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BIURO PRASOWE STOLICY APOSTOLSKIEJ دار الصحافة التابعة للكرسي الرسولي

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Message of the Holy Father for the “AI Ethics for Peace” Meeting (Hiroshima, 9 to 10 July 2024)

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to the participants in the “AI Ethics for Peace” meeting, taking place in Hiroshima from 9 to 10 July 2024:

Message of the Holy Father

Dear friends, I send this greeting to those participating in the “AI Ethics for Peace” Gathering. Artificial intelligence and peace are two issues of supreme importance, as I had the opportunity to emphasize to the political leaders at the G7: “It should always be remembered that a machine can, in some ways and by these new methods, produce algorithmic choices. The machine makes a technical choice among several possibilities based either on well-defined criteria or on statistical inferences. Human beings, however, not only choose, but in their hearts are capable of deciding. A decision is what we might call a more strategic element of a choice and demands a practical evaluation. At times, frequently amid the difficult task of governing, we are called upon to make decisions that have consequences for many people. In this regard, human reflection has always spoken of wisdom, the *phronesis* of Greek philosophy and, at least in part, the wisdom of Sacred Scripture. Faced with the marvels of machines, which seem to know how to choose independently, we should be very clear that decision-making, even when we are confronted with its sometimes dramatic and urgent aspects, must always be left to the human person. We would condemn humanity to a future without hope if we took away people’s ability to make decisions about themselves and their lives, by dooming them to depend on the choices of machines. We need to ensure and safeguard a space for proper human control over the choices made by artificial intelligence programs: human dignity itself depends on it” (*Address to the G7*, 14 June 2024).

In commending your initiative, I ask you to show the world that we are united in asking for a proactive commitment to protect human dignity in this new era of machines.

The fact that you are gathering in Hiroshima to discuss artificial intelligence and peace is of great symbolic importance. Among the current conflicts impacting our world – including the hatred of war – we hear more and more about this technology. That is why I consider this event in Hiroshima to be of extraordinary importance. It is

crucial that, united as brothers and sisters, we remind the world that “in light of the tragedy that is armed conflict, it is urgent to reconsider the development and use of devices like the so-called ‘lethal autonomous weapons’ and ultimately ban their use. This starts from an effective and concrete commitment to introduce ever greater and proper human control. No machine should ever choose to take the life of a human being” (*Address to the G7*, 14 June 2024).

As we look at the complexity of the issues before us, recognizing the contribution of the cultural riches of peoples and religions in the regulation of artificial intelligence is key to the success of your commitment to the wise management of technological innovation.

Hoping that your gathering will bear fruit in bringing about fraternity and cooperation, I pray that each of us may become instruments of peace for the world.

FRANCIS
