

A few days ago, Pope Leo XIV's encyclical letter *Magnifica Humanitas on safeguarding the human person in the time of artificial intelligence* was published.

The implications of artificial intelligence, associated with the **digital revolution** and **robotics**, have already been identified as the great historical challenge facing contemporary societies. These implications extend across social, economic, cultural, ethical, and even anthropological spheres (since the very definition of what it means to be human is at stake).

Aware of this significance, the Pope examines these implications in the light of the foundations and principles of the Church's Social Teaching (CST), affirming that it is rooted in revealed truths that are deepened and renewed in response to the challenges of different eras and through dialogue with diverse cultures and fields of knowledge (MH, 38). For Pope Leo XIV, it is evident that engaging with reality does not diminish the power of the Gospel; "on the contrary, it enables us to identify more clearly what truly promotes the life of persons and communities" (MH, 23).

**Two biblical images** run throughout the text, inviting reflection on the attitude we should adopt in discerning how to live responsibly in the age of artificial intelligence: **the construction of the Tower of Babel** (cf. Gen 11:1–9), where, in the name of the ambition of a few, self-sufficiency is pursued at the expense of human dignity; and **the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem** (cf. Neh 2–6), where Nehemiah summons and involves everyone in the common task of rebuilding the city and its walls. Ultimately, the choice is not between saying "yes" or "no" to technology, but between building Babel or rebuilding Jerusalem (MH, 7–10).

Without attempting to exhaust the rich content of this encyclical—which calls for investment in education, care for human relationships, and the promotion of a civilization of love founded on justice and peace—the Portuguese National Commission for Justice and Peace highlights the following ideas, organized into three sections:

### 1. New technological developments in the light of Catholic Social Teaching

The principles of Catholic Social Doctrine—human dignity, the value of work, the universal destination of goods, solidarity, subsidiarity, care for creation, peace, and fraternity—remain essential for guiding technological development toward a more humane and just society (MH, 91).

Leo XIV warns of the risks associated with the digital attention economy, which can exploit human vulnerabilities and limit personal freedom (MH, 170). He also denounces the concentration of platforms, data, and technological capacity in the hands of a few, which widens inequalities and contradicts the universal destination of goods (MH, 67). For this reason, he calls for technologies oriented toward the common good and governed with transparency and participation (MH, 95).

Social justice requires ensuring opportunities for every person, protecting the most vulnerable, and combating disinformation (MH, 80). Work continues to be a fundamental sphere of personal and communal fulfillment, and therefore automation must not generate exclusion or human impoverishment (MH, 152). Furthermore, AI depends on natural resources, infrastructures, and the often precarious labor of millions of people (MH, 173).

The encyclical emphasizes the need to evaluate AI through the lens of integral ecology, promoting sustainable technologies that respect creation, foster justice, and take future generations into account (MH, 101 and 84).

### 2. Human Nature and Its Capacity Not to Conform to a Closed Destiny

Artificial intelligence must not be confused with human intelligence. Although it surpasses human beings in computational capacity, it lacks experience, moral conscience, affectivity, and responsibility (MH, 99).

Easy access to answers and assistance may foster excessive dependence, weakening critical judgment and creativity (MH, 100). Likewise, the simulation of human relationships can create false perceptions of closeness and authenticity (MH, 100).

There is a risk of entrusting decisions regarding employment, credit, or public services to systems incapable of compassion,

thereby creating new forms of exclusion (MH, 102). Moreover, digital platforms may facilitate disinformation and blur the boundary between truth and falsehood (MH, 132).

In the military sphere, AI can make decisions concerning life and death faster and more impersonal. The encyclical reaffirms that the theory of the "just war" has been surpassed and rejects the delegation of lethal decisions to artificial systems (MH, 182–183, 192, and 198).

The Christian perspective reminds us that history remains open to hope and conversion (MH, 210). Human limitations are not merely defects to be corrected but opportunities for personal growth (MH, 118).

In response to the culture of distraction and polarization, an educational alliance among families, institutions, and political authorities is required (MH, 142). Every person can contribute to a civilization of love founded on peace, justice, dialogue, and multilateralism (MH, 212 and 214–227).

This change of epoch can be lived in the light of the Gospel (MH, 229). Against ideologies of technological domination, Christ reveals that true salvation is born from a love that welcomes and transforms human fragility (MH, 232).

