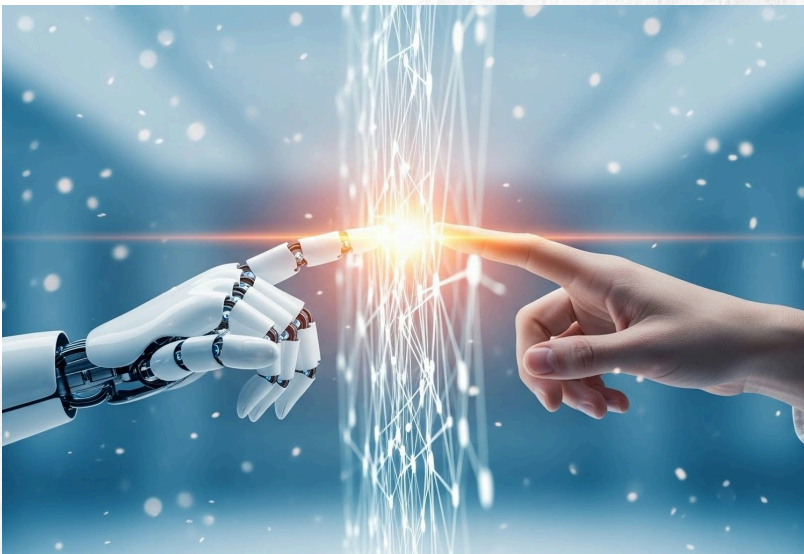


We need to preserve human faces and voices!



World Communications Day 2026

A Pastoral Reflection on Pope Leo's Message



POPE LEO'S MESSAGE



Leo P.P. XIV

Pope Leo XIV's message for the 60th World Day of Social Communications reflects on how technology, social media and artificial intelligence are changing the way people communicate, think and relate to one another. Under the theme "Preserving Human Voices and Faces," he reminds us that every person is unique, sacred and created in the image of God.

In his message the Holy Father warns that while technology can be helpful, it can also distance people from what is real and human. Artificial intelligence can imitate voices, images and even emotions, making it harder at times to recognise truth, trust and authentic relationships. Pope Leo encourages people not to hand over their thinking, creativity and humanity to machines or algorithms.

At the same time, his message is hopeful. He believes technology can be used wisely and responsibly when it serves truth, human dignity and the common good. He calls on families, schools, parishes, communicators and young people to grow in wisdom, critical thinking and responsible use of digital media.

Above all, Pope Leo reminds us that communication is about more than information or technology. It is about people, relationships and encounter. The Church is called to protect and value authentic human voices and faces in a world that is becoming increasingly digital.

In this pastoral reflection resource, Archbishop Eamon Martin reflects on Pope Leo XIV's message and what it means for the Church, families and communities today.

Scan QR Code to access the text of Pope Leo XIV's Message for 60th World Day of Social Communications

<https://www.vatican.va/content/leo-xiv/en/messages/communications/documents/20260124-messaggio-comunicazioni-sociali.html>

SCAN ME





A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON POPE LEO'S MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN

Dear parishes, school communities, families and all communicators,

I offer you this reflection based on Pope Leo XIV's message this weekend about Artificial Intelligence

We need to preserve human faces and voices!

This Sunday marks the 60th World Day of Social Communications and Pope Leo has made a courageous choice by choosing the topic of artificial intelligence for his annual message.

It is clear that the Holy Father has thought deeply about the use of artificial intelligence in communications and media. He reminds us that, at a time when technology can imitate the human face, clone the human voice, simulate affection, produce convincing falsehoods, and shape what people see, think and feel, we must ask ourselves whether our communication is truly recognising, protecting and serving the human person.

Pope Leo XIV's message asks us to return to a simple but demanding truth: every human being has a face and a voice. Before a person is a profile, a statistic, a screen-name, a consumer, a complainant, or a "case," they are someone created in the image and likeness of God. Their face and voice matter.

In a nutshell, Pope Leo XIV is asking us to preserve human voices and faces. He is speaking into a world where technology can now copy a voice, create a face, imitate emotion, and produce words that sound human. But the Pope asks us to go deeper and think about.... What is a person? What does it mean to truly communicate?

