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Guarding the Heart in the Digital Age according to the Book of Proverbs and the Antiqua et Nova Document

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Abstract

The development of digital technology and social media has significantly shaped patterns of human communication and behavior. The rapid flow of information and a culture of reactive interaction often drive people to act impulsively, thereby neglecting the dimensions of reflection and wisdom in life. This situation raises a fundamental question regarding how humans can continue to live wisely amidst a digital culture that tends to be controlled by algorithmic logic. This paper aims to reflect on the importance of guarding the heart as the center of human life in the face of these dynamics. This study employs a biblical-theological approach by examining the concepts of the heart and wisdom in the Book of Proverbs. In the Israelite wisdom tradition, the heart is understood as the center of human life that determines how one thinks, speaks, and acts. The call to guard the heart (*Proverbs 4:23*) *indicates that the wisdom of life is rooted in the depths of the human soul. This reflection is then dialogued with the Church's perspective in the document Antiqua et Nova, which affirms that virtue enables us to integrate the whole and the parts, our decisions and the consequences of moral responsibility and ethical wisdom. This study affirms that guarding the heart is a vital foundation for humans to use technology and social media wisely. Thus, biblical wisdom can serve as an inspiration for modern humans to integrate technological advancements with moral and spiritual depth in daily life.*

Keywords

Wisdom, Heart, Digital, Proverbs, Francis.

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INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology in the 21st century has brought about radical changes in the way people understand themselves. This understanding

encompasses how people think, communicate, build relationships, and make decisions.[1] The digital world, through the internet, social media, and artificial intelligence, has transformed from a mere tool into a new living space. This new living space has shaped the consciousness and identity of people today. In this context, modern humans live in a digital culture characterized by speed, algorithms, unlimited connectivity, and a massive, constant flow of information.[2] This reality opens up tremendous opportunities for the advancement of knowledge and global communication. However, it also poses serious challenges to the depth of human reflection, moral integrity, and spiritual life.

The digital world has brought about a phenomenon of impulsive reactions, the spread of misinformation, a culture of instant gratification, and a crisis of inner peace.[3] This phenomenon indicates that digital humans face a fundamental problem: a weakening ability to reflect wisely on life. In this situation, people often lose their sense of direction in life because they become too immersed in algorithmic logic and external validation. Therefore, an anthropological and spiritual foundation is needed to guide people toward living a whole and meaningful life amid the complex currents of digitalization.

The Christian faith tradition presents the concept of the heart as the center of human life. The Book of Proverbs offers a profound perspective on the importance of guarding the heart as the center of human life. The call to guard the heart in Proverbs 4:23 is particularly relevant to revisit in the context of today's digital world. The heart is understood not only as the center of emotions, but also as the center of thought, will, and moral decisions that determine the direction of human life. Guarding the heart is an essential foundation for a life of wisdom. For it is from there that the entire

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[1] Detania Hidapenta Et Al., "Kebijakan Dan Etika Berteknologi Untuk Mengatasi Pelanggaran Hak Cipta Di Era Digital," *Indo-Mathedu Intellectuals Journal* 4, No. 3 (2023): 2725, Https://Doi.Org/10.54373/Imeij.V4i3.585.

[2] Agustinus Gergorius Raja Dasion And Arie Wahyu Prananta, "The 'New Space' Of Homo Digitalis: Questioning Humans In The Digital Age," *Digital Theory, Culture & Society* 2, No. 1 (2024): 72, Https://Doi.Org/10.61126/Dtcs.V2i1.44.

[3] James T. Flynn, "Digital Discipleship: Christian Education In A Digital World," *Christian Education Journal: Research On Educational Ministry* 10, No. 1 (2013): 88–89, Https://Doi.Org/10.1177/073989131301000106.

course of human life flows. On the other hand, the Catholic Church, through the document *Antiqua et Nova*, offers a contemporary reflection on ethical and anthropological challenges. This document addresses the challenges posed by technological advancements, particularly artificial intelligence, and emphasizes the importance of moral wisdom in its use. It also underscores that while technology possesses high analytical capabilities, only humans possess a conscience, freedom, and moral responsibility. Therefore, humans are called to remain the subjects who control technology, not the other way around.

Thus, this paper aims to re-examine the significance of guarding the heart as a path to wisdom in facing the challenges of the digital age. Using a biblical-theological approach, this study integrates the concepts of the heart and wisdom found in the Book of Proverbs with the Church's moral reflections in the document *Antiqua et Nova*. Through this dialogue, it is hoped that a framework will emerge capable of guiding modern people to use technology wisely. It is hoped that people will not lose their spiritual depth and human integrity, which are rooted in the depths of the heart and moral responsibility.

RESULT

The Concepts of the Heart and Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs

In the Hebrew context, the word "heart" (*lev* in Hebrew) has a broad and profound meaning; it does not merely refer to the seat of emotions. In the tradition of Israelite wisdom, the heart encompasses the mind, the will, and the emotions, making it the control center for all aspects of human life. The heart is viewed as the center of thought and the place where a person plans and weighs their life decisions. Thus, the heart is the inner identity of a human being that determines a person's moral and spiritual direction.[4]

Wisdom in the Book of Proverbs is not merely intellectual knowledge, but a life skill rooted in moral and spiritual values. Wisdom begins with the fear of the Lord, which serves as the epistemological and moral foundation for the growth of faith. Wisdom is described as a straight path designed by God to guide individuals toward an orderly and hopeful life. Possessing wisdom serves as a personal shield that

[4] Aska Aprilano Pattinaja And Victor Pattianakotta, "Seven Principles Of Anatomical Pedagogy In Proverbs: A Hermeneutic Study Of Numerical Proverbs Based On Proverbs 6:16-19," *Predica Verbum: Jurnal Teologi Dan Misi* 4, No. 2 (2024): 105, Https://Doi.Org/10.51591/Predicaverbum.V4i2.108.

protects one from moral and spiritual dangers, as well as ensuring smooth progress on life's journey. Wisdom is viewed as a spiritual legacy that must be taught and passed down from one generation to the next through family upbringing.

The phrase "from there flows life" in Proverbs 4:23 indicates that the heart is the primary source or control center of all human actions.[5] The command to guard the heart with all vigilance emphasizes the need for consistent inner vigilance over one's thoughts, motivations, and desires so that they remain in harmony with divine wisdom. If the heart is not guarded, a person's entire life will go astray; conversely, a guarded heart will result in a meaningful life that glorifies God.

The Book of Proverbs consistently shows that what is in the heart is manifested through words and deeds. The way a person speaks and acts reflects their inner values and the state of their heart.[6] The words that come from one's lips reveal whether or not there is wisdom in a person's life; honest words reflect a sincere heart, while deceitful lips reveal moral corruption in the heart. The actions we take in our daily lives are the fruit of what has been planned and held in the heart.[7] Proverbs 4:23–27 links guarding the heart with controlling the mouth (words), the eyes (focus), and the feet (actions/lifestyle choices).[8] A wise person maintains a balance between a pure heart, uplifting words, and just actions, thereby creating a harmonious life with God and others.[9]

The Challenges of the Digital Age: A Crisis of Reflection and Wisdom

The digital age has brought about a fundamental transformation that touches every aspect of human life, creating a "digital culture" in which technology is no longer merely a tool, but rather a living environment (milieu) that shapes the way we think

[5] Sualang, *Pola Pendidikan Orangtua Dan Perkembangan Sosio Emosional Anak Berdasarkan Amsal 4:1-27*, 36.

[6] Ragil Kristiawan; Aprilia Vrischilla Lumiling, "Hikmat Dalam Mengatur Perkataan: Studi Tematis Penggunaan Kata "Lidah" Dalam Kitab Amsal," *Hymnos: Jurnal Teologi Dan Keagamaan Kristen* 1 No. 1 (2024):16.

