

OLQP MISSION STATEMENT

Our Lady Queen of Peace Catholic Church is dedicated to witnessing the teachings of Jesus Christ, especially the Gospel of Saint Matthew, Chapter 25:31-46. Our mission is to nurture the spirit and to encourage the potential of those we serve through liturgical celebration, educational endeavors and social ministries. The parish will continue to identify with its origin as a Black parish. As a multi-ethnic congregation we will seek to promote racial harmony and social justice. While our primary focus is within the immediate community, we will also work to provide for the well-being of the downtrodden everywhere. In this we strive for our parish community to be a caring, sharing, and loving family.

Welcome to OLQP Catholic Church!
¡Bienvenidos a OLQP Iglesia Católica!

Contact / Contacto:

2700 19th St S, Arlington VA 22204
703-979-5580, office@olqpva.org

Office Hours

Horas de oficina

Monday-Friday — 8:30am to 4:30pm
Lunes a viernes — 8:30am a 4:30pm

Website / sitioweb:

www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org

Live Stream Mass Schedule:

Horario de Misas de transmisión en directo:

December 30-31 — 5:30pm and 1pm Spanish
30-31 diciembre 5:30pm y 1pm en español

Misases / Misas:

Weekdays / Días laborables:

Mon-Fri 12pm / lunes a viernes 12pm

Weekend Mass Schedule /

Horario de misas de fin de semana:

Saturday Vigil — 5:30pm

Misa de vigilia sábados - 5:30 pm

Sundays — 8:00am, 9:30am, 11:15am,
1:00pm (Spanish) & 6:00pm (Young Adult)

Domingos — 8:00 am, 9:30 am, 11:15 am,
1:00 pm (español) y 6:00 pm (Misa de
jóvenes adultos)

DECLARACIÓN DE MISIÓN DE OLQP

La parroquia de la iglesia católica Nuestra Señora Reina de la Paz se dedica a dar testimonio de las enseñanzas de Jesucristo, especialmente el Evangelio de San Mateo, Capítulo 25:21-46. Nuestra misión es nutrir el espíritu y alentar el potencial de aquellos a quienes servimos a través de la celebración litúrgica, labores educativas y ministerios sociales. La parroquia continuará identificándose con su origen como una comunidad afro-americana, pero reflejando una congregación multi-étnica y continuará promoviendo la armonía racial y la justicia social. Si bien es cierto que nuestro enfoque principal es la vecindad comunitaria, continuaremos trabajando para proveer por el bienestar de los más necesitados en general. Es así como nos esforzamos para hacer de nuestra comunidad parroquial una familia que comparte y se preocupa por sus miembros.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE CHURCH

December 31, 2023

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY, JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Monday, January 1:
11:00am Bilingual

The Epiphany of the Lord Special Sunday Mass schedule

Saturday, January 6:
5:30pm Vigil Mass
Sunday, January 7:
8:00am, 9:30am, 12noon (bilingual
& livestreamed)) & 6:00pm

Prayer Service honoring
Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Monday, January 15, 11:00am

Solemnidad de María, Madre de Dios

Lunes, 1 de enero:
11:00am, bilingüe

La Epifanía del Señor horario especial de Misa dominical

Sábado, 6 de enero:
5:30pm (Misa de vigilia)
Domingo, 7 de enero:
8:00am, 9:30am, 12 del mediodía
(bilingüe) y 6:00pm

Servicio de oración para honrar
al Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Lunes, 15 de enero, 11:00am

The child
grew and
became
strong,
filled with
wisdom;
and the favor
of God was
upon him.

Luke 2:40



El niño iba
creciendo y
fortaleciéndose,
se llenaba
de sabiduría
y la gracia
de Dios
estaba con él.

Lucas 2,40



NUESTRA SEÑORA REINA DE LA PAZ
31 de diciembre de 2023

Fiesta de la Sagrada Familia de
Jesús, María y José

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION / PREPARACIÓN SACRAMENTAL

Baptism / Bautizo:

Please email Baptism Coordinator Mary Ann Suhocki,
baptism@olqpva.org.
Por favor mande un correo electrónico a la coordinadora de los
bautizos, Mary Ann Suhocki, baptism@olqpva.org.

Marriage Preparation/ Preparación para el matrimonio:

Please contact the parish office at least six months before your
wedding date to complete requirements.
Por favor llame a la oficina de la parroquia seis meses antes
de su matrimonio para completar todos los requisitos.

Reconciliation / Reconciliación—Confesión:

Fr. Ray Hall Library
Biblioteca Fr. Ray Hall
Saturdays, 4:45-5:15 pm and by appointment.
Los sábados: 4:45-5:15 pm, y por cita previa.