### 3. Four concrete challenges

The encyclical concludes with four concrete challenges:

1. To remain faithful to the truth, never losing sight of the magnificent humanity that dwells within every person (MH, 237).
2. To invest in education, beginning with ourselves, so as to live in the digital world in a humane and evangelical way (MH, 238).
3. To care for relationships, remembering that human beings still need hands capable of tenderness, attentive minds, and kind words (MH, 239).
4. To love justice and peace, so that every technical choice may also become an opportunity for spiritual discernment and for building a more humane world (MH, 240).

# ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND NEW WEAPONS: AN URGENT CHALLENGE

In Pope Leo XIV's encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas*, "On Safeguarding the Human Person in the Time of Artificial Intelligence," we are presented with an explicit reflection and an urgent warning about the implications of the increasingly widespread use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in the development of new "autonomous" weapons and, more generally, throughout military technology, particularly in relation to new nuclear weapons, which constitute an existential threat to all humanity. The essential message is that AI is becoming a driving force behind a new arms race with unpredictable consequences, in which the human factor—and therefore control over ethical responsibility in decision-making—is increasingly minimized, while the likelihood of armed conflicts escalating and violent responses becoming "normalized" is heightened.

This trend must be rapidly contained through international agreements capable of halting this "technological arms race" and ensuring that "effective, conscious and responsible human control" prevails in all areas (MH, 200). For, as the encyclical states: "It is not permissible to entrust lethal or, in any case, irreversible decisions to artificial systems. No algorithm can make war morally acceptable. AI does not free conflict from its intrinsic inhumanity; it can only make it faster and more impersonal, lowering the threshold for the use of violence and transforming defense into operational anticipation, with victims reduced to data. In this way, it accustoms us to the idea that violence is inevitable and merely needs to be optimized" (MH, 198). For this reason, "the chain of responsibility must remain identifiable and verifiable: those who plan, train, authorize and deploy must be accountable for their decisions" (MH, 199).

The encyclical also insists (MH, 197) that "the growing ease with which weapons systems possessing opera-

tional autonomy can be employed makes war more 'feasible' and less subject to human control, contradicting the principle that recourse to armed force should be a last resort in cases of legitimate defense." Likewise, it warns that "AI tends to shorten decision-making times; yet in war, irreversible decisions cannot be governed primarily by the criteria of speed and efficiency" (MH, 199).



**«AI does not remove the intrinsic inhumanity of conflict; indeed it can only bring about conflict more quickly and render it more impersonal [...] transforming defense into threat prediction and thus reducing victims to data» (MH, 198)**

These highly urgent considerations become particularly evident when examining recent developments in nuclear weapons technology and the role that AI is beginning to play in this field. **A recent report** by the Alliance for Nuclear Disarmament and the Delàs Center, in which Justice and Peace participated, analyzes this issue in detail and issues an urgent call to action, noting that the United States, Russia, and China are increasingly incorporating AI into their military capabilities, including in the nuclear domain.

Particularly alarming is the possibili-

ty of AI intervening in decision-making regarding the use of nuclear weapons during a crisis. The new hypersonic missiles that are already being incorporated into nuclear arsenals will drastically reduce response times in the event of a potential nuclear attack, thereby increasing the temptation to rely on AI systems for decision-making.

However, it is well known that advanced AI systems, once deployed, allow almost no possibility of intervention by their programmers, making verification during a crisis extremely difficult. Furthermore, such systems can experience "hallucinations," generating false information or flawed interpretations. As a result, AI-based systems may accelerate conflicts by encouraging preventive nuclear responses or recommending more aggressive courses of action. Moreover, the incorporation of AI systems makes military computer networks more open and interconnected, thereby increasing their vulnerability to cyberattacks, which are becoming ever more frequent and dangerous. Finally, the AI revolution has the potential to accelerate the chaos and dysfunction already present in the global information ecosystem. The massive spread of false information could trigger unjustified or disproportionate military responses.

It is worth recalling that, in December 2025, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a Resolution calling on States, "pending the total elimination of nuclear weapons, to maintain human control and oversight over nuclear weapons command, control and communications systems including those incorporating artificial intelligence technologies." We must work to ensure that such multilateral initiatives become a reality and, above all, that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons finally removes this irrational threat to all humanity.

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## Justice and Peace Europe: AI, Nuclear Disarmament and the Common Good

The national commissions that make up the European network of Justice and Peace are studying Pope Leo XIV's first encyclical, *Magnifica Humanitas*, and analysing the implications of this document for their ongoing activities. The digital revolution, driven by artificial intelligence, calls for a **renewed anthropology** capable of humanising labour, cultural, social and economic relations. The papal text recalls the fundamental principles of Catholic Social Teaching and warns against the **ethical risks** arising from the use of **artificial intelligence** in armed conflicts and in the development of autonomous weapons systems.