[7] Pattinaja And Pattianakotta, "Seven Principles Of Anatomical Pedagogy In Proverbs," 105.

[8] Sualang, *Pola Pendidikan Orangtua Dan Perkembangan Sosio Emosional Anak Berdasarkan Amsal 4:1-27*, 37.

[9] Ragil Kristiawan; Aprilia Vrischilla Lumiling, "Hikmat Dalam Mengatur Perkataan: Studi Tematis Penggunaan Kata "Lidah" Dalam Kitab Amsal," *Hymnos: Jurnal Teologi Dan Keagamaan Kristen* 1 No. 1 (2024):21.

and interact.[10] However, despite its convenience, this era poses significant challenges to human spiritual depth and capacity for reflection. The use of digital technology in all aspects of human life offers speed and easy access to information, regardless of age or gender.[11] Digital technology has eliminated physical barriers, enabling virtual interactions that transcend space and time, yet it often limits real-world physical activity.[12] Social media has become an integral part of life, especially for Generation Z and Generation Alpha, shifting communication patterns toward screen-based interactions rather than face-to-face interactions.[13] People are inundated with millions of pieces of data every day, and the main challenge is no longer finding the right information, but rather the ability to distinguish and process it amidst the flood of information.[14]

Digital culture tends to prioritize images over listening and reading, which risks undermining intellectual independence and critical thinking skills. The lack of deep emotional communication and high levels of stress in the online world contribute to the high prevalence of depression and anxiety, particularly among young people.[15] Digital users are often susceptible to the spread of fake news or disinformation without critically evaluating it, which can fuel social division.[16] The ease of technology has led to an increase in ethical violations such as copyright infringement, cyberbullying, and arrogant behavior on social media.

In the wisdom tradition, the heart (*lev*) is the center of human moral and spiritual control (Proverbs 4:23). In the digital world, the "heart" is facing a real crisis. The flood of digital stimuli has caused people to lose the time needed to cultivate the stillness, meditation, and personal space for reflection that are essential for inner

[10] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," *Berkat : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Katolik* 2, No. 2 (2025): 38, Https://Doi.Org/10.61132/Berkat.V2i2.856.

[11] Detania Hidapenta Et Al., "Kebijakan Dan Etika Berteknologi Untuk Mengatasi Pelanggaran Hak Cipta Di Era Digital," *Indo-Mathedu Intellectuals Journal* 4, No. 3 (2023): 2724, Https://Doi.Org/10.54373/Imeij.V4i3.585.

[12] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," 37.

[13] Ardianti Afdin Et Al., *Edukasi "Menjaga Iman Dan Hati" Dalam Bermedia Sosial Di Era Digital*, 4, No. 1 (2025): 30.

[14] Anthony Le Duc, "Towards A Cybertheology: Theology In The Digital Milieu," *Ssrn Electronic Journal*, Ahead Of Print, 2023, 8, Https://Doi.Org/10.2139/Ssrn.4337184.

[15] Sualang, *Pola Pendidikan Orangtua Dan Perkembangan Sosio Emosional Anak Berdasarkan Amsal 4:1-27*, 24.

[16] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," 37.

growth.[17] Although technology expands connectivity, the relationships formed are often superficial and fail to foster authentic interpersonal connections.

Digital humans tend to get caught up in *mêtis* (practical intelligence for solving technical problems) and lose sight of *noûs* (the contemplative faculty of reason that grasps deeper meaning and spiritual values).[18] The pressure to project a perfect image of oneself on social media can undermine the authenticity of one's spiritual identity, where outward appearances are prioritized over the true state of one's heart.[19] Excessive use of technology without self-control can lead to a dependency that erodes character and weakens our focus on life's core values. The challenge for the digital age is how to keep the heart as the source of life's vitality amid technological disruption that tends to shallow inner reflection.[20]