A person is not just an isolated individual. A person is someone who stands before us, someone to be recognised, someone whose dignity must be honoured.

That is deeply Christian because in Jesus Christ, God has shown us his face, The Word became flesh. God did not communicate with us from a distance but came among us with a human voice, a human face and a human heart.

So, in our use of technology, in our conversations, in parish life, in schools, in families, online and offline, the question is not only, "Are we communicating efficiently?" The question is, "Are we recognising the person before us?"

Are we listening to real voices?

Are we protecting real faces?

Are we speaking truthfully?

Are we allowing technology to serve communion, or are we letting it replace encounter?

CONTINUED....



A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON POPE LEO'S MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN

The heart of Pope Leo's message can be expressed simply: Christian communication recognises the person before us.

A human person is not content.

A human person is not data.

A human person is not an image to be manipulated.

A human person is not a voice to be silenced or copied.

A human person is a child of God, with a face to be honoured and a voice to be heard.

Christian communication should never be cold, manipulative, faceless or mere strategy. It must seek to carry something of the way Jesus communicated: truthfully, personally, mercifully, courageously.

Pope Leo recognises, of course, that artificial intelligence and digital technologies can be useful. They can assist communication, learning, creativity and access to knowledge. But, he warns, the real question is not simply, "What can technology do?" From a faith perspective the question goes much deeper:

Does this help us become more human?

Does this serve truth?

Does this protect the vulnerable?

Does this honour the dignity of the person?

Does this deepen communion, or does it isolate us further?

The Church must always seek to preserve the faces of those who are easily hidden, edited out, mocked, exploited or forgotten: The face of the poor. The face of the refugee. The face of the abused. The face of the lonely young person. The face of the elderly person in a room with no visitors. The face of Christ in the suffering human person. In a digital world of manipulated images and artificial faces Pope Leo invites us to look truthfully and tenderly at the real face before us.

One of the Pope's strongest warnings is that we must not give up the human capacity to think, judge and discern. AI can produce polished answers. Algorithms can feed us what holds our attention. Social media can reward anger, speed and reaction, but none of these can replace conscience, wisdom and the slow work of truth.

This is important for families, schools, parishes and public life.

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A PASTORAL REFLECTION ON POPE LEO'S MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP EAMON MARTIN

A Christian cannot simply ask, “What is everyone saying?” “What is trending?” “What does the machine tell me?”

A Christian must ask:

Is it true?

Is it just?

Is it loving?

Does it honour the person made in God's image?

Does it lead me towards Christ or away from him?

We might all ask, in our families, parishes, schools, public life and online spaces: do we preserve the dignity of faces and voices? Or do we reduce people to labels, images, reactions and data?

In our human communication, do we:

Look at one another.

Listen before reacting.

Check what is true before sharing.

Protect the vulnerable.

Do we hide behind screens when a real conversation is needed.

I invite everyone to reflect on Pope Leo's message:

Families: help children and young people use technology without losing real conversation.

Schools: teach discernment, media literacy and respect for truth.

Parishes: ensure communication is personal, hospitable and not merely administrative; use digital tools to lead people towards Christ.

Public life: resist disinformation, manipulation and the dehumanisation of opponents.

I'm reminded of how St Carlo Acutis saw technology as a path to encounter. Technology becomes dangerous when it becomes a substitute for real presence, real friendship and real communion.

Technology is at its best when it helps us see Christ more clearly and love one another more deeply.

With every good wish and blessing,

+ Eamon Martin

Eamon Martin

Archbishop of Armagh, Apostolic Administrator of Dromore



PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are the Word made flesh,
the face of the Father's mercy,
and the voice that calls each person by name.

Help us to communicate as your disciples.
Where there is noise, teach us to listen.
Where there is falsehood, give us courage to seek truth.
Where there is anger, form in us patience and mercy.
Where people are hidden, forgotten or mocked,
open our eyes to see your face in them.

Bless our families, schools, parishes and communities.
May our words build up rather than wound.
May our use of technology serve communion rather than isolation.
May our digital spaces become places of truth, dignity and hope.

Teach us to preserve human faces and voices,
so that in all our communication
we may honour the person before us
and witness to the Gospel with humility and love.