SUNDAY COLLECTIONS / COLECTAS DEL DOMINGO

Sunday Collection / Colecta del pasado domingo: \$6,650
Christmas Collection: \$9,255
Faith Direct (December Average /
promedio del mes de Noviembre): \$13,496

WORD & EUCHARIST MISSALETTE/

MISAL PALABRA Y EUCARISTÍA

Today's readings can be found on page 446
Las lecturas de hoy se encuentran en la página 447

BULLETIN DEADLINE / PLAZO PARA EL BOLETÍN

Wednesdays 9am — office@olqpva.org

OUR SICK AND HOMEBOUND STRENGTHEN US / NUESTROS

ENFERMOS Y CONFINADOS NOS FORTALECEN

PLEASE PRAY FOR / POR FAVOR OREMOS POR: Suri Barahona, Grace Bialecki, Cindy Bianga, Francis Bilgera, Joseph Leopold Bissonnette, Precious Bowens, April Brassard, Dave Brassard, Evie Brown, Lynne Burgh, Brody Carroll, Louise Chambers, Carmen Rosa Claire, Chris Comer, Jeff Cory, Mary DaLuca, Cheryl Darby, Jim Davis, John Demajo, Adrienne DiCerbo, Ernest Donatto, Patricia "Pat" Dowd, Calista Downey, Tim Felker, Irene Fitzpatrick, Elizabeth (Bunny) Foster, Yvette Francois, Susan Fratus, Anne Fullerton, Iva Futrell, Karen Gammache, Trishann Ganley, Francine Gemmill, Jean Giambalvo, Fred Gladbach, Nancy Gormley, Yolanda Gregorio, Melanie Guitreaux, Joe Harrington, Harris Family, Sally Harris, Linda Hawkins, Clare Hayden, Dee Hickey, Patrick Hynes, Lillian Jay, Pat Johnson, Sharon Jourdan, William Kahl, Ruth Klarman, Sally Krahn, Carmen Andrea Lara, Patrick Lawrey, John Lawyer, Kathleen Love, Lidia Montero Lopez, Olga MacKenzie, Wil McBride, Stefan McGuigan, Martha Gladys Medina, Maria Magdalena Medrano de Ventura, Eileen Melia, Frances Mierzwa, Arthur Miller, Mary Miller, Yvonne Mockler, Carmen Montijo, Dorothy Moran, Rosemary Morrissey, Luis R. Muñoz, Chelsea Murray, Dorothy Myrtle, Mario Amel Najarro, Julie O'Brien, Peggy O'Brien, Patrick Ogden, Carol Pacello, Roy Paco, Neil Parent, Catherine Parr, Mary Pasquarella, Mark Pazich, Minnie Pazich, Paul Ramirez, Santos Ramirez, Jeanna Reynolds, Jacob and Jaxson Rivera, Maritza Roldan, Marco Cristiaan Rufolo-Roger, Josefina Salgado, Carolyn Santos, Jane Shepard, Mary Shookhoff, Jeffrey Smith, Mary E. Smith, Lora Smolenski, Eva Souza, Grace Starbird, Nina Stewart, Michael Arthur Sweat, Carmelita and Roy Tucker, Nancy Urquiza, Stephen Utley, Alma Reyes Valentin, Carina Vaquez, Robin Vogel, Robert & Maureen Wallace, Bob Wilson, Kate Witkowski, Lauren Wolfe, Mary Woods, Malcolm Young, Claudia Zapata, Kate Zopp.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

FIESTA DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3 (17B); Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:22, 39-40
Génesis 15,1-6, 21,1-3 (17B); Colosenses 3,12-17; Lucas 2,22, 39-40

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

LA EPIFANÍA DEL SEÑOR

Isaiah 60:1-6 (20B); Ephesians 3:2-3, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12
Isaías 60,1-6 (20B); Efesios 3,2-3, 5-6; Mateo 2,1-12

MASS INTENTIONS, DECEMBER 30 – JANUARY 5

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

INTENCIONES DE LAS MISAS, 30 DICIEMBRE – 5 ENERO

FIESTA DE LA SAGRADA FAMILIA

Saturday December 30th

5:30 pm Alice Curtin & family (L) by Ramallo family

Sunday December 31st

8:00 am In thanksgiving (L) by Algerte & Venise Darisme

9:30 am Jean Ward Phelps (D) by the Lawler family

11:15 am Jean Ray (D) by Ray family

1:00 pm Luis Cabrera (D) by familia Cabrera

6:00 pm Elmer Torres (D) by his family, his wife and children

Monday January 1st

11:00 am the parish

Tuesday January 2nd

12:00 pm the parish

Wednesday January 3rd

12:00 pm Carmelita Cajulis Juaneza (D) by the Cajulis family

Thursday January 4th

12:00 pm Indira Murillo (D) by Milagros Lovo & family

Friday January 5th

12:00 pm Algerte Saint-Preux (L) by Venise Darisme

CONGRATULATIONS! / ¡FELICIDADES!

Abigail Baniqued and Keon Hee 'Joseph' Cho

Married December 30 / Casados el 30 de diciembre

Funeral Arrangements:

Dr. Eugene "Gene" DeFriest Bétit

Died in the Lord, December 15, 2023

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, January 20, 2024 at 11:00am at Bethel Lutheran Church, 2077 N. Frederick Pike, Winchester. The family will inter his ashes in the spring at Cool Spring Natural Cemetery at the Trappist Abbey in Berryville, VA.

Please remember the Betit family in your prayers during this difficult time — his wife Sheila, daughter Christie and granddaughter, Lisa.

Gene's obituary can be found [here](https://www.endersandshirley.com/obituary/eugene-betit):

<https://www.endersandshirley.com/obituary/eugene-betit>

JUST A THOUGHT...OR TWO...