These reflections will play a major role in the **International Workshop and General Assembly of Justice and Peace Europe**, which will take place in **Glasgow from 18 to 21 September 2026**. The central theme of the meeting will be **nuclear disarmament**, and it will include five thematic workshops focusing on alternatives

to deterrence and security policies, the human and environmental consequences of a nuclear explosion, the economic costs of investment in nuclear weapons, the history of nuclear disarmament campaigns, and educational tools and dialogue skills for peacebuilding.

At the same time, a European working group is preparing the **next Justice and Peace Europe Concerted Action for 2027**. The document, to which Emilio José Gómez and Ton Broekman from Spain are contributing, proposes a reflection on the importance of **Europe's spiritual heritage** as a foundation for commitment to the common good and as a response to the temptations of populism through a rediscovery of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. The draft will be discussed in Glasgow and subsequently approved at the meeting of General Secretaries scheduled to take place in Athens in February 2027.

Meanwhile, throughout 2026, the national commissions continue

to implement the Joint Action dedicated to **"Europe and Organised Crime"**. The initiative highlights the scale of this phenomenon and its serious social, economic, psychological and environmental consequences. Justice and Peace considers it an ethical imperative to strengthen cooperation among the Church, public institutions and civil society in order to combat criminal structures and promote a culture of legality and justice.

The European network is also working on a **new strategic plan** for the next **four years**. Its priorities include strengthening international **cooperation** among the various commissions, promoting Catholic Social Teaching through more effective **communication**, and consolidating **relations** with Church bodies, European institutions, the academic world, and Justice and Peace networks in other continents.

**TON BROEKMAN**

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## Francis with the Popular Movements of the World

Professor of Sociology and International Relations **Rafael Díaz-Salazar** published in May 2026 the book *FRANCIS AND THE POPULAR MOVEMENTS OF THE WORLD*, with the intention of keeping Pope Francis' message alive, especially regarding the most vulnerable and excluded people in our world, where an economy that kills continues to prevail. In Díaz-Salazar's own words, the objective of the book is *"to put Francis' social thought into practice."*

The book is divided into three parts. The first brings together the **Pope's messages**, accompanied by excellent summaries of the various meetings held between 2014 and 2024. During those ten years, Francis never ceased to advocate what he called the sacred rights of the poorest and most marginalized: Land, Housing, and Work. He also consistently denounced the notion that any human being could be considered disposable.

The second part is devoted to the **Proposals of the Popular Movements**, in which the different movements express their determination to become agents of change in the pursuit of a more just world through the culture of encounter.

The third part, perhaps somewhat lengthy, consists of a series of **interviews** with both non-believers, such as Pepe Mujica and Javier Cercas, and believers, such as Pepa Torres and Charo Castelló. Through these conversations, the interviewees reflect on Pope Francis, his legacy, and his work with the Popular Movements. Indeed, the book opens with a poem by Cercas about the Pope: "This is a Pope who at every step recalls Jesus when he said / That he did not come here for the righteous but for sinners." (El loco de Dios en el fin del mundo, Barcelona, Random House, 2025).

The General Commission for Justice and Peace of Spain has attended the various meetings between the Pope and the Popular Movements of the World since their inception. For this reason, we accompanied Díaz-Salazar at the presentation of the book, together with Abraham Canales (Director of Noticias Obreras), Pepa Torres (theology professor and activist), and José Luis Palacios, who served as moderator and is Editor-in-Chief of Noticias Obreras.

During the event, participants highlighted both the importance of Francis' personal involvement in these meetings and the significance of his messages, which stem from the vision of a Church that goes forth to the peripheries and frontiers to accompany the poorest and most excluded. Representatives of movements linked to Francis' three Ts—Tierra (Land), Techo (Housing), and Trabajo (Work)—also took part in the gathering, including Diego Sanz, Pedro Grande, and Alexandra Vásquez. The event took place on 12 May at the Ateneo La Maliciosa in Madrid.

Summarizing the purpose of the book, the editor—as he prefers to describe himself—remarked: *"This book is a tool for action, for learning about Francis' speeches and the Popular Movements, and for seeing how many deaf ears still exist within the Church. Francis called on local Churches to support popular social movements."*

For my part, I would say that this book is an excellent and highly useful resource for understanding and putting Pope Francis' thought into practice. It should also be noted that Díaz-Salazar has succeeded in making it accessible and **easy to read**, much like the speeches and encyclicals of Pope Francis himself.

