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ADDRESS BY HIS HOLINESS POPE LEO XIV TO THE MEMBERS OF THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Clementine Hall

Thursday, 24 September 2026

[Multimedia]

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Peace be with you.

Your Eminence,

Distinguished members of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to welcome you on the occasion of this year's Plenary Session of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. I thank the Chancellor, Cardinal Turkson, and the President, Joachim von Braun, together with the Council, for organizing this gathering to discuss the theme "The Future of Science in a Changing World." This issue is indeed timely, since "in recent years, it has become increasingly evident how rapidly and profoundly digitalization, artificial intelligence and robotics are transforming our world (*Magnifica Humanitas*, no. 4). Although their full impact remains uncertain, these tools give us reason to hope for a brighter future for humanity. They may, for instance, lead to scientific breakthroughs and technological innovations that advance medicine, improve the diagnosis and treatment of disease, strengthen food and energy systems, deepen our understanding of the universe and the natural world, and open new possibilities for human creativity and cooperation.

Yet precisely because these developments carry such promise, we must also recognize the risks that accompany them. Artificial intelligence can be used for surveillance, manipulation and discrimination (cf. nos. [103](#), [150](#)). Sophisticated cyber capabilities and autonomous weapons may, when developed or deployed without adequate safeguards and human oversight, introduce new dangers to security and international peace (cf. nos. [183](#), [197](#)). Moreover, "current AI systems require enormous amounts of energy and water, significantly influencing carbon dioxide emissions, and place heavy demands on natural resources" (no. [101](#)).

These possibilities and risks remind us that technological progress is never simply a technical matter. Every technology reflects, whether explicitly or implicitly, a particular understanding of the human person, of society and of the future we wish to build. Scientific and technological advancement must therefore be accompanied by a corresponding growth in responsibility. The greater our power to transform the world, the greater must be our capacity to discern what truly serves God-given human dignity, to govern wisely, and to care for those who may bear the greatest consequences of our choices (cf. no. [173](#)).

That same demand for responsibility is especially urgent in the face of climate change. We are witnessing heatwaves, droughts, floods, storms, wildfires and other natural disasters with increasing frequency and intensity. These shocks fall most heavily upon the poor, upon communities with the fewest resources to adapt, and upon those whose livelihoods depend directly upon the land or the forests and the oceans (cf. Francis, *Laudato Si'*, no. 25). It follows that the climate question is not merely an environmental challenge, it is fundamentally a question of justice, human dignity and solidarity between peoples and generations. We cannot respond to these challenges only after disaster has already struck. We need to move from emergency response to prevention, from vulnerability to preparedness, and from short-term measures to a wise and far-sighted vision for humanity. This calls for a responsible and discerning approach to science that builds resilience: one committed to discovery, while also considering, from the outset, the consequences that scientific and technological choices may have for humanity and for the integrity of creation entrusted to us by God.

In this effort, cooperation across disciplines is indispensable. Climate resilience requires the collaboration of scientists, engineers, economists, physicians and social scientists, together with local communities and policymakers. The challenges of a changing climate cross every boundary between disciplines, institutions and nations; our response must therefore cross them as well. As [Pope Francis](#) reminded us, our interdependence calls us to approach environmental challenges from a global perspective and to work towards a common plan (cf. no. [164](#)). For this reason, I welcome the series of Summits on climate resilience that your Academy has undertaken over the past two years, together with the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences and scientific partners from many parts of the world. It is encouraging that these gatherings bring together not only scientists, but also young people, public authorities, representatives of civil society and members of different religious traditions. Such gatherings create spaces where knowledge can be shared across borders, where successful experiences can be learned from and adapted, and where scientific understanding can be translated into practical action. I encourage you to continue along this path.

With these sentiments, I earnestly hope that your reflections during these days will offer valuable guidance for the future of science. We are reminded of the future with the young people among us! And it is very, very important. It is my prayer that you will foster a scientific culture that is ambitious yet humble, rigorous yet open to dialogue, innovative yet responsible, globally cooperative yet inclusive of those most at risk and most in need. In this way, scientific collaboration, as a public good in service of peace, can remain focused on safeguarding God-given human dignity, promoting the common good and caring for creation.

May the Holy Spirit, source of all charity and bond of unity, enlighten your minds and strengthen your efforts. And I willingly invoke upon all of you the abundant blessings of Almighty God. Thank you.

So, we pray together and we ask for God's blessing, first by praying the words that Jesus taught us. *Our Father* ... [Blessing.]

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