As we gaze upon the manger on this **Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph** it is easy to be filled with a warm and fuzzy feeling, and that is not a bad thing, — it is wonderful; however, let us not forget how difficult the trip, how cold the night and how frightening the circumstances...giving birth in an animal barn!

Let us reflect on the reality that God's very Self became human and was born into a family, not in a palace grand, but in a lowly manger. When I reflect on the Holy Family my mind turns to the very real and very human struggles they faced...not only having to give birth in a stable but the fact that they had to flee to Egypt to avoid Herod's execution of the children of Bethlehem and the surrounding region.

It is almost unconceivable to think that God was made a refugee and had to flee to a foreign country from where he was born to avoid becoming a victim of genocide.

And that ultimately Mary would have her heart pierced when her Son would be executed by the state. And so Mary too understands the suffering of mothers and fathers who have lost children to war, violence and sickness. So as we celebrate the Holy Family let us know that our God understands the struggles of human families and that "God is with us"...Emmanuel...in the midst of our struggles.

Let us know that God journeys with the migrants, refugees and immigrants of this world, just as we are called to do.

So as we draw near to them, we draw near to God! As we advocate and work to help our immigrant and refugee sisters and brothers, we do so with Christ who knows first hand their struggles and who works with us and shares with them on their journey.

What struggling families might I be able to reach out to in order to ease their struggles? How might I be Christ to those who struggle in life?

Somewhere in the story of the Holy Family there is a message for us today about those who are made refugees; those who are driven from their homeland by war and violence and poverty, seeking safety and a better life for themselves and their children.

In a country that more and more shuns refugees and immigrants I wonder if we would have received Joseph, Mary and Jesus? Over and over again in the Gospels Jesus warns us that our treatment of others is in fact our

treatment of God! Jesus told his followers that when we welcome the stranger we welcome him! And likewise, when we turn away the stranger we turn away Christ!

We, as a country, so often invoke the name of God...but do we as a nation really understand the implications of proclaiming that "we are one nation under God"? Do our elected members of the House and Senate really understand that? Do they show it by the laws they enact or those they block from becoming law?

How many millions of people fall though the economic safety net of this country and are forced to exist, not live, in unbelievable conditions because of the callousness and political aspirations of our elected officials in Congress and those who elect them?

As we celebrate the feast of the Holy family and fix our eyes upon the peaceful manger scene, let us never forget that this family we gaze upon was once driven from their homeland and made refugees in an alien land.

As we, as a country, fight for economic and social reform and comprehensive immigration reform I believe that the reality of the Holy Family's struggles may be fertile ground for further reflection.

Estimates say that during the 20th Century well over 50,000,000 people died because of acts of genocide at the hands of political leaders, rival tribes and oppressive nation-states.

And wars and genocide continue...think of Ukraine, Sudan, Palestine and Israel, Ethiopia and what looms on the horizon for the war-wearied people of those countries. Still today people seek refuge from genocide as well as poverty, famine, and corrupt governments.

Traditionally we hear the Gospel telling the story of Mary, Joseph, and Jesus fleeing Herod's execution of all of Bethlehem's young children. As we ponder their flight into Egypt, fleeing the certain death of their infant child, I cannot help but marvel at the concept that our very God, having become human, was being hunted down to be killed — even as a helpless infant!

Somewhere in this story there is a message for us today about those who are made refugee. Those who are driven from their homeland by war and violence and poverty, seeking safety and a better life for themselves and their children.

There is a message that the infant Jesus is telling us, but are we listening?

Christmas blessings, Fr. Tim

Una comunidad católica con una ética consistente con la vida

THE GIVING TREE – Support SEEC Day Laborers!

We invite you to support the parish in providing lunch for SEEC day laborers. Each week a group of volunteers shop, prepare and package lunches for Shirlington Day Laborers through the Brown Bag Lunch Program. The Giving Tree supports this effort: take a 'brown bag angel' ornament from the basket under the giving tree in the sanctuary, place your donation inside the ornament and hang it on the tree. The tree will be in the sanctuary through the Christmas season.

THE GIVING TREE -- ¡Apoye a los jornaleros de SEEC!

Los invitamos a apoyar a la parroquia al darle almuerzo a los jornaleros de SEEC. Cada semana un grupo de personas voluntarias que forman parte del *Brown Bag Lunch* van de compras, preparan y empacan almuerzos para los jornaleros de Shirlington. El *Giving Tree* apoya este esfuerzo: tome un ornamento, "un ángel de papel", de la canasta que está debajo del "giving tree" en el santuario, ponga su donación dentro del ornamento y cuélguelo en el árbol. El árbol va a estar en el santuario durante la temporada navideña.

OLQP KNITTERS DO IT AGAIN IN 2023!

The OLQP Knitting Group made over 750 adult and children's scarves and hats, sweaters, mittens, and baby blankets in 2023 which were donated to Path Forward, Comfort Cases (foster care), OLQP Project Gabriel, Feast on the Streets, and SEEC (day laborers). We are grateful to the 35 active knitters from inside the parish and several from outside of our church community. Many thanks to our church community for yarn donations and OLQP Young Adults for wrapping the scarves this year. If you have any yarn to donate please drop it in the bin in the foyer of Fr Ray Hall or the Knitters Closet in the library. Interested in contributing to this effort? Like to knit or crochet at your own pace? Then we are the group for you! Email Marilena Amoni, mamoni530@gmail.com. Wishing you all a Happy New Year and peace in the world in 2024.

