

Reflections of the Encyclical in the Foundational Roots of Justice and Peace.

At Justice and Peace, we have welcomed with great joy the encyclical *Magnifica Humanitas* (MH), which Pope Leo XIV has offered as a gift to humanity. In it, we find an updated expression of the very reason for our mission, not only because it strengthens our commitment to remain engaged in the task of transforming a world that “stands at a historic crossroads, one that concerns not merely technical progress but the very meaning of development and human co-existence,” but also because of the values, principles, and criteria that should guide that transformation. These are presented in a particularly systematic and contemporary manner in Chapter 2 of the encyclical, dedicated to Catholic Social Teaching (CST). Yet its “principles for reflection, criteria for discernment and judgment, and practical guidelines for action” (MH 3, 14, 183, etc.) appear throughout the entire text, in dialogue with and in response to new social realities that require open eyes, sensitive hearts, and ready hands. These realities challenge us to discern whether technologies (culture, relationships, politics, etc.), and even the very action and identity of the Church, truly serve humanity as part of the commitment to a civilization of love that seeks to build the city (polis) of co-existence and peace, or whether they instead subordinate humanity. They also provide guidance for our decisions. Once again, we are led to ask ourselves whether we choose to build a Babel-like world or the Jerusalem of Nehemiah (MH 184, 185).

From the perspective of Catholic Social Teaching, *Magnifica Humanitas* recalls the orientation of the **Second Vatican Council**, according to which it is the task of the People of God “to listen attentively, discern and interpret the various languages of our time.” Social Teaching is thus presented as a living heritage, one that grows through time without betraying the essential core of the faith.

In other words, the encyclical presents a CST that is alive, dynamic, and rooted in the concrete realities of history. It poses a twofold challenge—focusing on the res novae affecting the people, communities, and global realities with and for which we work: first, “not to remain distant from the concrete sufferings of the men and women of our time,” as expressed in (GS, 1); to “adapt the teaching of the Gospel to the servi-

ce of the dignity of every person and the good of peoples” (MH, 21-22).

This heritage must be cultivated and carefully safeguarded so that it may be invested in today’s global context and its many **challenges**: responding to new forms of power and control, fostering a culture of peace, promoting a CST in dialogue with the contemporary world, encouraging equitable and sustainable development, caring for our common home through sustainable ecology, and upholding respect for human dignity as the foundation, criterion, and principle of our being, presence, and action.

We are faced with an encyclical that encourages us to read, discern, and commit ourselves to the new signs of our times, collaborating in the construction of another possible world and responding to new challenges as we advance toward a Church in dialogue with humanity. Such a Church is built upon respect for the dignity of “every person and all persons,” the pursuit of the common good, fraternity, and peace as the fruit of justice.

If *Magnifica Humanitas* asks, “Where are we going? Toward what goal do we wish to orient ourselves? What direction should we choose as a human community and as a people?” (MH, 6), and affirms that “magnificent humanity today faces a decisive choice: to raise a new Tower of Babel or to build the city where God and humanity dwell together” (MH, 1)—a symbolic alternative that introduces from the outset **the contrast between a construction based on power and self-sufficiency and a path of shared responsibility and communion**—then we may affirm that this is not so much an encyclical about Artificial Intelligence (AI) as it is about **safeguarding the human person during an epochal transformation**. Just as, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Church opened its eyes to the challenges of the Industrial Revolution and defended the rights and dignity of the working class against exploitation, so today we are called to be vigilant in defending dignity, freedom, and privacy in the face of the growing influence of AI. Such technology requires profound discernment lest it undermine the common good, solidarity, and social justice. These are challenges arising in two different historical moments, yet just as the choice of the name Leo XIV by the present Pope evokes continuity with that earlier response, so too must it inspire us not to “fear getting our hands dirty in the work of our

own time” (MH, 16).

As early as 2024, we developed our own framework built around five cross-cutting pillars. Alongside the traditional themes of Peace, Catholic Social Teaching, Human Rights, and Ecology, we introduced a new focus on Artificial Intelligence. We began to examine this field in search of responses to emerging forms of power and control, while preserving the promotion of a culture of peace, a CST in dialogue with the contemporary world, equitable and sustainable development, care for our common home through sustainable ecology, and respect for human dignity as the foundation of all our work.

The encyclical therefore calls us to walk along five paths of shared responsibility (MH 212–220): 1. “Disarm words”, 2. “Build peace through justice”, 3. “Adopt the perspective of victims” (recognizing wounds), 4. “Cultivate healthy realism” (without renouncing the possibility of changing the world); and 5. “Revive dialogue” as an alternative to open conflict.

As *Populorum Progressio* once did, the document outlines the coordinates of an integral and solidarity-based development of every human person and of humanity as a whole. It highlights the urgency of a solidarity-driven action that understands development as “**the transition from less human conditions of life to more human conditions of life**,” responding to the demands of justice on a global scale, capable of guaranteeing planetary peace and making possible the realization of a fully humanistic vision.

This is not merely a dream; it is also a commitment. We can contribute decisively to initiatives that build a more just world, and we can invite others to collaborate in promoting integral human development, entering into dialogue with all the men and women of our time, and identifying, together with them, new paths toward the common good and the promotion of a dignified life for all persons and peoples (cf. MH 2). At every level, all people can contribute to the foundation of peace, which is justice (MH 215). “In this work we are called to assume an active role, without taking refuge in spiritualisms or in our small worlds: we must be faithful to the truth... and love justice and peace” (MH 236).

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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 possibi-

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 concluded 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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PLATFORM FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS