

Reflections from Father Juan Ruiz

Keeping Humanity at the Center of Technological Development

Pope Leo XIV recently published an encyclical titled Magnifica Humanitas, in which he speaks at length about artificial intelligence through the lens of Catholic Social Doctrine. He signed it on the 135th anniversary of Leo XIII's Rerum Novarum—the Church's response to the Industrial Revolution—signaling that AI marks an upheaval of comparable scale. Unlike what some might expect, he does not condemn AI or technological development. Rather, he comments on contemporary trends—transhumanism, posthumanism, and AI—and offers ways to safeguard humanity in this time of transformation, especially in relation to truth, work, and freedom.

To frame his argument, Pope Leo offers a biblical contrast: Babel versus Nehemiah. In the Tower of Babel, the people build a great tower to make a name for themselves; what began as a project of uniformity—a single language, a single technology, a single direction—falls apart when communication breaks down. Against this, Pope Leo sets the rebuilding of Jerusalem led by Nehemiah, who first asks God for help and then coordinates a collaborative effort in which responsibility is shared by each for their part. In a similar way, one of his most important points is the necessity of not leaving people out of the conversation, especially the poor. It is not about domination, but about shared building.

Like Pope Francis, Pope Leo puts people at the center. He treats artificial intelligence as a valuable tool that requires vigilance: transparency about the values of its developers, oversight to curtail abuse, and rejecting the assumption that technological power grants the right to govern. His underlying concern is that our humanity is lost in the process of adopting these new technologies.

Two worldviews, increasingly visible in this era, stand opposed to Catholic teaching: transhumanism and posthumanism. Transhumanism holds that we should enhance people with technology—implanting chips or replacing limbs to improve the body. Posthumanism goes further thinking that humanity is not essential. In Catholic teaching, God became human, meaning there is no further evolution or need to transform ourselves materially. Against both of those worldviews, Pope Leo claims that fulfillment is not achieved by eliminating our weaknesses but by growing to accept them. Therein lies a true peace. This is why the encyclical's title speaks of the grandeur of humanity.

In support of this grandeur, he argues that work confers a certain dignity on the person, and that the struggles work brings are essential to maturing. The elimination of all work, then, is not a desirable outcome; maturing is a good and healthy part of life.

A related point is the importance of truth. Pope Leo insists there is a true story to be told about world events, and that the flood of misinformation gravely threatens the harmony of the human family. If people cannot trust what they read or hear, the foundation for community collapses. Truth is a common good, and we all share responsibility for maintaining it.

Finally, Pope Leo speaks of freedom. Digital technologies are often addictive, and he worries about how the vast data collected on people is used to shape their behavior. A further threat is that every prompt fed to an AI system depends on material processes, sometimes relying on underpaid labor and exploitative resource extraction—trapping workers in new forms of slavery. This too must be taken seriously.

Neither Pope Leo XIV nor the Catholic Church is opposed to technological development. It can be a great gift and for it to prove most fruitful, we must keep God and humanity at the center.



Parables in Matthew 13:24-43 The Weeds & Mustard Seeds

SIXTEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME~ JULY 19, 2026

Immaculate Conception Catholic Church

1565 Curtis Street - Baton Rouge, LA 70807

Office Phone: (225) 775-7067 - Information: (225) 775-7062

Fax: (225) 775-0775 - Email: clarktf2002@yahoo.com

Web Site Address: www.immaculateconceptionbr.org

*Immaculate Conception Church is a Black Catholic Church
serving the family of God and feeding the soul of the Community.*

PASTOR: Father Thomas F. Clark, S.J.(225) 775-7067/(225) 773-2036

IN RESIDENCE: Father Fred Kammer, S.J.(504) 343-9195

SECRETARY: Renae Welsh/John Edwards.....(225) 775-7067

PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION:

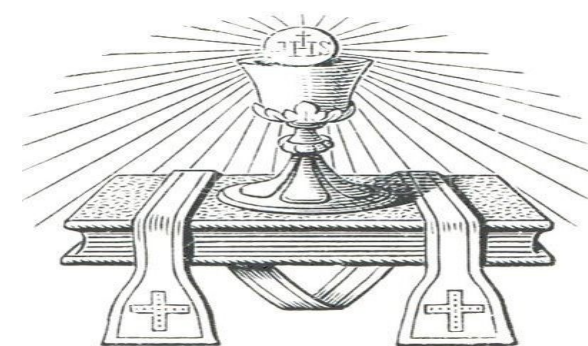
COORDINATOR: Gloria DeRouen(225) 936-8162

ASSISTANT TO COORDINATOR: Stephanie Yearby(214) 881-5663

OCIA COORDINATOR: Cathy Glover(225) 772-6099

MLK/SU CATHOLIC STUDENT CENTER:

Joyce Johnson - Wilfred Johnson(225) 775-8691



Mass Schedule

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 PM

Sunday Mass: 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

**Weekday Masses: MLK Chapel
12:10 PM**



THANK YOU TO OUR VISITING PRIESTS

Thank you to Father Juan Ruiz, SJ and Fr. Sean Toole, SJ for being with us this summer and celebrating the Masses and being available for pastoral care while Father Clark has been away for vacation and retreat. We appreciate their generosity and conscientious care of the parish.

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES IN AUGUST

Our weekly Bible Studies will resume on August 5 and 6 with Zoom Bible Study on Wednesday, August 5, at 7 PM, and in person on Thursday, August 6, at 10:30 AM in the Parish Activity Center.