¡LAS PERSONAS QUE TEJEN LO HACEN OTRA VEZ EN 2023!

El grupo de OLQP de personas que tejen tejieron más de 750 bufandas y gorros, suéteres, mitones y frazadas para personas adultas y niñas y niños y bebés en 2023 y se donaron a Path Forward, Comfort Cases (cuidado tutelar), el Proyecto Gabriel de OLQP, Fiesta en las calles y SEEC (jornaleros). Les agradecemos a las 35 personas tejedoras activas de la parroquia y a varias que no pertenecen a nuestra comunidad por su labor. Muchas gracias a nuestra comunidad parroquial por sus donaciones de hilo y a los adolescentes de OLQP por envolver las bufandas este año. Si tiene cualquier hilo para donar, por favor tráigalo al contenedor en el vestíbulo de Fr. Ray Hall o el Knitters Closet en la biblioteca. ¿Está interesada/o en contribuir a esta labor? ¿Le gusta tejer o hacer ganchillo a su propio ritmo? ¡Entonces somos el grupo para usted! Mándele un correo electrónico a Marilena Amoni, mamoni530@gmail.com. Deseándoles a todos un Feliz Año Nuevo y paz en el mundo en el 2024.

***Programs that are open to the entire community, but offered in English only.
Programas que le dan la bienvenida a toda la comunidad, pero que solo se ofrecen en inglés.***

MATTHEW 25

Will be closed from Thursday, December 21, until Tuesday, January 2. Consequently, will not be accepting donations during that time. Our staff and volunteers will be home enjoying the holidays. Thank you for your continued support.

FOOD PANTRY

Thank you for your continued support throughout the year! We will not be taking any donations while the parish offices are closed, December 23 through January 1. We look forward to offering weekly support to our community once again when we reopen on Tuesday, January 2, 2024.

NATIONAL EUCHARISTIC CONFERENCE There is a National Eucharistic Conference to be held in Indianapolis, IN, July 17th-21st, 2024. The Arlington Diocese has put together a conference package that includes a 5-day registration pass, four nights accommodation with continental breakfast, and farewell lunch. The Office of Youth, Campus, and Young Adult Ministries is also sponsoring a bus trip to the Conference, for those 16-35. Please see the bulletin board in the back of church for registration information or reach out to Rebecca Grant Jenkins. Her information is on the front of the bulletin and on the OLQP website.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM OUR TWIN PARISH

Greetings, peace and Christmas joy to Father Tim, Father Martin, Father Joe, members of the Haiti Committee and all our brothers and sisters of Our Lady Queen of Peace parish!

The apostle Saint John in the prologue to his gospel tells us: "And the Word became flesh, and he dwelt among us, and we contemplated his glory which he received from his Father as the only Son, full of grace and truth. (Jn 1:14)."

May the glory of the Word of God who became flesh shine on each person of Our Lady Queen of Peace and may His grace fill your heart with indescribable joy.

It is the grace of the Word of God who became flesh that made the connection and friendship between OLQP and the Saint Joseph parish. By commemorating the mystery of His birth, bringing us peace, joy, love and blessing, may He continue to bless our connection and our friendship every day so that we continue to work mutually to establish His reign of love and truth, justice and peace everywhere.

As we contemplate today in faith, in joy, and in hope the mystery of Christmas, the mystery of the communion between divinity and our humanity in the Word of God, the only Son full of grace and truth; may He fill our hearts with His joy, His fellowship, His peace and His blessings from now on and forever.

Amen and Merry Christmas!

With love, peace, joy and gratitude,

Father Frantz Aimé, pastor of St. Joseph church in Médor, Father Guivenchy Suréna and Seminarian Mackendy Olem Sanon, and the Sisters and members of the parish council, and all the parishioners of Médor.



TAU YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY invites Parish Young Adults to join us for our Christmas Around the World Epiphany Dinner, Saturday, January 6th at 7pm over 1915 Edgewood Street. Bring your favorite traditional family Christmas dish OR drink to share and bring a friend! Feel free to wear your favorite Ugly Christmas Sweater, there will be prizes for the best one and the most original one. For details contact Rebecca Grant Jenkins: rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org.

ECO TIP FOR THE NEW YEAR

Consider subscribing to the AIRE (Arlington Initiative to Rethink Energy) newsletter. This free publication provides energy saving tips and information on events aimed to make Arlington a more sustainable community. Learn about the 30% federal tax credit for purchases and installation costs of solar panels, solar water heaters and high efficiency electric equipment. Tax credits up to \$7,500 are also available for electric vehicles. Learn ways to reduce carbon pollution and to care for God's creation.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

Experience the power of Restorative Circles at OLQP beginning in January. They provide opportunities to share stories, reflections, emotions and ideas about challenging issues in a way that builds community. The topic will be how a faith community can respond to poverty in our world. Click on <https://tinyurl.com/ycxrdzki> to find the dates/times and to register to attend. Contact Bill Casey at 703-568-3438 or b13909@comcast.net for more information.

