



TOPICS

1. There is an increasing awareness and responsibility for our common home, which allows for the expansion of the field of integral ecology. Additionally, the phenomenon of globalization, especially as it affects health and human life, is receiving attention in the field of bioethics. Both of these phenomena can be taken as signs of the work of the Spirit in today's world, and therefore as places of cooperation with men and women of good will.

2. Pope Francis encourages the Academy to an active participation in the debate that is animating a reflection on the influence of bioethics under globalization (cfr nn. 10-11 Lettera Humana Communitas). The need has arisen to find ethical reference points with which to comprehend the scope of the ever-new acquisitions of the natural sciences and biotechnologies, in a way to be able to regulate both use and production. Given the intense interactions across diverse cultures, we need to develop a set of universally acceptable operational criteria that are incisive with regards to national and international politics. Human rights are in many ways the terrain on which this ethical comparison is taking place, a comparison which involves a series of questions to which the Tradition has responded with the doctrine of Natural Law in this search for a universal ethic.

3. Pope Francis declares «today's so-defined "emerging and converging" technologies» (n. 12 Lettera Humana Communitas) as the area of interest. This term refers to nanotechnology, biotechnology, information technology, and the cognitive sciences (NBIC). Their introduction into the fields of research and industry is accelerating change, broadening the areas of intervention into reality. More incisive applications are becoming available – not only applications that are therapeutic, but also applications for the strengthening and development of living organisms, as well as new procedures for organizing work and health. Applications even go as far as the transfer of functions previously conducted solely by the human body to artificial means of support. We are not simply facing new technical instruments, but changes that are profoundly intertwined with our very relationship with the world: new computer devices are settling in with growing pervasiveness in various spheres of reality, including the

human body, which finds itself continually more exposed to the dynamics of biopolitics.