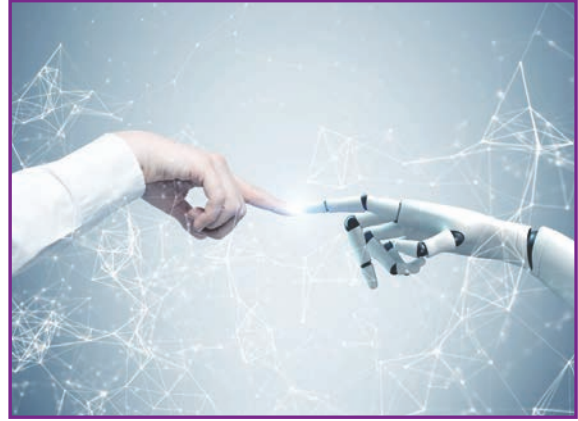## PEACE SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2024

For his theme for the World Day of Peace in 2024, Pope Francis has chosen 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace'. Whilst this might seem a strangely technical theme, we know that we do need to think about the consequences of the advances in AI for peace and justice.

Certainly, governments around the world are taking the development of AI seriously. In November, UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak invited experts and world leaders to a summit, expressly to look at AI and safety. Prior to the summit, he affirmed that, whilst we should not be alarmist, and whilst there are undoubtedly benefits for humanity in the development of AI, 'get this wrong' he said, 'and AI could make it easier to build chemical or biological weapons'. Further he said, in the most extreme case, there is even a risk that humanity might lose control of AI completely, experts warning earlier in the year that, '*Mitigating the risk of extinction from AI should be a global priority alongside other societal-scale risks such as pandemics and nuclear war*'.

In that light, Pope Francis is raising a highly contemporary theme and one he has spoken on before when he has addressed the risks in the development of technology, not least in *Laudato Si'* and *Laudato Deum*. He has already said it is a theme he will return to on World Communications Day 2024, when he will consider 'Artificial Intelligence and wisdom of the heart for a fully human communication'.

For many of us, the first question is: 'what exactly is 'Artificial Intelligence?' It is a concept that has entered our everyday language and yet we are not quite sure what it encompasses. Inevitably, there are a number of definitions but that used by the UK Information Commissioner is helpful:

'*AI is an umbrella term for a range of technologies and approaches that often attempt to mimic human thought to solve complex tasks. Things that humans have traditionally done by thinking and reasoning are increasingly being done by, or with the help of, AI.*'

Made in God's image? How can humans make AI into a servant of peace?
Picture: ImageFlow/Shutterstock

And we are already familiar with a number of its uses – internet search engines like Google, the ability of applications like Amazon, YouTube and Netflix to recommend something to buy, watch or listen to based on our previous choices, software like ChatGPT which can generate articles and essays (for the avoidance of doubt, this edition of *Justpeace* is not AI generated!) or design software that can generate images. Who has not seen the image of Pope Francis in a puffa jacket?

What are our concerns as peacemakers in the development of AI? First there is the direct impact of AI on war and weapons. Drone Wars UK warn that AI is seen by the world's military powers as a way to revolutionise warfare and gain an advantage over enemies. Worrying military applications of AI are already being rolled out and those in development pose threats to our lives, human rights and well-being.

Then there are the fundamental concerns that Pope Francis raised when he announced his theme for the World Day of Peace: the need to be vigilant that a 'logic of violence and discrimination' doesn't take root in the development of AI at the expense of the most fragile and excluded; that the advancement of AI does not fuel injustice and inequality and therefore conflict, and, of course, that AI is developed so that it serves humanity and the protection of our common home. It is a theme we will need to keep returning to.

Andrew Jackson

Peace Sunday 2024

Join Pope Francis in asking how we can ensure that

Artificial Intelligence serves peace not war.

Download Peace Sunday 2024 resources here: https://paxchristi.org.uk/peace-sunday/ or contact us on info@paxchristi.org.uk or 0208 203 4884