MATTHEW 25

Special donation request: we are looking for clothing specifically for men and girls. We would also in need of outerwear — jackets that are gently used or new. We will accept donations again after the holidays when we return on Tuesday, January 2, 2024. Thank you for your continued support.

PRISM YOUTH MINISTRY is on Christmas break.

We will resume programming with Teen Night on Sunday, January 7th. Merry Christmas!

OLQP PARISH STAFF / PERSONAL DE LA PARROQUIA

Pastor / Párroco: **Fr. Tim Hickey, CSSp**, thickey@olqpva.org

Parochial Vicar / Párroco Asociado: **Fr. Martin Vu, CSSp**,
mvu@olqpva.org

Ministerio Latino: **Fr. Joseph Nangle, OFM**,
j.nangleofm@yahoo.com

Deacon / Diácono: **Dcn. Tony Remedios**, tremedios@olqpva.org

Parish Office / Oficina parroquial

Business Manager / Gerente de Negocios: **Christina Kozyn**,
ckozyn@olqpva.org

*Social Justice & Outreach Minister / Ministro de Justicia Social y
Acercamiento (bilingüe):* **Sally Díaz-Wells**, sdiazwells@olqpva.org
Youth & Young Adult Minister / Ministro de Adolescentes y Jóvenes Adultos:

Rebecca Grant Jenkins, rgrantjenkins@olqpva.org

Faith Formation Director / Director de Formación de Fe (bilingüe):
Cecilia López Oetgen, clopez@olqpva.org



HAITI CHRISTMAS DRIVE 2023

We are blessed by our partnership with St. Joseph parish in Medor, Haiti. Your gifts enable the people of Medor to strengthen their community.

YOUR GIFTS MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE

\$40 purchases school materials for four primary school students

\$100 purchases a pruning knife for 25 farmers

\$500 pays **half** the cost of developing an environmental education manual for the secondary school

\$1,140 pays the annual salary of a primary school teacher who educates 30 or more students

\$5,000 pays for one year of primary school education for 89 students

Gifts can be placed in the Haiti box near the church entry or mailed to the office. Make checks out to OLQP with Haiti Christmas Drive on the memo line.

You can give online at <https://www.ourladyqueenofpeace.org/haiti-ministry> or by using this QR code:



Our mission is to support sustainable, community-based development in partnership with our twin parish, St. Joseph of Medor. Haiti.



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS FOR THE 57th WORLD DAY OF PEACE 1 JANUARY 2024

Artificial Intelligence and Peace

At the beginning of the New Year, a time of grace which the Lord gives to each one of us, I would like to address God's People, the various nations, heads of state and government, the leaders of the different religions and civil society, and all the men and women of our time, in order to offer my fervent good wishes for peace.

1. The progress of science and technology as a path to peace

Sacred Scripture attests that God bestowed his Spirit upon human beings so that they might have "skill and understanding and knowledge in every craft" (Ex 35:31). Human intelligence is an expression of the dignity with which we have been endowed by the Creator, who made us in his own image and likeness (cf. Gen 1:26), and enabled us to respond consciously and freely to his love. In a particular way, science and technology manifest this fundamentally relational quality of human intelligence; they are brilliant products of its creative potential.

In its Pastoral Constitution [*Gaudium et Spes*](#), the [Second Vatican Council](#) restated this truth, declaring that "through its labours and its native endowments, humanity has ceaselessly sought to better its life". [1] When human beings, "with the aid of technology", endeavour to make "the earth a dwelling worthy of the whole human family", [2] they carry out God's plan and cooperate with his will to perfect creation and bring about peace among peoples. Progress in science and technology, insofar as it contributes to greater order in human society and greater fraternal communion and freedom, thus leads to the betterment of humanity and the transformation of the world.

We rightly rejoice and give thanks for the impressive achievements of science and technology, as a result of which countless ills that formerly plagued human life and caused great suffering have been remedied. At the same time, techno-scientific advances, by making it possible to exercise hitherto unprecedented control over reality, are placing in human hands a vast array of options, including some that may pose a risk to our survival and endanger our common home. [3]

The remarkable advances in new information technologies, particularly in the digital sphere, thus offer exciting opportunities and grave risks, with serious implications for the pursuit of justice and harmony among peoples. Any number of urgent questions need to be asked. What will be the consequences, in the medium and long term, of these new digital technologies? And what impact will they have on individual lives and on societies, on international stability and peace?

2. The future of artificial intelligence: between promise and risk

Progress in information technology and the development of digital technologies in recent decades have already begun to effect profound transformations in global society and its various dynamics. New digital tools are even now changing the face of communications, public administration, education, consumption, personal interactions and countless other aspects of our daily lives.



Moreover, from the digital footprints spread throughout the Internet, technologies employing a variety of algorithms can extract data that enable them to control mental and relational habits for commercial or political purposes, often without our knowledge, thus limiting our conscious exercise of freedom of choice. In a space like the Web, marked by information overload, they can structure the flow of data according to criteria of selection that are not always perceived by the user.

