



# **Magisterial Quotations on Family, Media, Technology, and Human Dignity**

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# Family, Parents, and Education

## MAGISTERIAL TEACHING

*“Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the "material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.”*

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2223

*“The family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. It is particularly in the Christian family, enriched by the grace and office of the sacrament of matrimony, that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbor. Here, too, they find their first experience of a wholesome human society and of the Church. Finally, it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people.”*

— Second Vatican Council, Gravissimum Educationis, no. 3

*“Parents must be acknowledged as the first and foremost educators of their children. Their role as educators is so decisive that scarcely anything can compensate for their failure in it. For it devolves on parents to create a family atmosphere so animated with love and reverence for God and others that a well-rounded personal and social development will be fostered among the children. Hence, the family is the first school of those social virtues which every society needs.”*

— John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio, no. 36

*“Parents have the right to educate their children in conformity with their moral and religious convictions, taking into account the cultural traditions of the family which favor the good and the dignity of the child; they should also receive from society the necessary aid and assistance to perform their educational role properly.”*

— Holy See, Charter of the Rights of the Family, art. 5

*“Parents are the first educators, not the only educators, of their children. It belongs to them, therefore, to exercise with responsibility their educational activity in close and vigilant cooperation with civil and ecclesial agencies. “Man's community aspect itself — both civil and ecclesial — demands and leads to a broader and more articulated activity resulting from well-ordered collaboration between the various agents of education. All these agents are necessary, even though each can and should play its part in accordance with the special competence and contribution proper to itself. Parents have the right to choose the formative tools that respond to their convictions and to seek those means that will help them best to fulfil their duty as educators, in the spiritual and religious sphere also. Public authorities have the duty to guarantee this right and to ensure the concrete conditions necessary for it to be exercised. In this context, cooperation between the family and scholastic institutions takes on primary importance.”*

— Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 240

*“The family, founded upon marriage freely contracted, one and indissoluble, must be regarded as the natural, primary cell of human society. The interests of the family, therefore, must be taken very specially into consideration in social and economic affairs, as well as in the spheres of faith and morals. For all of these have to do with strengthening the family and assisting it in the fulfilment of its mission. ... Of course, the support and education of children is a right which belongs primarily to the parents.”*

— John XXIII, *Pacem in Terris*, nos. 16-17

*“The family is much more than the sum of its individual members. It is a community of parents and children, and at times a community of several generations. For this reason its "status as a subject", which is grounded in God's plan, gives rise to and calls for certain proper and specific rights. The Charter of the Rights of the Family, on the basis of the moral principles mentioned above, consolidates the existence of the institution of the family in the social and juridical order of the "greater" society—those of the nation, of the State and of international communities. Each of these "greater" societies is at least indirectly conditioned by the existence of the family.”*

— John Paul II, *Letter to Families Gratissimam Sane*, no. 17

*“Parents, moreover, have the right to determine, in accordance with their own religious beliefs, the kind of religious education that their children are to receive. Government, in consequence, must acknowledge the right of parents to make a genuinely free choice of schools and of other means of education, and the use of this freedom of choice is not to be made a reason for imposing unjust burdens on parents, whether directly or indirectly. Besides, the right of parents are violated, if their children are forced to attend lessons or instructions which are not in agreement with their religious beliefs”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Dignitatis Humanae*, no. 5

*“We have said that the State must not absorb the individual or the family; both should be allowed free and untrammelled action so far as is consistent with the common good and the interest of others.”*

— Leo XIII, *Rerum Novarum*, no. 35

*“Among the means which will assist and complement the exercise of the educational rights and duties of the family, the school has a value and an importance that are fundamental. In virtue of its mission, then, the school must be concerned with constant and careful attention to cultivating in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person.”*

— Congregation for Catholic Education, *Lay Catholics in Schools*, no. 12

*“Everything possible must be done, in cooperation with the wider community, to ensure that they are accessible to people of all social and economic strata. No child should be denied his or her right to an education in faith, which in turn nurtures the soul of a nation.”*

— Benedict XVI, *Address to Catholic Educators*, 17 April 2008

*“The first persons responsible for education are the parents, who have the natural right and obligation to educate their children. They have the right to choose the means and institutions through which they can provide for the Catholic education of their children.”*

— Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School*, no. 42

*“Lastly, the Declaration emphasizes the fact that parents have the right to choose and guide their children's education. ... In this regard, it is good to recall that the family's educational mission has its normal complement in the educational institutions.”*

— Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Family and Human Rights*, nos. 67-68



*“The family is the normal place where the young grow to personal and social maturity. It is also the bearer of the heritage of humanity itself, because through the family life is passed on from generation to generation. The family occupies a very important place in Asian cultures.”*

— John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, no. 46

# Media, Internet, and Communication

## MAGISTERIAL TEACHING

*“Parents should remember that they have a most serious duty to guard carefully lest shows, publications and other things of this sort, which may be morally harmful, enter their homes or affect their children under other circumstances.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Inter Mirifica*, no. 10

*“Parents and teachers should urge children to make their own choice even if the educators should reserve at times the final decision to themselves. And if they find themselves forced to disapprove of the way their children are using some aspect of the media, they must clearly explain the reasons for their objections. Persuasion works better than prohibition and this is especially true in education.”*

— Pontifical Commission for Social Communications, *Communio et Progressio*, no. 67

*“Teaching about the Internet and the new technology thus involves much more than teaching techniques; young people need to learn how to function well in the world of cyberspace, make discerning judgments according to sound moral criteria about what they find there, and use the new technology for their integral development and the benefit of others.”*

— Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *The Church and Internet*, no. 7

*“According to their age and circumstances, children and young people should be open to formation regarding media, resisting the easy path of uncritical passivity, peer pressure, and commercial exploitation. Families—parents and children together—will find it helpful to come together in groups to study and discuss the problems and opportunities created by social communication.”*

— Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Ethics in Communications*, no. 25

*“At a time of widespread and unfortunate confusion about moral norms, the communications media have made pornography and violence accessible to a vastly expanded audience, including young people and even children, and a problem which at one time was confined mainly to wealthy countries has now begun, via the communications media, to corrupt moral values in developing nations.”*

— Pontifical Council for Social Communications, *Pornography and Violence in the Communications Media*, no. 5

*“The digital environment is also one of loneliness, manipulation, exploitation and violence, even to the extreme case of the ‘dark web’. Digital media can expose people to the risk of addiction, isolation and gradual loss of contact with concrete reality, blocking the development of authentic interpersonal relationships.”*

— Francis, *Christus Vivit*, no. 88

*“Digital connectivity is not enough to build bridges. It is not capable of uniting humanity.”*

— Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, no. 43

*“It follows that there exists a Christian way of being present in the digital world: this takes the form of a communication which is honest and open, responsible and respectful of others.”*

— Benedict XVI, 45th World Communications Day Message, 2011

*“Like other communications media, it is a means, not an end in itself. The Internet can offer magnificent opportunities for evangelization if used with competence and a clear awareness of its strengths and weaknesses.”*

— John Paul II, 36th World Communications Day Message, 2002

*“Silence is an integral element of communication; in its absence, words rich in content cannot exist. In silence, we are better able to listen to and understand ourselves; ideas come to birth and acquire depth.”*

— Benedict XVI, 46th World Communications Day Message, 2012

*“Good communication helps us to grow closer, to know one another better, and ultimately, to grow in unity. The walls which divide us can be broken down only if we are prepared to listen and learn from one another.”*

— Francis, 48th World Communications Day Message, 2014

*“All of us are responsible for the communications we make, for the information we share, for the control that we can exert over fake news by exposing it. All of us are to be witnesses of the truth: to go, to see and to share.”*

— Francis, 55th World Communications Day Message, 2021

*“We are not made to live like atoms, but together. ... What specifically makes communication good and fully human is listening to the person in front of us, face to face, listening to the other person whom we approach with fair, confident, and honest openness.”*

— Francis, 56th World Communications Day Message, 2022

*“Advancements in technology have made new kinds of human interactions possible. In fact, the question is no longer whether to engage with the digital world, but how. Social media in particular is an environment where people interact, share experiences, and cultivate relationships unlike ever before.”*

— Dicastery for Communication, Towards Full Presence, no. 1

*“There is no communication without the truth of an encounter. To communicate is to establish relationships; it is to ‘be with’. To be community is to share with others fundamental truths about what one holds and what one is.”*

— Dicastery for Communication, Towards Full Presence, no. 45

*“The means of social communications have become so important as to be for many the chief means of information and education, of guidance and inspiration in their behavior as individuals, families and within society at large.”*

— Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Aetatis Novae, no. 4

*“The communications media have acquired such importance as to be the principal means of guidance and inspiration for many people in their personal, familial, and social behavior. We are dealing with a complex problem, because the culture itself, prescinding from its content, arises from the very existence of new ways to communicate with hitherto unknown techniques and vocabulary.”*