The Antiqua and Nova Perspectives on Moral Wisdom

This document was published in January 2025 by the Vatican. The document *Antiqua et Nova* was drafted through collaboration between the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith and the Dicastery for Culture and Education, and was officially approved by Pope Francis on January 14, 2025. The title *Antiqua et Nova* refers to the Gospel of Matthew 13:52, which speaks of drawing "old and new" things from the treasury of faith to respond to the challenges of the times.[21] This document was created amid the changing times brought about by widespread digitalization.[22] The Church views the current AI technological revolution as akin to the social urgency of the First Industrial Revolution, during which the Church needed to provide moral guidance to protect human dignity and workers' rights. As a form of anthropological and ethical reflection, this document aims to contribute to a global dialogue so that technological progress remains focused on serving the individual and the common good, rather than merely industrial interests or technocratic efficiency.[23]

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[17] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," 40.

[18] Dariusz Kowalczyk, "Humans And Ai: Differences, Opportunities, Threats Reflections Around The Note Antiqua Et Nova,"*Journal Of The Catholic Social Thought* 29 (2025), 151. Doi : 10.21697/Csp.2025.29.1.06

[19] Afdin Et Al., *Edukasi "Menjaga Iman Dan Hati" Dalam Bermedia Sosial Di Era Digital*, 30.

[20] Sualang, *Pola Pendidikan Orangtua Dan Perkembangan Sosio Emosional Anak Berdasarkan Amsal 4:1-27*, 36.

[21] Kowalczyk, "Humans And Ai", 140.

[22] Dokpen Kwi, *Dikasteri Untuk Ajaran Iman Dikasteri Untuk Kebudayaan Dan Pendidikan*, N.D., 1.

[23] Fransiskus Fernando Siapedeng, *Etika Digital Dalam Perspektif Gereja Katolik: Telaah Atas Dokumen Antiqua Et Nova*, N.D., 143.

The Church makes a clear distinction between human intelligence and Artificial Intelligence (AI). AI is understood, both functionally and methodologically, as a tool of human creativity that operates on the basis of statistical data and deductive logic.[24] On the contrary, human intelligence is holistic, encompassing the mind, body, emotions, aesthetic values, and the capacity to seek truth and the meaning of life, qualities that machines cannot replicate.[25] All AI development must uphold the intrinsic dignity of human beings, who are created in the image of God (*imago Dei*). Technology must not demean, exploit, or treat human beings merely as a set of data (digital reductionism).[26]

Only humans possess a conscience and the freedom to make decisions, so the moral responsibility for the use of technology remains entirely in human hands. Important moral decisions must not be delegated entirely to algorithms without human oversight.[27] Human intelligence is not isolated; rather, it develops through interpersonal relationships and real-world encounters that involve the body (physical). The document warns of the risks of superficial virtual interactions that can lead to loneliness or blur the line between humans and machines through anthropomorphic language (humanizing AI).[28] The Church rejects all forms of discrimination arising from algorithmic bias and calls for transparency and accountability in the development of AI to protect vulnerable groups and prevent social polarization. In this age of information overload, what is most needed is true wisdom to understand the true meaning of life. This wisdom enables humanity to use technology to advance the integral development of the human person, care for our common home (the environment), and guide humanity toward its ultimate goal: communion with God.[29]

Wisdom of the Heart and Self-Integration in the Modern World

In the modern world dominated by technology and artificial intelligence (AI), wisdom of the heart is understood as a fundamental virtue that enables humans to integrate decisions with their consequences, as well as to perceive reality in its