We need to remember that scientific research and technological innovations are not disembodied and “neutral”, [\[4\]](#) but subject to cultural influences. As fully human activities, the directions they take reflect choices conditioned by personal, social and cultural values in any given age. The same must be said of the results they produce: precisely as the fruit of specifically human ways of approaching the world around us, the latter always have an ethical dimension, closely linked to decisions made by those who design their experimentation and direct their production towards particular objectives.

This is also the case with forms of artificial intelligence. To date, there is no single definition of artificial intelligence in the world of science and technology. The term itself, which by now has entered into everyday parlance, embraces a variety of sciences, theories and techniques aimed at making machines reproduce or imitate in their functioning the cognitive abilities of human beings. To speak in the plural of “forms of intelligence” can help to emphasize above all the unbridgeable gap between such systems, however amazing and powerful, and the human person: in the end, they are merely “fragmentary”, in the sense that they can only imitate or reproduce certain functions of human intelligence. The use of the plural likewise brings out the fact that these devices greatly differ among themselves and that they should always be regarded as “socio-technical systems”. For the impact of any artificial intelligence device – regardless of its underlying technology – depends not only on its technical design, but also on the aims and interests of its owners and developers, and on the situations in which it will be employed.

Artificial intelligence, then, ought to be understood as a galaxy of different realities. We cannot presume a priori that its development will make a beneficial contribution to the future of humanity and to peace among peoples. That positive outcome will only be achieved if we show ourselves capable of acting responsibly and respect such fundamental human values as “inclusion, transparency, security, equity, privacy and reliability”. [\[5\]](#)

Nor is it sufficient simply to presume a commitment on the part of those who design algorithms and digital technologies to act ethically and responsibly. There is a need to strengthen or, if necessary, to establish bodies charged with examining the ethical issues arising in this field and protecting the rights of those who employ forms of artificial intelligence or are affected by them. [\[6\]](#)

The immense expansion of technology thus needs to be accompanied by an appropriate formation in responsibility for its future development. Freedom and peaceful coexistence are threatened whenever human beings yield to the temptation to selfishness, self-interest, the desire for profit and the thirst for power. We thus have a duty to broaden our gaze and to direct techno-scientific research towards the pursuit of peace and the common good, in the service of the integral development of individuals and communities. [\[7\]](#)

The inherent dignity of each human being and the fraternity that binds us together as members of the one human family must undergird the development of new technologies and serve as indisputable criteria for evaluating them before they are employed, so that digital progress can occur with due respect for justice and contribute to the cause of peace. Technological developments that do not lead to an improvement in the quality of life of all humanity, but on the contrary aggravate inequalities and conflicts, can never count as true progress. [\[8\]](#)

Artificial intelligence will become increasingly important. The challenges it poses are technical, but also anthropological, educational, social and political. It promises, for instance, liberation from drudgery, more efficient manufacturing, easier transport and more ready markets, as well as a revolution in processes of accumulating, organizing and confirming data. We need to be aware of the rapid transformations now taking place and to manage them in ways that safeguard fundamental human rights and respect the institutions and laws that promote integral human development. Artificial intelligence ought to serve our best human potential and our highest aspirations, not compete with them.

3. The technology of the future: machines that “learn” by themselves



In its multiple forms, artificial intelligence based on machine learning techniques, while still in its pioneering phases, is already introducing considerable changes to the fabric of societies and exerting a profound influence on cultures, societal behaviours and peacebuilding.

Developments such as machine learning or deep learning, raise questions that transcend the realms of technology and engineering, and have to do with the deeper understanding of the meaning of human life, the construction of knowledge, and the capacity of the mind to attain truth.

The ability of certain devices to produce syntactically and semantically coherent texts, for example, is no guarantee of their reliability. They are said to “hallucinate”, that is, to create statements that at first glance appear plausible but are unfounded or betray biases. This poses a serious problem when artificial intelligence is deployed in campaigns of disinformation that spread false news and lead to a growing distrust of the communications media. Privacy, data ownership and intellectual property are other areas where these technologies engender grave risks. To which we can add other negative consequences of the misuse of these technologies, such as discrimination, interference in elections, the rise of a surveillance society, digital exclusion and the exacerbation of an individualism increasingly disconnected from society. All these factors risk fueling conflicts and hindering peace.

4. The sense of limit in the technocratic paradigm

Our world is too vast, varied and complex ever to be fully known and categorized. The human mind can never exhaust its richness, even with the aid of the most advanced algorithms. Such algorithms do not offer guaranteed predictions of the future, but only statistical approximations. Not everything can be predicted, not everything can be calculated; in the end, “realities are greater than ideas”. [\[9\]](#) No matter how prodigious our calculating power may be, there will always be an inaccessible residue that evades any attempt at quantification.

In addition, the vast amount of data analyzed by artificial intelligences is in itself no guarantee of impartiality. When algorithms extrapolate information, they always run the risk of distortion, replicating the injustices and prejudices of the environments where they originate. The faster and more complex they become, the more difficult it proves to understand why they produced a particular result.

