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*In May, the Vatican released Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical,* **Magnifica Humanitas** *(lit. 'magnificent humanity'). The document articulates the church's moral response to the defining issue of our time - artificial intelligence, or AI. We asked Ray Burnell to share his thoughts on the paper and how CBIS' active ownership work aligns with the Pope's vision.*

**What is the central message of Pope Leo's Magnifica Humanitas?**

It's about ensuring AI serves the human person—not the other way around.

In Magnifica Humanitas, Pope Leo proclaims that AI requires both moral responsibility and spiritual discernment so that human intelligence, guided by conscience and freedom, can direct technology and set its limits. Only then can humanity realize AI's extraordinary potential for the benefit of all.

**The Pope's encyclical comes close on the heels of Mensuram Bonam. Are there connections between the two?**

There are, and they're very important. Mensuram Bonam explains how Catholics should invest responsibly. Magnifica Humanitas declares why AI makes this work more urgent than ever. Together, they call investors to not merely avoid harm, but to actively place technology at the service of the human person, in solidarity, with social justice, and for the common good.

One sets the standard and the other raises the stakes. The connections are quite profound.

**How does Magnifica Humanitas build on Mensuram Bonam's call to place human dignity at the center of Catholic Investing?**

The central question of the encyclical is not what artificial intelligence can do, but what it should do in order to safeguard the inalienable dignity of every human person. Human dignity remains the first principle of the Pope's consideration of AI.

**How does Magnifica Humanitas shape the vocation of Catholic stewardship?**

Magnifica Humanitas brings stewardship into the age of AI. Pope Leo teaches that AI must remain guided by human conscience, responsibility and just governance. For Catholic investors, active stewardship can help curb AI's harms and support human flourishing.

**That's a considerable leap in faith-based investing.**

It is. Magnifica Humanitas reinforces what CBIS calls the 'three Es' — engage, enhance, and exclude. To be sure, investor diligence on AI has become extremely important since it's being developed primarily by publicly traded companies. Investors in those companies have an essential responsibility to influence how those technologies are being designed, how they're being governed, how they're being deployed.

**Does Magnifica Humanitas extend Mensuram Bonam's moral framework to AI?**

That's a good way to frame it. Mensuram Bonam says investing must serve the common good while respecting justice and ethical standards. Magnifica Humanitas applies that same moral discernment to digital infrastructures and algorithms, asking whether they protect the most vulnerable, whether they ensure equitable access, and whether they serve the common good. The two documents go hand in hand.

**As an encyclical, the highest form of Catholic social teaching, how can Magnifica Humanitas guide CBIS' stewardship?**

Our engagement approach is to use our expertise and skills to influence companies to be more moral, just, and sustainable. In the case of AI, we are extending our engagements beyond risk reduction, harm mitigation, and setting ethical guidelines. CBIS is pushing companies to build AI technologies and AI governance systems and AI labor models that advance the principles of human dignity and the common good.

**Will AI shape humanity or will humanity shape AI?**

That's the defining question. Companies leading AI development are among the most powerful enterprises in the world. Yet investors can influence the direction this technology takes. By engaging as active owners we can encourage these businesses to reduce harmful applications while promoting innovations that serve humanity. The message isn't to fear AI. It's to help shape AI before it shapes us.



## *Contact Us*

### We want to hear from you!

If you have any questions, please reach out to your CBIS representative:

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