[24] Siapedeng, *Etika Digital Dalam Perspektif Gereja Katolik: Telaah Atas Dokumen Antiqua Et Nova*, 145.
[25] Kwi, *Dikasteri Untuk Ajaran Iman Dikasteri Untuk Kebudayaan Dan Pendidikan*, 7.
[26] Siapedeng, *Etika Digital Dalam Perspektif Gereja Katolik: Telaah Atas Dokumen Antiqua Et Nova*, 146.
[27] Siapedeng, *Etika Digital Dalam Perspektif Gereja Katolik: Telaah Atas Dokumen Antiqua Et Nova*, 147.
[28] Siapedeng, *Etika Digital Dalam Perspektif Gereja Katolik: Telaah Atas Dokumen Antiqua Et Nova*, 147.
[29] Kwi, *Dikasteri Untuk Ajaran Iman Dikasteri Untuk Kebudayaan Dan Pendidikan*, 114.

fullness. This wisdom is not merely an accumulation of data or information, but a spiritual capacity to uncover the true meaning behind events and relationships. True wisdom demands a genuine encounter with reality, not merely surfing the internet or relying on unverified data sets.[30] Wisdom of the heart enables people to integrate all dimensions of their being in responding to the challenges of the modern age, including advances in AI.[31]

Wisdom involves the unique human capacity to understand meaning and purpose (*noûs*), which differs from the functional or practical intelligence (*mêtis*) possessed by machines. [32] This wisdom leads to ongoing self-integration. Self-integration involves a process in which the narcissistic ego gradually yields to the spiritual ego. This requires intellectual humility to recognize the limitations of the human mind in distinguishing essence from mere appearance.

In the modern era, people often experience a duality of presence: their physical bodies are in one place, but their mental engagement is in a virtual community. Self-integration means overcoming this division by building genuine interpersonal relationships and uniting spirit and matter. Self-integration rejects digital reductionism, in which aspects of life that cannot be measured are deemed irrelevant because they cannot be formally quantified. The ability to distinguish between good and evil is crucial in a digital age rife with disinformation. This involves critical reflection on the content that is consumed and shared. To maintain the ability to think and act democratically, education and personal life must provide space for solitude, silence, and contemplation. Without pauses, human actions will merely become blind reactions to digital stimuli. Robust self-integration is grounded in a personal relationship with God, who serves as a spiritual anchor amidst the relentless flow of digital information.[33]

Modern culture often worships the ego through digital narcissism, in which individuals seek external validation as the basis for their self-worth, rather than seeking an authentic identity. There is a risk that human dignity and social justice will be sacrificed in the name of technological efficiency. Wisdom of the heart must serve as a bulwark to ensure that technology continues to serve humanity, and not the other

[30] Antiqua Et Nova, 59.

[31] Antiqua Et Nova, 114.

[32] Kowalczyk, "Humans And Ai", 151.

[33] F. Budi Hardiman, "Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital," *Diskursus - Jurnal Filsafat Dan Teologi Stf Driyarkara* 17, No. 2 (2018): 182, Https://Doi.Org/10.36383/Diskursus.V17i2.252.

way around.[34] Overall, self-integration into the modern world is achieved when people are no longer victims of technology or their own egos, but rather become wise moral agents capable of using digital tools to advance the common good and spiritual growth.

Relevance to the Use of Technology

The relevance of technology in the modern era centers on the shift in technology's role from merely a tool to the infrastructure of profound human experience. Digital technology has now shaped human existence, which is no longer defined by human thought but by digital activities as we navigate the digital world. The use of technology must always be centered on human dignity. Technological progress must not be viewed as an autonomous entity that dominates, but rather as a form of human collaboration with God to perfect creation. Wisdom is required to ensure technology is used for the common good and not for the exploitation or marginalization of specific groups. Technology possesses highly rapid practical intelligence, but lacks the contemplative capacity to understand meaning and value. The use of technology must remain a moral agent that retains control over critical decisions. This is because machines lack intentionality, empathy, or a moral conscience. Technology that relies entirely on digital data without human involvement can trigger digital reductionism, where aspects of life that cannot be measured are deemed irrelevant.