“Intelligent” machines may perform the tasks assigned to them with ever greater efficiency, but the purpose and the meaning of their operations will continue to be determined or enabled by human beings possessed of their own universe of values. There is a risk that the criteria behind certain decisions will become less clear, responsibility for those decisions concealed, and producers enabled to evade their obligation to act for the benefit of the community. In some sense, this is favoured by the technocratic system, which allies the economy with technology and privileges the criterion of efficiency, tending to ignore anything unrelated to its immediate interests. [\[10\]](#)

This should lead us to reflect on something frequently overlooked in our current technocratic and efficiency-oriented mentality, as it is decisive for personal and social development: the “sense of limit”. Human beings are, by definition, mortal; by proposing to overcome every limit through technology, in an obsessive desire to control everything, we risk losing control over ourselves; in the quest for an absolute freedom, we risk falling into the spiral of a “technological dictatorship”. Recognizing and accepting our limits as creatures is an indispensable condition for reaching, or better, welcoming fulfilment as a gift. In the ideological context of a technocratic paradigm inspired by a Promethean presumption of self-sufficiency, inequalities could grow out of proportion, knowledge and wealth accumulate in the hands of a few, and grave risks ensue for democratic societies and peaceful coexistence. [\[11\]](#)

5. Burning issues for ethics

In the future, the reliability of an applicant for a mortgage, the suitability of an individual for a job, the possibility of recidivism on the part of a convicted person, or the right to receive political asylum or social assistance could be determined by artificial intelligence systems. The lack of different levels of mediation that these systems introduce is particularly exposed to forms of bias and discrimination: systemic errors can easily multiply, producing not only injustices in individual cases but also, due to the domino effect, real forms of social inequality.



At times too, forms of artificial intelligence seem capable of influencing individuals' decisions by operating through pre-determined options associated with stimuli and dissuasions, or by operating through a system of regulating people's choices based on information design. These forms of manipulation or social control require careful attention and oversight, and imply a clear legal responsibility on the part of their producers, their deployers, and government authorities.

Reliance on automatic processes that categorize individuals, for instance, by the pervasive use of surveillance or the adoption of social credit systems, could likewise have profound repercussions on the social fabric by establishing a ranking among citizens. These artificial processes of categorization could lead also to power conflicts, since they concern not only virtual users but real people. Fundamental respect for human dignity demands that we refuse to allow the uniqueness of the person to be identified with a set of data. Algorithms must not be allowed to determine how we understand human rights, to set aside the essential human values of compassion, mercy and forgiveness, or to eliminate the possibility of an individual changing and leaving his or her past behind.

Nor can we fail to consider, in this context, the impact of new technologies on the workplace. Jobs that were once the sole domain of human labour are rapidly being taken over by industrial applications of artificial intelligence. Here too, there is the substantial risk of disproportionate benefit for the few at the price of the impoverishment of many. Respect for the dignity of labourers and the importance of employment for the economic well-being of individuals, families, and societies, for job security and just wages, ought to be a high priority for the international community as these forms of technology penetrate more deeply into our workplaces.

6. Shall we turn swords into ploughshares?

In these days, as we look at the world around us, there can be no escaping serious ethical questions related to the armaments sector. The ability to conduct military operations through remote control systems has led to a lessened perception of the devastation caused by those weapon systems and the burden of responsibility for their use, resulting in an even more cold and detached approach to the immense tragedy of war. Research on emerging technologies in the area of so-called Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems, including the weaponization of artificial intelligence, is a cause for grave ethical concern. Autonomous weapon systems can never be morally responsible subjects. The unique human capacity for moral judgment and ethical decision-making is more than a complex collection of algorithms, and that capacity cannot be reduced to programming a machine, which as "intelligent" as it may be, remains a machine. For this reason, it is imperative to ensure adequate, meaningful and consistent human oversight of weapon systems.

Nor can we ignore the possibility of sophisticated weapons ending up in the wrong hands, facilitating, for instance, terrorist attacks or interventions aimed at destabilizing the institutions of legitimate systems of government. In a word, the world has no need of new technologies that contribute to the unjust development of commerce and the weapons trade and consequently end up promoting the folly of war. By so doing, not only intelligence but the human heart itself would risk becoming ever more "artificial". The most advanced technological applications should not be employed to facilitate the violent resolution of conflicts, but rather to pave the way for peace.

On a more positive note, if artificial intelligence were used to promote integral human development, it could introduce important innovations in agriculture, education and culture, an improved level of life for entire nations and peoples, and the growth of human fraternity and social friendship. In the end, the way we use it to include the least of our brothers and sisters, the vulnerable and those most in need, will be the true measure of our humanity.

An authentically humane outlook and the desire for a better future for our world surely indicates the need for a cross-disciplinary dialogue aimed at an ethical development of algorithms – an algor-ethics – in which values will shape the directions taken by new technologies. [\[12\]](#) Ethical considerations should also be taken into account from the very beginning of research, and continue through the phases of experimentation, design, production, distribution and marketing. This is the approach of ethics by design, and it is one in which educational institutions and decision-makers have an essential role to play.



7. Challenges for education

The development of a technology that respects and serves human dignity has clear ramifications for our educational institutions and the world of culture. By multiplying the possibilities of communication, digital technologies have allowed us to encounter one another in new ways. Yet there remains a need for sustained reflection on the kinds of relationships to which they are steering us. Our young people are growing up in cultural environments pervaded by technology, and this cannot but challenge our methods of teaching, education and training.