**PILAR DE LA ROSA**

*Vice-president, GC Justice and Peace*

Pope Leo's visit to Spain has exceeded all expectations. Not only did he fulfil one of Pope Francis' wishes by visiting the Canary Islands **to meet with migrants**, but from the very beginning of his journey he chose to encounter those who have no voice: migrants, people living in poverty, prisoners, and those carrying lives marked by deep suffering. We must also thank them for sharing their stories publicly. He embraced others and allowed himself to be embraced. In that embrace lies the Magnifica Humanitas that stands as a powerful call to hope in a dramatic age besieged by wars and conflicts. He has also delivered clear messages against paternalistic charity and the disembodied spirituality that often accompanies it, leading us to evade genuine commitment to our neighbours. Leo XIV is gradually revealing who he is: a missionary and a priest who renounced a brilliant career in order to dedicate himself to and share his life with forgotten people. Politicians, journalists, and ordinary citizens, believers and non-believers alike, have recognised in him a powerful moral voice that places human dignity at the centre. For those of us who thirst for justice, he has left us with a genuine roadmap for the years ahead.

## We were born for Encounter

On the celebration of **1 May**, International Workers' Day, and the commemoration of Saint Joseph the Worker, ITD, as it does every year, issued a **manifesto** denouncing the consequences of labour **precariousness**, ranging from workplace accidents—nearly 700 people die each year in Spain as a result of occupational accidents—to the growing incidence of mental health problems.

*"Unemployment, job insecurity, inadequate wages, abusive temporary employment, workplace accidents, and the deterioration of mental health continue to shape the lives of thousands of workers."* As Pope Leo XIV has stated, **workplaces** should be **spaces of life**, yet *"they too often become places of death and desolation."* For this reason, the platform renews *"our commitment to the right to decent work that guarantees fair, safe, and stable working conditions."* It is also worth highlighting that, in most dioceses where a Church for Decent Work platform exists, Eucharistic celebrations were held during which the manifesto was read. Public events also took place, either specifically organised by the platforms or through participation in local demonstrations held in different cities. Likewise, although their number is not yet significant, an increasing number of **bishops** are accompanying these platforms and **writing pastoral letters** on the occasion of 1 May in support of Decent Work.

Church for Decent Work (ITD)  
www.iglesiaporetrabajodecente.org

As The three-year campaign "Peace Weaves" (2026–2029) invites us to build a culture of peace capable of responding to the great challenges of our time. Faced with a reality marked by conflict, poverty, environmental degradation, and the weakening of spaces for dialogue, the campaign promotes an integral vision of peace, understood as the fruit of justice, human dignity, care for creation, and nonviolence. Inspired by the Social Teaching of the Church and by Pope Leo XIV's calls to become artisans of peace, the initiative will be developed around three inseparable pillars: **peace weaves social justice**, promoting more inclusive societies that respect human rights; **peace weaves integral ecology**, defending our Common Home and the conditions that make life possible; and **peace weaves non-violence**, fostering dialogue, reconciliation, and unarmed and disarming action. The campaign reminds us that peace is neither a distant utopia nor merely the absence of war. Rather, it is a daily task that begins with each person and every community. Building bridges, listening to victims, strengthening the social fabric, and adopting more just and sustainable lifestyles are among the concrete commitments it proposes in order to advance towards a lasting peace.

Connect yourself for Justice  
www.enlazateporlajusticia.org

## First Green Gathering

As part of **Laudato Si' Week**, the first Green Gathering was held in Seville, organised by the Diocesan Group for Integral Ecology – Justice and Peace. The event consisted of a walk through María Luisa Park which, inspired by this year's theme, "From Hope to Action," aimed to explore a selection of trees from a holistic perspective, considering their characteristics, their relationship with other living beings, and the role they play in the ecosystem, while also sharing reflections and readings. The walk began beside a casuarina tree with the reading of *"Mycelium, the Footprint of God We Do Not See,"* a text written for the occasion by Alfonsa Acosta, a member of the group. The journey continued with the recitation of *Rhyme XVII* by Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, *Woman Greeting the Trees* by Dorothea Tanning, *To a Withered Elm* by Antonio Machado, and *The Cypress* by Juana de Ibarbouro. It included beneath a ginkgo biloba tree with *Copla Made in a State of Ecstatic Contemplation* by Saint John of the Cross. It was a deeply enriching experience. Participants expressed how meaningful they had found the activity and how it had helped them contemplate nature through "a different lens."

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