**Pope Francis** ✔
@Pontifex

Hello world! Here is my latest message to you:

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3:00 PM · May 24, 2015 · TweetDeck

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**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 9h
Replying to @Pontifex

As an atheist and a firm believer in sciences, I am positively surprised by your approach towards the problems which you lay out in your encyclical letter. Considering that you are one of the most well-known religious individuals on this planet, I honestly expected to read that you believe that contemporary problems could be solved solely through religious means. This is not the case, however. You meticulously explain each problem, how they form a threat to today's society, and how we, collectively as humanity, should go about solving them. Even though you present the reader with several religious aspects, you only tend to use these as a way to reinforce Christianity. Anyone who can look past the literal meanings of these bits and focus on analyzing the deeper, symbolic messages, will notice that the topics discussed within your letter are mostly ones of ethical nature. Hence the reason why you probably "wish to address every living person on this planet," not just Christians.

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 8h
Replying to @Pontifex

Your letter certainly has incited me to think about my future role as an engineer. I feel that engineers are sometimes so caught up in inventing new technology that they forget to take a step back and look at the larger picture. They only seem to start asking questions after their invention is not used as intended and/or harms the environment. When this happens, the damage done cannot be easily reversed. The problem here is not necessarily the loss of control over the exponential growth of technology, but rather the loss of control over human or lack of humane handling. As Blessed Pope Paul VI would put it: "the most extraordinary scientific advances, the most amazing technical abilities, the most astonishing economic growth, unless they are accompanied by authentic social and moral progress, will definitively turn against man".

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 7h
Replying to @Pontifex

I like to think that technology is amoral. Technology by itself cannot act in an ethical way; in other words, it needs an actor, a human. Take for example that I would kill someone using a flashlight, a utility that is typically used to brighten dark areas. Such an immoral action would not render the flashlight immoral. As you express in your encyclical "our immense technological development has not been accompanied by a development in human responsibility, values and conscience." I completely agree with this statement; because of a lack of development in human ethics, technology can become dangerous when it is controlled by individuals who are guided by immoral principles.

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 6h
Replying to @Pontifex

The issue with ethics lies within the hierarchical structure of today's society. The individuals who possess the most power are the ones who, albeit unknowingly, get to decide on what is morally right and wrong. Technology has "given those with the knowledge, and especially the economic resources to use them, an impressive dominance over the whole of humanity and the entire world." Since they are able to employ this power to maintain some sort of status quo, they both directly and indirectly set ethical rules for the rest of the world, in line with their own moral beliefs, or worse, their personal interests.

**Donald J. Trump** ✓ @realDonaldTrump · 6h
Replying to @Pontifex

You are fake news.

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 5h
Replying to @Pontifex

It all boils down to human psychology. Humans are born as neutral beings. Through education and various life-changing events, a person's moral spectrum gets shaped. Then again, as stated in the above tweet, ethics is subjective and mostly dependent on the nature of the most powerful individuals. Something that one might consider morally correct, might be deemed immoral by another.

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 4h
Replying to @Pontifex

I am not saying that technology is the solution to all the problems we face. When rightly applied in a controlled environment, however, it can do a lot of good. You too acknowledge this by stating that "technology has remedied countless evils which used to harm and limit human beings". Technology has been and always will be an extension of the human mind and body. Consequently, I do not think it is correct to say that technological progress is not allowed to replace human work. If a machine is more competent at successfully performing a task than a human, then work being "a necessity, part of the meaning of life on this earth" should not be a solid argument to hold back this kind of progress. If anything, it gives rise to creative destruction. Workers can shift their focus towards new, necessary, and more satisfying jobs, such as engineering and IT. Just like the previous job, the new one is "a path to growth, human development and personal fulfillment".

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 3h
Replying to @Pontifex

Physical and ethical restrictions are two things that engineers will have to continue to deal with. As they design and invent new technologies, they have to take into account the consequences of their concepts. If they wish to be an ethical engineer, they are required "to adopt a circular model of production capable of preserving resources for present and future generations, while limiting as much as possible the use of non-renewable resources, moderating their consumption, maximizing their efficient use, reusing and recycling them". They cannot afford to accept "every advance in technology with a view to profit, without concern for its potentially negative impact on human beings". This is no different for me. I should take the time to question what I am working on and how this will/could impact my surroundings.

**Ciaran Van Hoeserlande** @BelgianKiddo · 2h
Replying to @Pontifex

Your encyclical letter is a good read. It is a detailed summary of all of the previous findings and call-to-actions from experts, with a personal touch. It is not very effective if it has to function as a call-to-action, though. Individually, humans are lazy and egocentric beings. Naturally being pack animals, a lot of people need an example that they can follow to think about changing their behavior. Apathy, the thought that individual action does not contribute to the greater good, is common among humans. Consequently, it is difficult to bring about any significant change without having the numbers. I assume you realized this while writing your letter and are simply hoping that it will reach the right people, altering their views and/or their future behavior. Despite these rather negative views on humanity, I am convinced that "yet all is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves, choosing again what is good, and making a new start, despite their mental and social conditioning". In conclusion, all that is left to do is making the right choice and acting accordingly.