REMINDER: PARISH COUNCIL OF MINISTRIES

This quarter’s Parish council of Ministries meeting will take place on Tuesday August 18 at 6:30 PM in the Parish Activity Center. Minutes and agenda will be provided as the date approaches.

PROVINCIAL VISITATION

On Sunday, August 9, our new Provincial Superior, Father Andrew Kirschman, SJ, will be making his annual visit to our parish. He will be concelebrating at the 10:30 AM Mass.

SOLAR PANEL INSTALLATION CONTINUES....More Details to come!!

The installation of the solar panels continues with, as of this writing, 50% of the work completed. We are tentatively planning for a ribbon cutting celebration on Saturday, August 15. We are also planning pop up rallies on the Saturdays of August in our parking lot to let the neighborhood know about our Lighthouse as well as to encourage everyone to get out and **VOTE** in November.

STUDENT MASS AT SOUTHERN RESUMES ON AUGUST 16

The Student Sunday Mass at the MLK Catholic Student Center will resume on Sunday, August 16 at 2:00 PM. Please spread the word to family and friends attending Southern University this fall about this Sunday Mass and our daily Mass at 12:10 PM as well as our availability to students for pastoral support, a quiet place to study, and a shoulder to cry on when needed.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY TO OUR CHURCH

As the fiscal year closed on June 30, thank you to all the parishioners who so faithfully and generously support the parish with your offertory donations. For the fiscal year 2025-2026, you donated \$578 479.49 to the Sunday Offertory and \$52,245.98 to the Building Fund. Your generosity makes it possible for us to pay our operating costs entirely from the Sunday Offertory. We are consistently whittling down our debt from the renovation of the church in 2019. We have reduced our \$700,000 debt by \$422,946.20. Our remaining balance is \$277,053.80. The whole parish are partners in ministry with our St. Vincent de Paul Food pantry and the MLK Catholic Student Center by your donations to those funds. Your continued generosity helps us to keep on doing what we are doing, and to find new ways in which to serve God’s people.

Thank You to Our Faithful Volunteers

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers who give so generously of their time and hearts. To keep our Parish thriving under challenging circumstances, we must also prioritize your well-being, protect your personal boundaries, and normalize the need for rest. Let’s continue to support each other and look out for one another’s well being ensuring our community remains strong.



RHONDA	DENT	7/20
SHEILA	DEROUEN	7/20
JERRICA	EAGLIN	7/20
JANIFER	GRIFFIN	7/20
DYLAN	HONORE	7/20
ORRIN	LEBLANCE, II	7/20
EDDIE LEE	SCOTT	7/20
DEE	TAYLOR	7/20
DARREN	CLARK	7/21
MICHAEL	GORDON	7/21
DARRYL	HONORE,II	7/21
MARTHA	PAYNE	7/21
EDWIN	ROBILLARD	7/22
ELTON	DEROUEN, III	7/22
ROOSEVELT	PAYNE, JR.	7/22
LASHAWN	PRUDHOMME	7/22
FREDA	RUSSELL	7/22
DAVID	SENEGAL	7/23
LARRY	BERRY	7/23
JERRARD	DUGAS	7/23
LAUREN	ST. AMANT	7/23
DWAYNE	THIERRY	7/23
SUSIE	BOUDREAUX	7/24
LARRY	BUTLER	7/24
JOY	GREEN	7/24
ROBYN	JACKSON	7/24
CHARLES	MOORE	7/24
CLAUDE	PATIN, III	7/24
ARTHUR	JONES	7/25
TRAMAINE	KENT	7/25
HARVEY	OLISON	7/25
JOSEPH	PATRICK, JR.	7/25
CASSANDRA	BENOIT	7/26
JOHN	DARJEAN	7/26
ENA	LACY	7/26
THADDEUS	SAM	7/26
JORDAN	THOMAS	7/26
APRIL	TOUSSAINT	7/26

SAVE THE DATES

Our **Parish Picnic** will take place on Sunday, October 12, from 1 2 PM to 3 PM. **SU Homecoming Parade** will take place on Sunday, September 27. The **SU Homecoming Game** will be on Saturday, October 3. We will have our regular Sunday Mass schedule on September 27 with a "expedited Mass" at 10:30 AM so you can beat the traffic before the parade. Those who park in our parking lot for Mass can stay there for the parade. On Saturday, October 3, there **will not be a 4 PM Vigil Mass**. The Knights will be selling parking spaces for their scholarship fund.

**Weekly Mass Readings
July 19th –July 26th**

Sunday
Sixteenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time

Wisdom 12: 13, 16-19
Romans 8: 26-27
Matthew 13: 24-43

Monday
Micah 6: 1-4, 6-8
Matthew 12: 38-42

Tuesday
Micah 7: 14-15, 18-20
Matthew 12: 46-50

Wednesday
Feast of Saint Mary Magdalene
Songs of Songs 3: 1-4b
John 20: 1-2, 11-18

Thursday
Jeremiah 2: 1-3, 7-8, 12-13
Matthew 13: 10-17

Friday
Jeremiah 3: 14-17
Matthew 13: 18-23

Saturday
Feast of Saint James, Apostle
2 Corinthians 4: 7-15
Matthew 20: 20-28

Sunday
Seventeenth Sunday in
Ordinary Time
1 Kings 3: 5, 7-12
Romans 8: 28-30
Matthew 13: 44-52