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# Pope's encyclical on AI wins praise



Pope Leo's document called on the world's 1.4 billion Catholics and society at large to engage with AI fearlessly, critically and creatively. YARA NARDI/REUTERS

## Pontiff says technology must benefit humanity

Marc Ramirez  
USA TODAY

What are humans worth when the work and thoughts they produce threaten to be replicated by technological algorithms? And what is artificial intelligence worth if in the end it does not benefit humanity?

With his first major document as head of the Catholic Church, Pope Leo XIV has produced a "tremendously significant" and ultimately hopeful treatise

addressing the moral questions posed by AI while stressing the need to put humans first as the rapidly developing technology progresses, church observers said.

The eagerly awaited encyclical from the first U.S.-born pope, titled "Magnifica Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity), waxed joyfully on the glory of humanity, urged that AI benefit the common good, called on policymakers to protect workers' rights and to keep children safe amid AI's proliferation and pressed for strict regulation of AI systems to halt the spread of misinformation, conflict and war.

"Pope Leo's encyclical asks the right questions of an industry that has so far been better at building first and considering the consequences later," said Mar-

co Trombetti, CEO and co-founder of Translated, a Rome-base AI company partnering with the Vatican to use AI technology to translate Masses at St. Peter's Basilica in real time.

In the 43,000-word document, released May 25, the pope encouraged "robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, informed users and a political system that does not abdicate its responsibility." He called for more active political involvement "capable of slowing things down when everything is accelerating."

Paolo Carozza, a professor of law at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Indiana, called the document "profound and prophetic." By

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KINGS MOUNTAIN

## 'Cottage court' housing arriving

Rebecca Sitzes  
Shelby Star  
USA TODAY NETWORK

As new neighborhoods, subdivisions and housing developments continue to pop up all around Cleveland County, a small developer is bringing a brand-new housing concept to the city of Kings Mountain that is centered around convenience, community, affordability and walkability.

Stacy Label, a broker and Realtor based in the greater Charlotte area, said over the past five years, she's focused on building affordable homes on infill lots throughout Gaston, Cleveland, Lincoln and Rutherford counties and now she's tackling a new project.

She said over the past four years, she has brought nearly 200 homes to market and was approached about bringing a new kind of development to Kings Mountain called "Cottage Court."

"About a year ago, one of my vendors introduced me to the idea of a 'cottage court' community and asked whether I thought something like that could work in Kings Mountain," Label said. "The timing felt right. With the casino bringing thousands of jobs to the area and continued regional growth, it seemed clear there would be increasing demand for housing options beyond the traditional large subdivision model."

The Cottage Court concept was first brought to council's attention around a year ago, and Label said the city created a cottage court special-use permit within its unified development ordinance to allow for the new development.

Now, within weeks, crews will be breaking ground on The Enclave at Deal Street.

"After more than a year of planning, coordination, engineering, and design, we now have approved site and floor plans and are positioned to begin construction on what we're calling The Enclave at Deal Street," Label said.

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# Iran suspends talks over attacks on Lebanon

Christopher Cann  
USA TODAY

Iran halted indirect talks with the United States over Israel's intensifying attacks on Lebanon, according to Iranian media reports, signaling a possible breakdown in diplomatic efforts to end the 3-month-old war.

The Iranian semi-official Tasnim news agency said on June 1 that Tehran's negotiating team would stop communicating with Washington through mediators over Israel's military campaign against Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

The White House did not immediately

comment on reports of a breakdown in talks, and Iranian officials also did not publicly confirm that negotiations had been halted.

The development comes as a ceasefire between the two countries was being tested by fresh strikes over the weekend. U.S. Central Command said it carried out "self-defense" airstrikes on Iranian radar and drone sites after Tehran shot down an American drone. Iran said it targeted an air base used by American forces.

In an early morning social media post on June 1, President Donald Trump said "Iran really wants to make a deal and it will be a good one for the U.S.A." He did

not mention the weekend strikes but blasted critics of the war, including those he described as "seemingly unpatriotic Republicans."

"Just sit back and relax, it will all work out well in the end - It always does!" he said.

Trump met with his national security team on May 26 but did not make a final determination on a deal to end the war. Among the main sticking points in negotiations is Iran's nuclear program. Trump has repeatedly said Iran must dispose of its enriched uranium and end its nuclear program as part of any deal. Iranian leaders have called their right to uranium enrichment non-negotiable.

As the war drags on, Iran has maintained its grip on the Strait of Hormuz, where one-fifth of the world's oil and natural gas flows.

The conflict has become increasingly unpopular in the United States as Americans face higher prices at the pump. Average U.S. gas prices were at \$4.32 a gallon for regular unleaded as of June 1, according to AAA.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei on June 1 accused Washington of shifting its negotiating positions and condemned what he described as U.S. aggression.

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