— John Paul II, The Rapid Development, no. 3

# Technology, Artificial Intelligence, and Human Dignity

## MAGISTERIAL TEACHING

*“Technology is never merely technology. It reveals man and his aspirations towards development, it expresses the inner tension that impels him gradually to overcome material limitations. Technology, in this sense, is a response to God’s command to till and to keep the land (cf. Gen 2:15) that he has entrusted to humanity, and it must serve to reinforce the covenant between human beings and the environment.”*

— Benedict XVI, *Caritas in Veritate*, no. 69

*“Technology tends to absorb everything into its ironclad logic, and those who are surrounded with technology ‘know full well that it moves forward in the final analysis neither for profit nor for the well-being of the human race’ ... Our capacity to make decisions, a more genuine freedom and the space for each one’s alternative creativity are diminished.”*

— Francis, *Laudato Si*, no. 108

*“We need to be aware of the rapid transformations now taking place and to manage them in ways that safeguard fundamental human rights and respect the institutions and laws that promote integral human development. Artificial intelligence ought to serve our best human potential and our highest aspirations, not compete with them.”*

— Francis, 57th World Day of Peace Message, no. 2

*“We need to ensure and safeguard a space for proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs: human dignity itself depends on it. ... No machine should ever choose to take the life of a human being.”*

— Francis, Address to the G7 Session on Artificial Intelligence, 14 June 2024

*“Like every other product of human intelligence and skill, algorithms are not neutral. For this reason, there is a need to act preventively, by proposing models of ethical regulation, to forestall harmful, discriminatory and socially unjust effects of the use of systems of artificial intelligence.”*

— Francis, 58th World Communications Day Message, 2024

*“AI could be used as an aid to human dignity if it helps people understand complex concepts or directs them to sound resources that support their search for the truth. ... However, AI also presents a serious risk of generating manipulated content and false information, which can easily mislead people due to its resemblance to the truth.”*

— Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Antiqua et Nova*, nos. 85-86

*“As Pope Francis has stated, ‘the intrinsic dignity of every man and every woman’ must be ‘the key criterion in evaluating emerging technologies; these will prove ethically sound to the extent that they help respect that dignity and increase its expression at every level of human life.’”*

— Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Antiqua et Nova*, no. 42

*“Just as the industrial revolution called for basic literacy to enable people to respond to new developments, so too does the digital revolution require digital literacy, along with humanistic and cultural education, to understand how algorithms shape our perception of reality, how AI biases work, what mechanisms determine the presence of certain content in our feeds, what the economic principles and models of the AI economy are and how they might change.”*

— Leo XIV, 60th World Communications Day Message, 2026

*“I limit myself to recalling a few essential elements for a moral and social discernment that safeguards the primacy of the human person, in order to ensure that it will always be human intelligence, with its conscience and freedom, that guides technical innovations and responsibly determines their use and limits.”*

— Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas, no. 97

*“In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, decisions are made at the closest level possible to the persons involved, thereby fostering community life and avoiding people being presented with decisions that have already been taken. In this way people can participate in the decision-making process.”*

— Leo XIV, Magnifica Humanitas, no. 70

*“The algorithms operating in the digital world show that our thoughts and will are much more ‘uniform’ than we had previously thought. They are easily predictable and thus capable of being manipulated. That is not the case with the heart.”*

— Francis, Dilexit Nos, no. 14

*“The development of science and technology, this splendid testimony of the human capacity for understanding and for perseverance, does not free humanity from the obligation to ask the ultimate religious questions. Rather, it spurs us on to face the most painful and decisive of struggles, those of the heart and of the moral conscience.”*

— John Paul II, Veritatis Splendor, no. 1

*“This technology can be a means for solving human problems, promoting the integral development of persons, creating a world governed by justice and peace and love. ... The Internet can help make it real—for individuals, groups, nations, and the human race—only if it is used in light of clear, sound ethical principles.”*

— Pontifical Council for Social Communications, Ethics in Internet, no. 5

*“Education to fraternal humanism must make sure that learning knowledge means becoming aware of an ethical universe in which the person acts. In particular, this correct notion of the ethical universe must open up progressively wider horizons of the common good, so as to embrace the entire human family.”*

— Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating to Fraternal Humanism, no. 20