The digital world has created a condition known as the digital state of nature, where unlimited freedom has given way to brutality, misinformation, and hatred.[35] Wisdom of the heart is essential for distinguishing accurate information from disinformation that can undermine social order. People need intellectual humility to recognize the limitations of the human mind, which is easily influenced by the repetition of information on the internet. Technology often creates a virtual presence, where the physical body is present but mental engagement resides in a virtual community. This risks creating social isolation and narcissism. Self-integration helps people use social media to build genuine solidarity and authentic communities, rather than merely seeking superficial external validation through likes or followers.

[34] Antiqua Et Nova, 69.

[35] Hardiman, "Manusia Dalam Prahara Revolusi Digital," 179.

Wisdom reminds us that the deepest interpersonal relationships still require a physical dimension that cannot be replaced by technology.

Amid the constant digital noise, modern life education must provide space for solitude and inactivity.[36] Without time to think and reflect, human actions will become nothing more than automatic reactions to algorithms, causing us to lose the ability to start anew in a creative way. Overall, the wise use of technology requires us not to become slaves to our own work, but rather to use these digital tools with a moral responsibility to advance humanity and justice in the public sphere.

Cultivating the Heart as a Path to Wisdom in the Digital Age

Guarding the Heart in the Book of Proverbs and Antiqua et Nova

The concept of guarding the heart serves as a philosophical and spiritual bridge connecting the ancient wisdom traditions of the Book of Proverbs with the contemporary moral reflections of the Catholic Church as articulated in the document *Antiqua et Nova*. In the digital age, this practice offers a path of wisdom for navigating the complexities of technology and embodies the essence of humanity. Proverbs 4:23 affirms, "Guard your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life." In biblical tradition, the heart is viewed as the control center of all human life, encompassing thoughts, will, and emotions. Through this proverb, one's inner state determines the quality of one's actions and words.[37] What is in the heart will be revealed through the tongue. The tongue of the wise brings healing, while an unguarded tongue can destroy relationships and bring disaster. Guarding the heart requires inner discipline to choose the path of the righteous, which is like the light of dawn, rather than the dark path of the wicked.[38]

The *Antiqua et Nova* document reintroduces the concept of wisdom of the heart as a response to advances in artificial intelligence (AI). Wisdom of the heart is a virtue that enables humans to integrate all dimensions of their being into decision-making. This integration encompasses spiritual, cognitive, physical, and relational aspects.[39]

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[36] Jenni Nilsson, "The Future Is Not Set. Democratic Education In The Age Of Homo Digitalis," *Studies In Philosophy And Education* 44, No. 6 (2025): 615, Https://Doi.Org/10.1007/S11217-025-10001-Y.

[37] Sia Kok Sin, "Pendekatan Topikal Dalam Menafsirkan Kitab Amsal," *Sola Gratia: Jurnal Teologi Biblika Dan Praktika* 6, No. 1 (2020): 16, Https://Doi.Org/10.47596/Solagratia.V6i1.66.

[38] Farel Yosua Sualang, *Pola Pendidikan Orangtua Dan Perkembangan Sosio Emosional Anak Berdasarkan Amsal 4:1-27*, N.D., 33–34.

[39] Antiqua Et Nova, 114.

The fundamental difference between humans and machines lies in the heart. AI can make technical decisions based on statistics. However, only humans are capable of making decisions from the heart, taking into account moral values and ethical consequences. The heart is understood as an inner space where humans transcend the material universe and encounter God to determine their destiny.[40]

The integration of these two concepts is crucial for modern humans who have transformed into digital beings. In an era where existence is defined by digital activity, tending to the heart helps humans retain their individual agency so they are not entirely governed by external algorithms. Once again, tending to the heart serves as a bulwark to ensure that technology remains a tool that serves human dignity, rather than the other way around, where humans are enslaved by efficiency and data.[41]

Wisdom of the heart is needed to critically distinguish between hoaxes and disinformation rife with verbal brutality. Nurturing the heart requires space for solitude and inactivity.[42] Without moments of reflection, human actions will become nothing more than automatic reactions to digital stimuli. Guarding one's heart in the digital age is not merely an act of self-isolation, but a practice of intellectual and spiritual integrity. It is the path to ensuring that, amid the flood of data, humans remain capable of loving, empathizing, and seeking a truth that transcends machine logic.

