
Artificial Intelligence. Father Pasqualetti (UPS): “Transparency of AI systems essential, reject disintermediation and promote good journalism”

“The use of artificial intelligence is inevitable. Our societies will be increasingly integrated by AI systems. But what will our understanding of social relations look like? What will be the meaning of freedom and democracy?” Fr **Fabio Pasqualetti**, Dean of the School of Social Communications at the Pontifical Salesian University and Advisor to the Dicastery for Communications, reflected upon Pope Francis' [Message](#) for the 58th World Day of Social Communications, entitled "Artificial Intelligence and the Wisdom of the Heart: for a fully human communication.”



Is Artificial Intelligence altering the foundations of civil coexistence? The transformation is underway. With the first wave of AI, we experienced the contradictions of social media, including the creation of fake news, polarisation, echo chambers and radicalised beliefs. The second generation is amplifying these effects. **Think of ChatGPT and how it has hacked human language: we are faced with a computing machine that interacts through language.** What impact will this have on people, especially the least informed, who are already inclined to empathise with objects? The risk is that it will become an oracle. **The Pope invites us to start from the "wisdom of the heart" in an age "rich in technology and poor in humanity"...** The wisdom of the heart is the ability to reposition ourselves in the right place. The extraordinary progress that humanity has made in the field of technology has not been matched by corresponding human progress. When you look at a flowering meadow, how much variety is there? And that diversity is the beauty of it. Instead, we continue to argue about race, nations and borders. We are incapable of understanding that we are part of this immense organism that is the cosmos, of which we human beings are but one component. We should be doing everything possible to work together for a better world. Instead, all we are able to do is to wage war. Wisdom sees details but knows where they fit into the whole, sees contradictions but appreciates differences. Wisdom is not exclusive to any religion. It is the wisdom of the heart, where the encounter with God takes place. And it makes us aware of the limits. **Is there a need for transparency in AI systems?** This has already happened with food: we demanded that ingredients and origin be listed on food packaging. Similarly, we need to demand transparency in cultural food. We should also know what we are consuming culturally. **Fake news, deep fakes, false narratives: are these the pathologies of AI?** No, these are the pathologies of the way in which we are using them. On social media, anything that stirs up controversy is amplified to attract the users' attention. Then there are deliberate information polluters. Traditionally, those in power want to control information. **Disintermediation is the myth that needs to be shattered. It is perceived as exciting and exuberant, but this is only true for powerful systems that can bypass journalism and media.** People are navigating a chaotic ocean of information in which they have no sense of direction. Paradoxically, algorithms provide less information than is needed.

That is why we need professional mediation and good journalism to help people understand what is happening. So much for the disintermediation of information.

In his message, Francis calls for the ethical regulation of AI through a "binding international treaty". It will not be easy, nor will it come quickly, but sooner or later a regulation will be in place. We need to know everything about the cultural and spiritual nourishment of humanity. I don't believe

in catastrophic analyses, but we have to come to terms with reality: we are currently facing a third world war that is being fought on a piecemeal basis and risks becoming globalised. We are facing a real danger that we will break down, create new caste systems, increase inequalities or plunge into a dystopian scenario. However, human history is full of painful repetitions of the domination and subjugation of one group over another. As Christians and as Church, we are called to be sentinels, prophets and heralds. Our vocation is not to become Cassandras, but to promote the conversion of hearts.

Marco Calvarese