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RenAissance
Foundation

Morning Welcome

Archbishop Paglia speaks with HE Sheikh Al Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah and Chief Rabbi Eliezer Simha Weisz

Excellencies / friends / Attendees / Delegations

Almost three years ago, at the close of a well-attended conference, the principles of the Rome Call for AI Ethics were accepted and signed by its initial supporters. The Call was something entirely new at the time, and it still is.

In the past three years, perhaps thanks in part to our efforts, all over the world studies have examined one of the most pressing AI issues of our times—the urgent need for ethics in the development and implementation of technology.

In the field of artificial intelligence, progress has been more rapid and more widespread than expected, and the term used by Pope Francis – “algorithethics” - ‘the ethics of artificial intelligence’ - has come into common usage. The essence of our Call is to ask artificial intelligence—a tool of extraordinary potential—as well as those who design it, implement it, and work for its adoption, to put human beings at the center of its and their concern.

When we began, there were few of us, but we had influence and, most importantly, we were committed. Even then, we could see in our appeal a hardy seed that in the past three years has developed and thrived—despite the great difficulties despite the great difficulties imposed by the Covid pandemic.

The first Call signatories were, in addition to the Catholic Church, supranational and governmental institutions, and giants of technology, but today, the event for which we are gathered gives us great joy because it shows that the urgency of our Call has been recognized worldwide, and our Jewish and Muslim brothers and sisters have now joined their voices to the ones we raised three years ago.

It seems to me crucially significant that the three great monotheistic religions agree on the need for artificial intelligence to be firmly circumscribed by an ethical horizon that sees in the human being the summit of Creation.

The presence here of two religious leaders who are honored and recognized by their communities and by all people of good will makes this event particularly significant. They are



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Chief Rabbi Eliezer Simha Weisz, a member of the Council of the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, and HE Sheikh Al Mahfoudh Bin Bayyah (Secretary General of the Abu Dhabi Forum for Peace).

Today, in this prestigious venue, our gathering is joyful as we are aware of the moral strength that this event gives witness to. The three Abrahamic religions are becoming joint and several companions with other institutions to promote and safeguard our common humanity.

It is appropriate for us here to make our own the first words of the message of peace that Pope Francis addressed to the world on New Year's Day of 2023: "No one is saved alone." The presence of the three Abrahamic religions, come to sign the *Rome Call for AI Ethics*, is a great manifestation of the peace that solidarity brings.

Artificial intelligence, which now touches every aspect of human life, even to the point of deciding between life and death, needs to be inspired by a humanistic vision that guides the entire AI phenomenon.

Allow me to quote in this regard a passage from the encyclical *Caritas in Veritate*, of Benedict XVI, whose memory shall now be for a blessing: "*Technology is highly attractive because it draws us out of our physical limitations and broadens our horizon. But human freedom is authentic only when it responds to the fascination of technology with decisions that are the fruit of moral responsibility. Hence the pressing need for formation in an ethically responsible use of technology. Moving beyond the fascination that technology exerts, we must reappropriate the true meaning of freedom, which is not an intoxication with total autonomy, but a response to the call of being, beginning with our own personal being.*"

The freedom proposed by the *Rome Call* flows naturally from its principles, whose goal is the protection of strategic areas of our common humanity, such as education, healthcare, social equality, and law. Our intent is to contribute to the debate on artificial intelligence at a global level, and to do so through comparative analysis and dialogue among all.

The event that brings us together today reflects the responsibility that the three Abrahamic religions have for the protection of Creation and for the advancement of a human fraternity that doesn't shrink from reliance on artificial intelligence.

Let us make our own the words of Pope Francis to the members of the Pontifical Academy for Life: "*simple education in the correct use of new technologies is not enough: they are not in fact 'neutral' instruments, because, as we have seen, they shape the world and engage consciences on the level of values. There is a need for broader educational action.*" (General Assembly, 2020).

Aware of this responsibility, in 2021, the Pontifical Academy for Life established the RenAIssance Foundation, which, in addition to promoting the *Rome Call*, is committed, through its Study Center, to offer scientific contributions on the use of artificial intelligence.



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I mention in particular one RenAIssance initiative that is particularly close to my heart: the impact of AI on the world of work and on the lives of migrants. There are, of course, other issues without number to be addressed. The challenge is great, but we can neither put things off nor slow our pace, and we are encouraged to greater boldness by the increase in the number of institutions that have asked to become signatories to the *Rome Call*.

Please accept my heartfelt thanks for being with us today, and my best wishes for the continuing success of our work together.