Press Release

Vatican Hosts Leading AI Scientists and Experts for Dialogue on the Future of Artificial Intelligence and Human Dignity

Pope Leo XIV receives participants as scientific experts and Vatican representatives examine emerging technologies, human responsibility, and the ethical challenges of advanced AI.

VATICAN CITY, October 30, 2026 - Leading international researchers and experts in artificial intelligence gathered at the Vatican on Friday for a dialogue on the future of AI, its emerging risks, and the responsibilities of the scientific community and public institutions in guiding technological development toward the common good.

The meeting, entitled *The Future of AI: A Dialogue Between the Vatican and the Scientific World on the Developments and Applications of Intelligent Technologies*, was co-organized by the Pontifical Academy for Life and the Future of Life Institute and held at the Casina Pio IV in Vatican City.

Participants included Stuart Russell, professor of computer science at the University of California, Berkeley and President of the International Association for Safe and Ethical AI; Max Tegmark, MIT physicist and Chair of the Future of Life Institute; and other internationally recognized researchers, technology experts, and specialists in AI governance.

At the center of the program was a direct dialogue between the participating scholars and the Vatican Commission on Artificial Intelligence, allowing scientific, ethical and institutional perspectives to engage with one another on the challenges raised by increasingly capable AI systems. The Commission was established by Pope Leo XIV in May 2026 to promote coordination among Vatican institutions addressing the implications of AI for humanity and the Church.

The discussions focused in particular on how meaningful human control can be preserved as AI systems become increasingly autonomous; how safety and reliability can be ensured; how human responsibility can remain clearly identifiable; and how ethical principles can be translated into effective

safeguards, verification mechanisms and forms of governance. The dialogue also addressed broader questions concerning work, freedom, the concentration of technological power, global inequalities and the relationship between technological innovation and human dignity.

Pope Leo XIV Receives Participants

During the gathering, participants were received in audience by Pope Leo XIV at the Apostolic Palace.
The spirit of the meeting reflects the approach outlined by Pope Leo XIV in his encyclical letter *Magnifica Humanitas*, where he emphasizes the importance of dialogue between the Church and the scientific community: "When dealing with many specific questions, the Church does not claim to offer 'a definitive opinion' but recognizes the importance of listening to scientific research and of encouraging a serious and honest debate among experts while welcoming a diversity of opinions" (*Magnifica Humanitas*, 23).
The meeting forms part of the Holy See's ongoing engagement with the ethical and human implications of artificial intelligence, including the Rome Call for AI Ethics and the work of the Vatican Commission on Artificial Intelligence.

Scientific Dialogue and Shared Responsibility

The program included presentations by participating scholars and exchanges with the VCAI. Discussions addressed the possible consequences of advanced AI for human dignity, social structures, international institutions, and the future relationship between human beings and intelligent technologies.

Speaking on behalf of VCAI, Cardinal Michael Czerny said that we want "to listen to everyone who works in this field – in research, business, policy – and to reflect together about how the Church can best fulfil her pastoral and prophetic mission, bearing witness to the dignity of the human person and promoting the common good, making sure that vulnerable persons and communities are not left behind."

The meeting was conceived as a space for sustained dialogue between scientific expertise and the ethical and institutional reflection of the Holy See, at a time when the rapid development of increasingly capable AI systems is raising questions that no single scientific, political or cultural community can address alone.

About the organizers

Pontifical Academy for Life: Established by Pope John Paul II in 1994, the Pontifical Academy for Life promotes the study and discussion of questions concerning human life and dignity, including the ethical implications of emerging scientific and technological developments.

Future of Life Institute: The Future of Life Institute is an independent nonprofit organization focused on reducing risks associated with transformative technologies, particularly advanced artificial intelligence, through research, public engagement, and policy advocacy.

Accompanying Media Quote Sheet

Stuart Russell — University of California, Berkeley
"The leading AI developers are pursuing a trajectory intended to produce superhuman machines; they admit that if they succeed there's a good chance that every human being will die. We must turn aside from this trajectory before it is too late and pursue other trajectories, ones that lead to systems that are guaranteed to remain under control and to further human interests."

Max Tegmark — Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Future of Life Institute
"Top AI CEO's have predicted that 'AI will be in charge, not humans' and 'We'll be the first species ever to design our own descendants'. With strong moral leadership, the Vatican can help steer AI development onto a better pro-human path."

Archbishop Renzo Pegoraro — President, Pontifical Academy for Life
"The value of this meeting lies precisely in bringing different perspectives into dialogue. Scientists, institutions and the Church approach Artificial Intelligence from different points of view, but we share a fundamental question: how can we guide its development so that it remains genuinely at the service of the human person and the common good?"

Fr. Paolo Benanti — LUISS University; RenAIssance Foundation
"For years we have agreed on principles. What the people who build and study these systems asked for today is harder: rules that bind, institutions able to verify, and a person who answers for every decision a machine helps to make.

Artificial intelligence is something we build, so it is still something we can govern. The question now is what artificial intelligence is for, and who answers for it. Scientists, engineers and lawyers asked the Church to help turn the principles of Magnifica Humanitas into institutions. That is the work ahead: keeping the human person in charge of the tools we make."

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