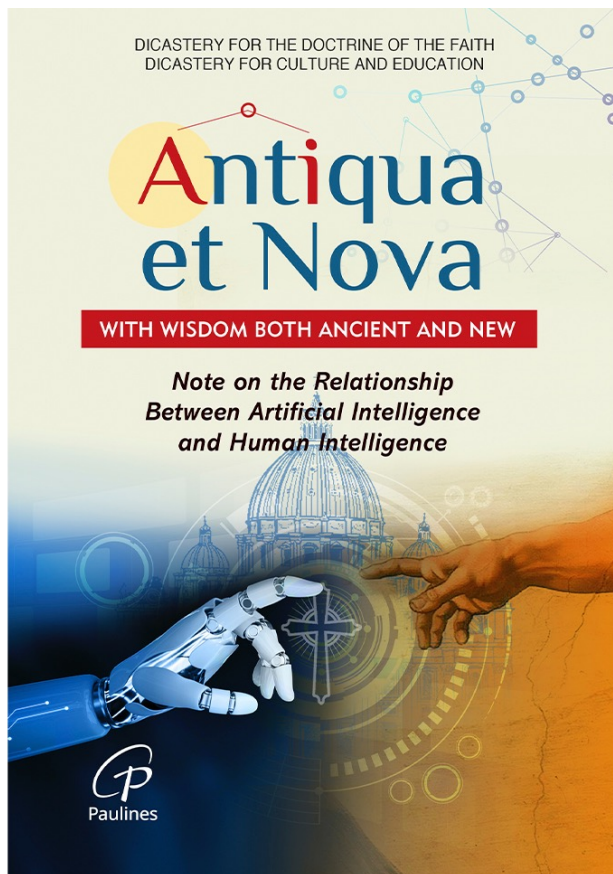
Antiqua et Nova's Concluding Thoughts



- Since only the human person can be morally responsible, and the challenges of a technological society are ultimately spiritual in nature, facing the challenges of AI demands an intensification of spirituality. It likewise requires an increased appreciation of what it really means to be human. AI should be used as a tool to complement human intelligence rather than replace its richness.
- Human beings must not allow knowledge to be reduced to the accumulation of data and information but direct it to the pursuit of wisdom, without which it won't be able to assess and respond to the anthropological and ethical challenges of AI.



Antiqua et Nova's Concluding Thoughts



- Human perfection is not achieved by the person's information or knowledge but by the person's charity. The true measure of our humanity is the way we care for the least of our brothers and sisters, and the wisdom of the heart can help make sure that AI is directed toward these ends.
- Believers are called to act as moral agents capable of using AI to promote an authentic vision of the human person and society, with the understanding that technological progress is part of God's plan for creation that we are called to order toward God and integrate within the mystery of redemptive love.



AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- I asked ChatGPT: “How could AI be used effectively in Catholic missionary work?”
- It responded, somewhat shockingly, “That’s an excellent and forward-thinking question — and one that leaders like Monsignor Roger Landry and the Vatican’s Pontifical Mission Societies are beginning to explore. AI, when guided by faith and ethics, can powerfully serve the Church’s missionary and evangelizing mission — not replace human witness, but amplify it. Let’s look at this clearly and concretely.”





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- The Missionary Mandate. Catholic mission is rooted in Jesus' command: "Go and make disciples of all nations..." (Mt 28:19) The Church's mission is therefore incarnational (personal presence, relationship, witness) — but it also uses the best means available in each age: the printing press, radio, internet... and now AI.
- Used wisely, AI can become a tool for: (1) Reaching those who are far away or unconnected from the Church, (2) Translating the Gospel into every culture and language, and (3) Supporting missionaries and catechists in their work.
- It specified the following possible uses:





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Translation and Accessibility:
 - Automatic multilingual translation of Scripture, catechetical materials, and homilies into local dialects or minority languages.
 - Speech-to-text and text-to-speech tools for those with limited literacy or visual impairment.
 - Example: A missionary in rural Africa could instantly translate daily reflections into a local tongue and share them by WhatsApp voice note.
 - Missionary benefit: Removes language barriers and makes evangelization more inclusive.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Catechesis and Faith Formation:
 - AI-based personalized learning apps can adapt catechetical lessons to age, background, and understanding level.
 - Chatbots (with proper theological oversight) could answer faith questions or guide users through Scripture or the Catechism.
 - Gamified learning powered by AI could keep youth engaged in religious education.
 - Missionary benefit: Helps overworked catechists reach more people effectively and consistently, especially where priests are scarce.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Evangelization in Digital Spaces:
 - AI tools can help analyze online culture, trends, and questions to identify what people are searching for spiritually.
 - AI can assist in creating context-sensitive evangelizing content—videos, podcasts, posts—expressing faith in ways that resonate with local concerns.
 - AI-driven social media listening could highlight where people are open to dialogue or in crisis.
 - Missionary benefit: Makes the Church’s digital presence more listening, compassionate, and responsive.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Support for Missionaries on the Ground:
 - AI translation during live pastoral encounters (e.g., confession preparation, counseling).
 - Predictive analytics to anticipate humanitarian or pastoral needs (food, migration, conflict zones).
 - Administrative automation so missionaries spend less time on paperwork and more on people.
 - AI-driven logistics for distributing medical supplies, food, or Bibles in hard-to-reach regions.
 - Missionary benefit: Frees missionaries to focus on relational and sacramental ministry.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Preservation of Cultural and Linguistic Heritage:
 - AI can help record, transcribe, and preserve local languages and oral traditions, especially where the Church operates among indigenous peoples.
 - It can help translate liturgical texts or hymns into native forms while retaining theological accuracy.
 - Missionary benefit: Honors inculturation — evangelizing without erasing culture.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Charitable Outreach and Social Mission:
 - AI-based diagnostics and data analytics can improve Church-run hospitals and clinics.
 - Predictive systems can track patterns of poverty, disease, or climate risk to target aid more effectively.
 - Caritas and missionary NGOs already use AI to detect famine risk or optimize supply routes.
 - Missionary benefit: Makes the Church's mercy ministries more efficient and far-reaching.