Education in the use of forms of artificial intelligence should aim above all at promoting critical thinking. Users of all ages, but especially the young, need to develop a discerning approach to the use of data and content collected on the web or produced by artificial intelligence systems. Schools, universities and scientific societies are challenged to help students and professionals to grasp the social and ethical aspects of the development and uses of technology.

Training in the use of new means of communication should also take account not only of disinformation, “fake news”, but also the disturbing recrudescence of “certain ancestral fears... that have been able to hide and spread behind new technologies”. [\[13\]](#) Sadly, we once more find ourselves having to combat “the temptation to build a culture of walls, to raise walls... in order to prevent an encounter with other cultures and other peoples”, [\[14\]](#) and the development of a peaceful and fraternal coexistence.

8. Challenges for the development of international law

The global scale of artificial intelligence makes it clear that, alongside the responsibility of sovereign states to regulate its use internally, international organizations can play a decisive role in reaching multilateral agreements and coordinating their application and enforcement. [\[15\]](#) In this regard, I urge the global community of nations to work together in order to adopt a binding international treaty that regulates the development and use of artificial intelligence in its many forms. The goal of regulation, naturally, should not only be the prevention of harmful practices but also the encouragement of best practices, by stimulating new and creative approaches and encouraging individual or group initiatives. [\[16\]](#)

In the quest for normative models that can provide ethical guidance to developers of digital technologies, it is indispensable to identify the human values that should undergird the efforts of societies to formulate, adopt and enforce much-needed regulatory frameworks. The work of drafting ethical guidelines for producing forms of artificial intelligence can hardly prescind from the consideration of deeper issues regarding the meaning of human existence, the protection of fundamental human rights and the pursuit of justice and peace. This process of ethical and juridical discernment can prove a precious opportunity for shared reflection on the role that technology should play in our individual and communal lives, and how its use can contribute to the creation of a more equitable and humane world. For this reason, in debates about the regulation of artificial intelligence, the voices of all stakeholders should be taken into account, including the poor, the powerless and others who often go unheard in global decision-making processes.

* * *

I hope that the foregoing reflection will encourage efforts to ensure that progress in developing forms of artificial intelligence will ultimately serve the cause of human fraternity and peace. It is not the responsibility of a few but of the entire human family. For peace is the fruit of relationships that recognize and welcome others in their inalienable dignity, and of cooperation and commitment in seeking the integral development of all individuals and peoples.

It is my prayer at the start of the New Year that the rapid development of forms of artificial intelligence will not increase cases of inequality and injustice all too present in today’s world, but will help put an end to wars and conflicts, and alleviate many forms of suffering that afflict our human family. May Christian believers, followers of various religions and men and women of good will work together in harmony to embrace the opportunities and confront the challenges posed by the digital revolution and thus hand on to future generations a world of greater solidarity, justice and peace.

From the Vatican, 8 December 2023



[1] No. 33.
[2] *Ibid.*, 57.
[3] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 104.
[4] Cf. *ibid.*, 114.
[5] *Address to Participants in the "Minerva Dialogues"* (27 March 2023).
[6] Cf. *ibid.*
[7] Cf. *Message to the Executive Chairman of the "World Economic Forum" meeting in Davos* (12 January 2018).
[8] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 194; *Address to Participants in the Seminar "The Common Good in the Digital Age"* (27 September 2019).

[9] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium* (24 November 2013), 233.
[10] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 54.
[11] Cf. *Meeting with Participants in the Plenary Assembly of the Pontifical Academy for Life* (28 February 2020).
[12] Cf. *ibid.*
[13] Encyclical Letter *Fratelli Tutti* (3 October 2020), 27.
[14] *Ibid.*
[15] Cf. *ibid.*, 170-175.
[16] Cf. Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si'* (24 May 2015), 177.

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Pope Francis' Prayer for Peace

Lord God of peace, hear our prayer!

We have tried so many times and over so many years to resolve our conflicts by our own powers and by the force of our arms. How many moments of hostility and darkness have we experienced; how much blood has been shed; how many lives have been shattered; how many hopes have been buried... But our efforts have been in vain.

Now, Lord, come to our aid! Grant us peace, teach us peace; guide our steps in the way of peace. Open our eyes and our hearts, and give us the courage to say: "Never again war!"; "With war everything is lost". Instill in our hearts the courage to take concrete steps to achieve peace.

Lord, God of Abraham, God of the Prophets, God of Love, you created us and you call us to live as brothers and sisters. Give us the strength daily to be instruments of peace; enable us to see everyone who crosses our path as our brother or sister. Make us sensitive to the plea of our citizens who entreat us to turn our weapons of war into implements of peace, our trepidation into confident trust, and our quarreling into forgiveness.

Keep alive within us the flame of hope, so that with patience and perseverance we may opt for dialogue and reconciliation. In this way may peace triumph at last, and may the words "division", "hatred" and "war" be banished from the heart of every man and woman. Lord, defuse the violence of our tongues and our hands. Renew our hearts and minds, so that the word which always brings us together will be "brother", and our way of life will always be that of: Shalom, Peace, Salaam!

Amen.

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