

Fr Ben's Weekly Reflection

25th Sunday Ordinary Time

Sep 20, 2026

No A.I. Algorithm Needed

I have been reading Pope Leo's first encyclical "Magnifica Humanitas". While he does address AI, he central theme is the human person. The subtitle is the best summary: "on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence."

In paragraph 165, Pope Leo, quoting Pope Saint John Paul II, says "The family is the primary social good. Founded on the enduring union between a man and a woman, it is the first environment in which all persons develop their potential, become aware of their dignity and learn the earliest forms of truth and goodness, internalizing the habits that prepare them for life in society. As the first natural society…the family is the fundamental and irreplaceable cell of every community organization."

I bring up this paragraph because I counted that I have done around 20 baptisms in the year I have been at Holy Family. This is super exciting and noteworthy for a parish our size. One of the essential wedding vows sometimes overlooked is the promise to accept children openly and raise them in the faith.

The Church has always recognized the family as the cornerstone of society. Marriage is a sacrament for this very reason. Jesus Christ Himself established marriage as holy, not just a societal contract for "eh…as long as this works." Marriage is directed for the good of the husband and wife and for the raising of children. No AI algorithm can do what Pope Leo outlined. Only in a family are those values instilled and children raised as children of God.

There is a "joke" people say that "I grew up in a good Catholic family." It generally means someone was one of 5, 6, 7 or 10+ kids. I squirm a little at that as a "joke" since large families are nothing to be ashamed of or weird. The "American dream" of one boy, one girl, a dog, a cat, and a suburban house with a white picket fence may by my/our planned family…but when does anything go according to plan? Every child, (and every baptism), is a great joy! A new child of God!

That doesn't mean every Catholic family **has** to have as many kids as possible. God provided for that in what the Church has developed as Natural Family Planning (NFP) for working with God's plan. There are many resources available on it.

But it **does** mean, as Catholic families, we should be open to life whenever God plans to bless a marriage in that way. I have known amazing Catholic couples with no children, one child, two children, 4 children, 6 children, and 9 children. The common thread is being faithful to the vows made in marriage.