# Chastity, Modesty, and Protection

## MAGISTERIAL TEACHING

*“Chastity means the successful integration of sexuality within the person and thus the inner unity of man in his bodily and spiritual being. Sexuality, in which man's belonging to the bodily and biological world is expressed, becomes personal and truly human when it is integrated into the relationship of one person to another, in the complete and lifelong mutual gift of a man and a woman.”*

— Catechism of the Catholic Church, no. 2337

*“Chastity cannot exist as a virtue without the capacity to renounce self, to make sacrifices and to wait. In giving life, parents cooperate with the creative power of God and receive the gift of a new responsibility—not only to feed their children and satisfy their material and cultural needs, but above all to pass on to them the lived truth of the faith and to educate them in love of God and neighbour.”*

— Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, no. 5

*“Sex education, which is a basic right and duty of parents, must always be carried out under their attentive guidance, whether at home or in educational centers chosen and controlled by them. In this regard, the Church reaffirms the law of subsidiarity, which the school is bound to observe when it cooperates in sex education, by entering into the same spirit that animates the parents.”*

— John Paul II, *Familiaris Consortio*, no. 37

*“Such education, therefore, must be offered within the family to children and adolescents in a gradual manner, always considering the total formation of the person.”*

— Congregation for Catholic Education, *Educational Guidance in Human Love*, no. 15

*“In accordance with these pressing exhortations, the faithful of the present time, and indeed today more than ever, must use the means which have always been recommended by the Church for living a chaste life. These means are: discipline of the senses and the mind, watchfulness and prudence in avoiding occasions of sin, the observance of modesty, moderation in recreation, wholesome pursuits, assiduous prayer and frequent reception of the Sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist.”*

— Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Persona Humana*, no. 12

*“Parents are the first and most important educators of their children, and they also possess a fundamental competency in this area: they are educators because they are parents. They share their individual mission with other individuals or institutions, such as the Church and the State. But the mission of education must always be carried out in accordance with a proper application of the principle of subsidiarity.”*

— Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, no. 23

*“The dignity of the body cannot be considered inferior to that of the person as such. The Catechism of the Catholic Church expressly invites us to recognize that ‘the human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God.”’”*

— Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 60



*“The exercise of responsible parenthood requires that husband and wife, keeping a right order of priorities, recognize their own duties toward God, themselves, their families and human society. From this it follows that they are not free to act as they choose in the service of transmitting life.”*

— Paul VI, *Humanae Vitae*, no. 10

# Common Good, Subsidiarity, and Solidarity

## MAGISTERIAL TEACHING

*“This likeness reveals that man, who is the only creature on earth which God willed for itself, cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 24

*“There must be made available to all men everything necessary for leading a life truly human, such as food, clothing, and shelter; the right to choose a state of life freely and to found a family, the right to education, to employment, to a good reputation, to respect, to appropriate information, to activity in accord with the upright norm of one’s own conscience, to protection of privacy and rightful freedom even in matters religious.”*

— Second Vatican Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, no. 26

*“Every person is created by God, loved and saved in Jesus Christ, and fulfils himself by creating a network of multiple relationships of love, justice and solidarity with other persons while he goes about his various activities in the world.”*

— Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church, no. 35

*“Respect for the dignity of each person is the indispensable basis for the existence of any society that claims to be founded on just law and not on the force of power. Acknowledging human dignity forms the basis for upholding fundamental human rights, which precede and ground all civic coexistence.”*

— Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dignitas Infinita*, no. 64

*“There is no area of human experience, especially given the vast phenomenon of globalization, in which the media have not become an integral part of interpersonal relations and of social, economic, political and religious development.”*

— Benedict XVI, 42nd World Communications Day Message, 2008

*“Many people are actually discovering, precisely thanks to a contact initially made online, the importance of direct encounters, experiences of community and even pilgrimage, elements which are always important in the journey of faith.”*

— Benedict XVI, 47th World Communications Day Message, 2013

*“The family is the normal place where the young grow to personal and social maturity. It is also the bearer of the heritage of humanity itself, because through the family life is passed on from generation to generation. The family occupies a very important place in Asian cultures.”*

— John Paul II, *Ecclesia in Asia*, no. 46

*“[W]e need then to ‘show care’ for all life and for the life of everyone and thus to reveal the original and unconditional love of God, the source of the meaning of all life. To that end, especially in hospitals and clinics committed to Christian values, it is vital to create space for relationships built on the recognition of the fragility and vulnerability of the sick person.”*

— Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Samaritanus Bonus*, 2020