

FR. BRAD HAGELIN

PASTOR

My dear Kirkland Catholics,

We have a pope from Chicago! The very cool news that means we have an American Pope, the bad news is that he is a White Sox fan; but no one is perfect, not even the pope (Fr. Brad sarcasm there). In terms of the focus of his papacy, very often the name chosen is significant in terms of the Holy Father's self-understanding of what his mandate will likely be during his papacy. Leo XIV has said that a major reason he chose this is because of his nominal predecessor's (Leo XIII) grappling with the effects of the Industrial Revolution well anticipates this era and the new economic revolution that is occasioned by the rise of artificial intelligence. The technological revolution that is the internet could be added in there as having a major effect on society over the past 25 years plus, with many negative side effects.

Sociologists are not fully sure why, but the rise in technology has taken place beside the decline of religiosity, and there seems to be a definite correlative effect. In terms of the challenges this poses to the proclamation of the Gospel and sustaining (or growing) membership of the Church – especially in the Western World, this is something that has to be reckoned with in terms of the spiritual health of our world. The rise of A.I. doesn't necessarily directly relate directly to that challenge around evangelization, but it certainly will have repercussions for economies and labor all over the world which will have lasting and potentially significant effects to the average person's basic understanding of both work and what it means to be human. The latter would certainly impact evangelization.

I personally think it is very wise for Pope Leo XIV to see this, and I hope and pray he can convene the great minds to strategize and see ahead to anticipate new challenges before they arise in this new reality. I also hope he can serve as a voice of conscience in potential continued erosion of the dignity of the human person and of work that might be coming. Let us continue to pray for Pope Leo and especially his anticipation of challenges ahead and his vision for how he can best put his gifts at use in service of the Church in this time the Lord has given him to lead us.

With love in Christ,

Fr. Brad