Practices for Maintaining a Healthy Mindset in the Digital Age

Guarding one's heart in the digital age is an act of spiritual and intellectual self-discipline aimed at maintaining integrity amid the tide of technology. Guarding one's heart is not merely a passive act, but rather the control center of one's life that determines the quality of one's actions and words in cyberspace.[43] According to Proverbs 4:23, the heart is the source of life. In the digital age, guarding the heart means exercising strict oversight over one's thoughts, motivations, and will to ensure they remain in harmony with divine wisdom. Ultimately, people do not merely react impulsively to algorithms. The practice of guarding the heart involves rejecting digital

[40] Antiqua Et Nova, 107.

[41] Antiqua Et Nova, 54.

[42] Nilsson, "The Future Is Not Set. Democratic Education In The Age Of Homo Digitalis," 606.

[43] Rolin Ferdilianto Sandelgus Taneo, "Manusia Sebagai Homo Digitalis: Suatu Wacana Teologi Publik Gereja Atas Keterlemparan Manusia Di Ruang Digital," *Sophia: Jurnal Teologi Dan Pendidikan Kristen* 5, No. 1 (2024): 60, Https://Doi.Org/10.34307/Sophia.V5i1.234.

reductionism.[44] This is where aspects of life that cannot be measured are considered irrelevant because they cannot be quantified by machines.

People need to develop the ability to distinguish between accurate information and hoaxes or disinformation that undermine social order. This practice requires users not to be passive consumers of information. Every piece of content consumed and shared must undergo critical reflection. Users must consider whether it builds up or, on the contrary, spreads hatred. What is in the heart is reflected through speech on social media. Guarding the heart means steering clear of a deceitful tongue and treacherous lips. [45] In today's world, being mindful means avoiding slander, cyberbullying, and hate speech. Users should treat others online just as they would like to be treated in person. This helps restore the human touch that is often lost in remote communication.

Amid the digital information storm, it is crucial to set aside time for solitude, silence, and contemplation. Getting into the habit of not always being connected or digitally available creates space for the heart to reconnect with itself. One can reflect and engage in honest inner dialogue without the distraction of external stimuli. Nurturing the heart also involves cultivating a personal relationship with God as the primary spiritual foundation. This relationship serves as a stable anchor so that individuals are not tossed about by digital trends or the search for external validation. Humans should not replace real interpersonal relationships with shallow virtual connections. Relationships involving physical encounters and genuine empathy remain fundamental human needs that cannot be replaced by technology. Thus, the practice of tending to the heart is a path of wisdom to ensure that humans remain autonomous moral agents in the face of technology. By tending to the heart, modern humans can use digital tools to advance collective well-being and spiritual growth without losing their human essence.

Digital Spirituality

The digital world is not merely a tool, but a cultural environment and anthropological space that shapes the way people think, communicate, and form relationships. Digital spirituality is understood as a systematic reflection on the transformative impact of the digital age on the life of faith and people's responses to

[44] Antiqua Et Nova, 112.

[45] Antiqua Et Nova, 114.

this new environment. At the heart of spirituality in the digital age is a genuine personal relationship with the living Christ.[46] The Church emphasizes that amid the constant flood of information and digital stimuli, a personal relationship with Christ serves as a spiritual anchor that provides stability and a deeper sense of meaning in life.