AI in Catholic Missionary Work?



- Formation of Missionary Disciples:
 - AI can tailor spiritual-growth programs for seminarians, religious, and lay missionaries.
 - It can provide daily reminders, prayer plans, or Scripture reflections personalized to one's stage of faith.
 - It can help identify emerging vocations by analyzing pastoral engagement patterns (with discretion and consent).
 - Missionary benefit: Builds interior life alongside external outreach — the balance Landry calls “union with Christ and mission from Christ.”





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- ChatGPT prompted me if I wanted to see a Pastoral Plan for AI in Catholic Missionary Work. I said sure. It replied,
- “Excellent — here’s a Pastoral Plan for the Effective and Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in Catholic Missionary Work, written in the spirit of leaders like Monsignor Roger Landry, the Pontifical Mission Societies, and recent Vatican guidance such as the Rome Call for AI Ethics and Pope Francis’ 2024 World Day of Peace Message on AI. This plan is practical — something a diocese, missionary order, or parish mission team could actually begin implementing.”





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- It entitled the “Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work,” “At the Service of Communion, Evangelization, and Human Dignity.”
- Vision Statement: “Artificial intelligence must serve the human person, advance communion, and bring Christ to the ends of the earth.” AI is a new missionary language — a tool to proclaim the Gospel, educate, heal, and uplift the poor — but never to replace the human witness of love. This plan aims to integrate AI ethically, intelligently, and evangelically into missionary work.”





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- It gave five guiding principles:
 - **Christ at the Center:** Every use of AI must deepen personal encounter with Jesus Christ — not distract from Him.
 - **Human Oversight:** AI assists; people discern. Final responsibility rests with human persons guided by conscience.
 - **Dignity & the Common Good:** Respect for privacy, inclusion of the poor, and justice for all peoples are non-negotiable.
 - **Truth & Transparency:** AI must never deceive, manipulate, or distort. Clarity about how tools function is essential.
 - **Preferential Option for the Poor:** Missionary AI initiatives should prioritize the underserved — rural, marginalized, or digitally excluded communities.





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- It gave Five Pastoral Steps:
- **Step 1 — Discernment and Formation.**
 - Goal: Help clergy, religious, and laity understand AI's nature, limits, and moral implications.
 - Actions:
 - Offer workshops on “AI and Catholic Mission” in seminaries and diocesan training centers.
 - Read and discuss Church documents (e.g., Rome Call for AI Ethics, Pope Francis 2024 Peace Message).
 - Invite Catholic tech professionals to teach responsible use of digital tools.
 - Encourage spiritual discernment: Does this tool draw us closer to Christ and others?





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- **Step 2 — Assessment of Local Needs.**
 - Goal: Identify how AI can concretely serve evangelization and charity in each mission territory.
 - Actions:
 - Consult local missionaries and catechists about their greatest communication or logistical challenges.
 - Assess access to electricity, internet, and devices.
 - Map possible applications:
 - Translation and literacy tools in native languages.
 - AI-based learning for catechesis or priestly formation.
 - Data analytics to guide outreach to marginalized communities.
 - Logistics AI for humanitarian and Caritas projects





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- **Step 3 — Implementation and Partnership**
 - Goal: Build or adopt AI tools that are faithful to Catholic teaching.
 - Actions:
 - Partner with Catholic universities, technology institutes, or startups committed to ethical AI.
 - Develop AI catechetical assistants that answer questions with verified Church sources (Bible, Catechism, papal documents).
 - Deploy AI translation and speech tools in missions to bridge linguistic divides.
 - Use AI-assisted resource planning to allocate mission funds or aid more effectively.
 - Establish a “Digital Mission Team” in each diocese or missionary society to oversee initiatives.





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- **Step 4 — Ethical Oversight and Safeguards**
 - Goal: Ensure all AI use respects moral and pastoral principles.
 - Actions:
 - Create an Ethics Board including theologians, missionaries, data specialists, and lay representatives.
 - Conduct periodic audits: Are we protecting data privacy? Avoiding bias? Using AI transparently?
 - Require human verification of all public AI-generated content (homilies, posts, catechetical materials).
 - Uphold data protection and informed consent, especially when working with minors or vulnerable groups.





Pastoral Plan for AI in Missionary Work



- **Step 5 — Evaluation, Testimony and Communion**
 - Goal: Measure fruitfulness and share best practices across the global Church.
 - Actions:
 - Evaluate annually:
 - How has AI supported evangelization, education, or charitable outreach?
 - Has it strengthened relationships or created dependency?
 - Gather missionary testimonies of success and difficulty.
 - Share insights with the Pontifical Mission Societies, Catholic Media networks, and regional bishops' conferences.
 - Celebrate AI-assisted initiatives that bear true evangelical fruit — conversions, improved literacy, health, or unity.





Thank **you!**