



57th World Day of Peace, 1st January, 2024

Artificial Intelligence and Peace

Points for homily

First Reading (Num 6:22-27)

In the first reading we read about God's blessing for his people and us all. This blessing is received by God's people through his servant, in this case, Aaron.

This scripture reading reminds us that blessings are not meant just to be received with gratitude, but also to flow through us.

At the start of this new year, we can ask ourselves: How can I be a blessing for the people around me? How can I be an instrument of God's mercy for those who are need of experiencing His unconditional love? We can think of a thousand examples, large or small. Even a simple word of encouragement or a smile can make a big difference in someone's life.

We should also ask ourselves: Is the world a bit of a better place today because of me? In the light of the Pope's message on 'Artificial Intelligence and Peace', we can also ask ourselves: Has my online behaviour today helped in promoting dialogue and reconciliation? Or have I caused division and generated hate?

Gospel (Lk 2: 16-21)

Having welcomed the angel's announcement of the birth of Christ, the shepherds "hurried off" to seek and find the truth and the source of their joy and hope. In today's world, it is very easy to give up on this search. Sometimes, bombarded as we are with contrasting 'truths', we simply give up, even before starting our journey. May we follow today the examples of these shepherds: without dragging our feet, let us set forth and allow ourselves to be challenged by what lies beyond the comfortably familiar; like them, in this search, let us be guided by God's messengers and not by algorithms generated by artificial intelligence.

Today's Gospel also invites us to rediscover the gift of simplicity and the grace of awe. In an age of astounding technological advances, we might struggle to embrace the powerful simplicity of the manger: the baby, the Son of God, was lying in a manger. In our digital age, our eyes receive a constant barrage of visual information. It is not easy to recognise the presence of God in simplicity. It is not easy to stand in awe and grateful for what the Lord has done and is doing in our lives, often by making the ordinary extraordinary. Nowadays,

nothing impresses us any longer. But the manger of Betlehem teaches us that the most important things and events in life are often the humblest and simplest.

It is therefore not a coincidence if at the beginning of each year, the Church invites us to spend time in the company of Mary, Mother of God. With her we can give thanks for all the gifts we have received in the year we are leaving behind us. Like her we can “treasure up” all the things the Lord has done and is doing in our lives. In today’s Gospel, Mary also took time to “ponder”. As we reflect today on the impact artificial intelligence is having on our lives, it is important to underline the importance of this verb. Those who ponder avoid moving hurriedly from one thing to another in a perpetual state of busyness, to become aware of what is happening in them and around them. Those who ponder refuse to passively and uncritically accept everything they see and hear. Like Mary, we are called to be people of prayer. Like her we are invited to ponder with wisdom, so that in every sphere of our lives – including in the digital sphere – we can always choose to live and act in a way which respects the dignity of every human being and promotes just peace.

Punti għall-omelija

L-Ewwel Qari (Num 6:22-27)

Fil-ewwel qari naqraw dwar il-barka ta’ Alla għall-poplu tiegħu u għalina lkoll. Din il-barka tiġi milqugħa mill-poplu ta’ Alla permezz tal-qaddej tiegħu, f’dan il-każ, Aron.

Dan il-qari tal-iskrittura jfakkarna li l-barkiet m’għandniex biss nirċevuhom bi gratitudni, iżda naqsmuhom ukoll ma’ ħaddiehor.

Fil-bidu ta’ din is-sena l-ġdida, nistgħu nistaqsu lilna nfusna: Kif nista’ nkun ta’ barka għan-nies ta’ madwari? Kif nista’ nkun strument tal-ħniena ta’ Alla għal dawk li għandhom bżonn jesperjenzaw l-imħabba bla kundizzjoni Tiegħu? Nistgħu naħsbu f’elf eżempju, kbir jew żgħir. Anke sempliċi kelma ta’ inkoraġġiment jew tbissima tista’ tagħmel differenza kbira fil-ħajja ta’ xi ħadd.