The digital world offers a new metaphor for understanding God's presence. The digital space, consisting of non-physical presences, provides a way to envision a spiritual presence that transcends the traditional boundaries of space and time.[47] The internet has made it easier to find spiritual meaning and resources that were previously hard to access, now enabling the growth of faith through various sources. Digital spirituality faces the risk of digital reductionism. The challenge lies in the pressure to maintain a perfect spiritual image in the virtual world, which can actually undermine the authenticity of one's spiritual identity. Digital noise can also disrupt the silence and tranquility necessary for contemplation and inner dialogue with God. The digital world also features massive virtual connections. These massive virtual connections are often not accompanied by emotional depth. Consequently, they can lead to social isolation and loneliness.[48]

For technology to serve the growth of faith, we must be able to distinguish accurate information from misinformation and harmful content, and assess how technology impacts our spiritual lives. Users must recognize that virtual interactions should not replace genuine in-person encounters. The deepest human connections remain those that unite spirit and matter.[49] Using digital spaces to build communities that authentically support and serve others, rather than merely seeking external validation such as likes, comments, and followers. Thus, digital spirituality is not about escaping into the virtual world, but rather about how humans can remain autonomous moral agents and stay connected to God amidst the reality of technology.

[46] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," *Berkat : Jurnal Pendidikan Agama Dan Katolik* 2, No. 2 (2025): 39, Https://Doi.Org/10.61132/Berkat.V2i2.856.

[47] Anthony Le Duc, "Towards A Cybertheology: Theology In The Digital Milieu," *Ssrn Electronic Journal*, Ahead Of Print, 2023, 9, Https://Doi.Org/10.2139/Ssrn.4337184.

[48] Adrian Yanuar P And Young People, "Nilai-Nilai Christus Vivit Bagi Kaum Muda Di Era Digital," 2025, 42.

[49] Kowalczyk, "Humans And Ai", 148.

The success of this spirituality depends on the awareness to use technology as a tool to perfect creation, not as a substitute for God.

CONCLUSION

The digital age presents significant opportunities for human development. Human progress in the digital age does not lie solely in technological advancement itself, but rather in humanity's ability to manage and guide the use of such technology wisely. Digital culture, characterized by speed, an abundance of information, and the dominance of algorithms, has the potential to weaken the depth of reflection, reduce interpersonal relationships, and blur human moral orientation. In this situation, the most fundamental crisis is a crisis of the heart as the center of human life.

The heart, as the center of human life, determines the direction of our thoughts, words, and actions. The Book of Proverbs provides a strong theological foundation by identifying the heart as the source of all actions, words, and life decisions. The call to guard the heart is a universal principle that transcends time, including in navigating the complexities of today's digital world. A guarded heart enables humans to live in wisdom, the ability to distinguish between good and evil and to act in accordance with God's will. Guarding the heart is not merely an individual spiritual practice but the foundation for a wise and responsible life, including in the use of technology. When the heart is not guarded, humans easily fall into impulsivity, disinformation, and a loss of moral compass. Conversely, a well-guarded heart enables people to act reflectively, critically, and with compassion amidst the complexities of the digital world.

Antiqua et Nova further emphasizes that, amidst technological progress, human beings remain responsible moral agents. Human beings must not lose their identity as moral beings endowed with a conscience. Technology, including artificial intelligence, lacks a conscience and cannot replace human wisdom. Therefore, wisdom of the heart is key to ensuring that technology remains within the framework of serving human dignity and the common good. Wisdom of the heart is the key to integrating technological progress with spiritual depth. Thus, humans are not reduced to mere users or even objects of digital systems.

Thus, tending to the heart in the digital age is not merely an individual spiritual practice, but an existential stance that demands the integration of intellectual, moral, and spiritual dimensions. This practice presupposes the existence of space for reflection, silence, and authentic relationships with God and others. Without these, humans risk becoming reactive, losing their way, and getting trapped in an uncontrollable digital current. The wisdom of the heart becomes the path that enables

modern humans not only to survive but also to grow holistically in the midst of the digital world. By tending to the heart, humans are able to use technology responsibly, build meaningful relationships, and remain rooted in the values of truth, goodness, and love. In the light of faith, this affirms that technological progress should not distance humans from God, but rather serve as a means to increasingly realize their calling in life as the image of God in the world.

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