Dejjem għandna nistaqsu lilna nfusna: Illum, ħajjet id-dinja daqxejn aħjar milli sibtha? Fid-dawl tal-messaġġ tal-Papa fuq ‘l-Intelliġenza Artifiċjali u l-Paċi’, nistgħu wkoll nistaqsu lilna nfusna: L-imġieba tiegħi online illum għenet fil-promozzjoni tad-djalogu u r-rikonċiljazzjoni? Jew ikkawżajt diviżjoni u ġġenerajt mibegħda?

Evangēlju (Lq 2, 16-21)

Wara li laqgħu t-tħabbira tal-anġlu dwar it-twelid ta’ Kristu, ir-rgħajja “marru jgħaġġlu” biex ifittxu u jsibu l-verità u s-sors tal-ferħ u t-tama tagħhom. Fid-dinja tal-lum, huwa faċli ħafna li taqta’ qalbek f’din it-tfittxija. Xi drabi, bbumbardjati kif aħna b’ ‘veritajiet’ kuntrastanti, nieqfu nfittxu qabel ma nagħmlu l-ewwel pass. Jalla nimxu illum fuq l-eżempji ta’ dawn ir-

rgħajja: mingħajr ma nkaxkru saqajna, ejjew noħoġu minn dak li huwa komdu u familjari; bħalhom, f'din it-tfittxija, ejjew inkunu gġwidati mill-messaġġiera ta' Alla u mhux mill-algoritmi iġġenerati mill-intelligenza artifiċjali.

L-Evangēlju tal-lum jistedinna wkoll biex niskopru mill-ġdid id-don tas-semplicità u l-grazzja tal-istagħġib. Fi żmien ta' avvanzi teknoloġiċi tal-għaġeb, nistgħu nisbuha diffiċli biex inħaddnu s-semplicità qawwija tal-maxtura: it-tarbija, l-Iben ta' Alla, kienet mimduda f'maxtura. Fl-era diġitali tagħna, għajnejna huma kontinwament bbumbardjati minn ammont enormi ta' informazzjoni viżiva. Mhux faċli li tagħraf il-preżenza ta' Alla fis semplicità. Mhux faċli għalina li nkunu grati u nistagħbu b'dak li għamel u qed jagħmel Alla f'ħajjitna, ħafna drabi bill jitransforma l-ordinarju fl-istraordinarju. Illum il-ġurnata, xejn m'għadu jimpressjonana. Imma l-maxtura ta' Betlehem tgħallimna li l-aktar affarijiet importanti fil-ħajja tagħna għandna nfittxuhom f'dak li hu l-aktar umli u sempliċi.

Għaldaqstant, mhux kumbinazzjoni li fil-bidu ta' kull sena, il-Knisja tistedinna nqattgħu f'it tal-ħin ma' Marija, Omm Alla. Magħha nistgħu nringrazzjaw lil Alla għar-rigali kollha li rċevnejna fis-sena li qed inħallu warajna. Bħalha nistgħu "ngħożżu" l-affarijiet kollha li l-Mulej għamel u qed jagħmel f'ħajjitna. Fl-Evangēlju tal-lum, Marija wkoll ħadet il-ħin biex tixtarr u taħseb bejnha u bejn ruħha. Hekk kif illum nirriflettu fuq l-impatt li l-intelligenza artifiċjali qed ikollha fuq ħajjitna, huwa importanti li niftakru fl-importanza ta' dawn il-verbi. Min jaħseb u jixtarr isir konxju ta' dak li jkun qed jiġri fihom u madwarhom, biex ma jispiċċax jiġri u jdur minn ħaġa għall-oħra qisu ċippitatu. Dawk li jaħsbu u jixtarru jirrifjutaw li jaċċettaw b'mod passiv u mingħajr dixxerniment, dak kollu li jaraw u jisimgħu. Bħal Marija, aħna msejħin inkunu persuni ta' talb. Bħalha aħna mistiedna nixtarru bil-għaqal, biex f'kull qasam tal-ħajja tagħna - inkluż dak diġitali – nagħzlu li ngħixu u nagħixxu b'mod li jirrispetta d-dinjità ta' kull bniedem u jippromwovi l-paċi ġusta.